

Title: **BAREFOOT ON HOLY GROUND**
 Text: Exodus 3:5
 Subject: *How Does a Sinner Come to God?*
 Date: Tuesday Evening — April 18, 2006
 Tape # Exodus 18

Introduction:

How does a sinner come to God? How can I, a poor, worthless, doomed, damned, guilty, vile and helpless sinner come to the holy Lord God and find acceptance with him? How can I approach the Lord and obtain his mercy? How can I come to God and stand before him? Does that interest you? If it does, turn with me to Exodus 3, and I will show you.

(Exodus 3:1-4) "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb. (2) And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed. (3) And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. (4) And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I."

Moses drew near to the Lord; but, before he did, the Lord appeared to Moses. And I know this. — **No sinner will ever come to God, until God first comes to the sinner.** First, the Lord "*appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.*" Then Moses turned aside to see the Lord. That is always the order.

- God first came seeking **Adam**. Then Adam came to God.
- The Lord God first came to **Abram**. Then Abram came to the Lord.
- The Lord Jesus first appeared to **Saul of Tarsus**. Then Saul came to the Savior.

Next, we are told in verse 4, "*God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses.*" God called him personally, and called him effectually. It is obvious that the Lord called him personally, for he said, "*Moses, Moses.*" And we know that his call was effectual because Moses answered the call. — **And no sinner will ever come to God, except he is called, personally, effectually, irresistibly called by grace to come.** Faith in Christ is always the result of God's call.

And no sinner will ever come to Christ until the Lord Jesus Christ reveals himself to the sinner. You cannot trust an unknown Savior any more than you can come back from where you have never been. Faith, true, saving faith, is always the result of divine revelation, the result of the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (Zech. 12:10; 2 Cor. 4:4-6).

(Zechariah 12:10) "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn."

(2 Corinthians 4:4-6) "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Now, look at verse 5. This is my text.

(Exodus 3:5) “And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground.”

Proposition: The only way any sinner can ever come to God is barefoot on holy ground. — I want to talk to you about being **BAREFOOT ON HOLY GROUND** before the Lord.

Divisions: There are three things in this verse by which we are taught of God how we must come to him. There is...

1. A Prohibition — “*Draw not nigh.*”
2. A Prerequisite — “*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet.*”
3. A Place — “*The place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*”

A PROHIBITION

First, when Moses answered God’s call and was about to approach him in the bush, the Lord God said, “Stop. Don’t take another step. You cannot come to me.” — He said, “*Draw not nigh hither.*” What a strange thing that is. Does God call a man, only to tell him he cannot approach him? Indeed he does!

You and I cannot approach God, come to God, stand before God, and obtain acceptance with God in our natural, fallen, sinful state. It is written, “*And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein*” (Lev. 22:21). Without holiness, perfect, absolute, unblemished holiness, no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

Not only does God prohibit us from coming to him as fallen, sinful men and women, he warns us plainly, if only we had ears to hear his warning, that if we dare attempt to make ourselves holy before him, we shall be slain by him. When the Lord God gave his law on Mt. Sinai, it was not given to show men what they must do to be accepted of him. It was given to tell us plainly that we can do nothing to make ourselves acceptable to him (Ex. 19:11-13, 16-19; 20:18-19, 22-26).

(Exodus 19:11-13) “And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. (12) And thou shalt **set bounds** unto the people round about, saying, **Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: (13) There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live:** when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.”

As it was when the Lord appeared to Moses, the Lord told Israel to come up to the mount, to see it and hear his voice, but demanded that they come no closer, that they were not even touch it with their polluted hands, lest they be slain.

(Exodus 19:16-19) “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that **all the people that was in the camp trembled.** (17) And **Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.** (18) And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and **the whole mount quaked greatly.** (19) And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.”

(Exodus 20:18-19) “And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, **they removed, and stood afar off.** (19) And they said unto Moses, **Speak thou with us,** and we will hear: but **let not God speak with us, lest we die.**”

(Exodus 20:22-26) “And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. (23) Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. (24) **An altar of earth thou shalt make** unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. (25) And **if thou wilt make me an altar of stone**, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for **if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it**. (26) **Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.**”

How thankful ought to be that God does not require us to produce righteousness for ourselves! We have not come up to Mt. Sinai, but unto Mt. Zion (Heb. 12:18-24).

(Hebrews 12:18-24) “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, (19) And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (20) (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: (21) And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) (22) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, (23) To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, (24) And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel.*”

A PREREQUISITE

That is the prohibition. — “*Draw not nigh!*” But blessed be his name, God’s word does not end there. It is a prohibition that makes way for an open door of hope, giving us a prerequisite, a requirement that will allow us to come to God. — “*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet.*” **God required Moses to come to him barefoot.**

In **Exodus 40**, God required Moses, and Aaron, and Aaron’s sons to wash their hands and feet in the holy water of the holy laver of brass, as they came into the tabernacle. Then they went into the house of God barefoot, always barefoot before the Lord. No man was allowed to enter God’s house, do service in God’s house, or offer sacrifice in God’s house, until he was washed in the laver and was barefoot before the Lord. What does that mean?

REVERENCE — As you know, it is still customary in Asian countries for people to remove their shoes before entering a home. It is an act of courtesy, a show of respect, much like that shown by a gentleman taking off his hat when he enters a building, or when he greets a lady. Certainly, that is one thing that God required of Moses, and requires of all, when he says, “*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet.*” **The Lord God demands that we reverence him.** The holy Lord God cannot and will not be worshipped by any who do not sanctify his name and reverence him.

SHAME —Yes, we must reverence God. We can never come to him without reverence. — “*God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him*” (Ps. 89:7). But there is more in this matter of being barefoot before the Lord than reverence.

In **Deuteronomy 25** God’s law uses barefootedness as a symbol of shame. If a man refused to take his dead brother’s wife, he was brought before the elders; and, in an act by which he was to be publicly humiliated, she took off his shoe and spit in his face. From that day, until the day of his death, he wore the title, “*him that hath his shoe loosed,*” as a shameful man (Deut. 25:9-10).

Are you beginning to get the picture? **God requires that all who come to him come to him as shameful sinners,** as people who are ashamed of themselves, ashamed to approach him, acknowledging that we are utterly unworthy to lift our faces in his direction.

NAKEDNESS — Another thing associated with being barefoot is nakedness (Isa. 20:2).

(Isaiah 20:2) “At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.”

I am confident that Isaiah was not completely naked for three years. That would have been indecent. But he was required to walk for three years without the sackcloth that covered his upper body and barefoot, **exposed and defenseless**. That is how we must approach the Lord God, as **barefoot** and **defenseless**, and **shamefully naked**, just like the publican our Lord described in Luke 18 (Luke 18:13; 1 John 1:9).

(Luke 18:13) “And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

(1 John 1:9) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The Lord God will never put the shoes of grace on our feet, as sons in his house (Luke 15:22), until we take off the shoes of our own filthy righteousness in the mountain of his holiness.

A PLACE

Now, read the last line of Exodus 3:5, and you will see why we must come barefoot to God. — “*And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*” If we come to God, if we draw nigh to God, we come barefoot to stand upon a place called “**holy ground**.”

The ground was called holy because the Lord God was there, because it was the place chosen by God to meet this sinful man in mercy. He had sanctified it, set it apart from all other ground, as the place where he would meet Moses, reveal himself to Moses, and allow Moses to come to him. **I did not just pull that idea out of my hat. I pulled it from the Book of God.** Jerusalem was called God’s holy hill of Zion (Ps. 99:9), because he put his temple there. That was the **place of his sacrifice, his priest, and his worship**. The holy of holies was separated from the holy place and called “**the most holy place**” (Ex. 26:33-34), because the mercy-seat was there, the glory of God was there, and mercy was dispensed there. The Lord God said, “*And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory*” (Ex. 29:43). **The one place, the only place where God meets with men and men come to God is the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all things in the tabernacle and temple were types.** Christ is the Holy Ground upon which we draw nigh to God and stand in grace (Heb. 7:24-27; 10:14, 17-22).

(Hebrews 7:24-27) “But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. (25) Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (26) For such a high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; (27) Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”

(Hebrews 10:14) “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

(Hebrews 10:17-22) “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. (18) Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin. (19) Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, (20) By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; (21) And *having* an high priest over the house of God; (22) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

Holiness is that attribute of God spoken of throughout the Scriptures by which he is entirely distinct, separated from all his creatures. It refers to his whole glorious and perfect being. God's holiness is his supreme perfection. **This is "the message,"** John tells us, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." That which is holy is perfect, sinless, and undefiled.

As God is holy, he cannot and will not accept any who are not holy, perfect, and undefiled. He says, "Walk before me and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1; 1 Pet. 1:15-16).

(1 Peter 1:15-16) "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; (16) Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Now, I want you to know the blessedness of what I am about to tell you. Oh, may God make this blessedness yours. — **Coming to God by faith in Christ, we stand barefoot on Holy Ground and are made holy by him who is that "Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord"** (Heb. 12:14). Christ is that Holy Ground by which we are made perfectly holy before our God (John 17:15-19).

(John 17:15-19) "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. (16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (18) As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. (19) And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

BAREFOOT BLESSEDNESS — Now, let me show you something of the blessedness of being barefoot on Holy Ground before the holy Lord God.

- When the Lord God says to poor sinners like us, "Pull off your shoes and come in," he is expressing his open heart of **hospitality** to all who come to him by Christ Jesus. — "Pull off your shoes and sit down." — He is saying, "Sinners, come and welcome!" (Matt. 11:28-30).
- As a rule, the only time you see grown people barefoot is at home, or where they are so comfortable that they feel **completely at home**. — I can't think of a better way to describe what I want to say than that. — I am completely comfortable and at home with God in Christ!
- Find me a person who is running around barefoot, and I will show you someone who is completely confident that there is **no danger** before him. — Look at the little child running through the grass, playing in its father's yard barefoot, or the housewife running around her house barefoot. There is not a more serene, peaceful picture in the world, except this. — A sinner standing barefoot on holy ground before God almighty, "*accepted in the Beloved.*"

That is the only way to stand before the Captain of the Lord's hosts, the Captain of our salvation (Jos. 5:13-15).

(Joshua 5:13-15) "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, *Art* thou for us, or for our adversaries? (14) And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? (15) And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so."

- The law demands holiness. — Christ gives holiness.

- The law says, “*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*” — The gospel says, “*Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute iniquity.*”
- The law says, “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.*” — Grace says, “*Herein is love: not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*”
- The law speaks of priestly sacrifices offered year by year continually, which could never make the comers thereunto perfect. — The gospel speaks of Christ who, “*after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever...by one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.*”
- The law declares that as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. — Grace proclaims, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,*” for all who are in Christ have forever passed from death unto life!
- The law says, “*Draw not nigh.*” Christ says, “*Pull off your shoes and come in.*”

“Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
 Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
 Jesus ready stands to save you,
 Full of pity joined with power:
 He is able, He is able, He is able,
 He is willing; doubt no more.

Come, ye needy, come and welcome,
 God’s free bounty, glorify;
 True belief and true repentance,
 Every grace that brings you nigh.
 Without money, without money, without money,
 Come to Jesus Christ and buy.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
 Bruised and broken by the fall;
 If you tarry till you’re better,
 You will never come at all:
 Not the righteous, not the righteous, not the righteous,
 Sinners Jesus came to call.

Let not conscience make you linger,
 Nor of fitness fondly dream;
 All the fitness He requireth
 Is to feel your need of Him;
 This He gives you, this He gives you, this He gives you;
 ‘Tis the Spirit’s rising beam.

Lo! th’ incarnate God, ascended,
 Pleads the merit of His blood;
 Venture on Him, venture wholly,
 Let no other trust intrude.
 None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus,
 Can do helpless sinners good.

I will arise and go to Jesus,
 He will embrace me in His arms.
 In the arms of my dear Savior,
 O there are ten thousand charms