

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Exodus 33 verses 1 through 6. Let us take heed to how we hear these words for there. The words of god. Then you always said to Moses depart. And go up from here. You and the people whom you have brought. Out of the land of egypt. To the land of, which i swore to abraham, Isaac, and jacob saying, To your descendants.

I will give it. And i will send my angel before you I will drive out the canonite and the amorite. And the hittite, the parasite. When the heavite and the Jebusite. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. For i will not go up in your midst.

Lest i consume you on the way. For you are a stiff. Necked people.

And when the people heard this bad news they mourned. And no one put on his ornaments. For you, always had said, to Moses, say to the children of israel. You are a stiff necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now, therefore take off your ornaments.

That i may know what to do to you. So, the children of israel stripped themselves. Of their ornaments. By Mount Horeb.

So far, the reading of gods inspired. And the narrant worked.

I'm afraid that we often read about the nation of israel. The church. And the old testament with, Much of a ferocerical spirit of our own. It's easy for us to see their failings. And to mess that although there is warning in their failing and we'll hear about that this.

By the end of this sermon, lord willing. That the great story is of the enduring patients and mercy of god. Has determination his persistence to bring jesus christ into the world to save. Sinners. And his using a stiff necked people. Along the way that that love which we would see most of all demonstrated in christ dying for sinners.

We might also see working out in the history of god's patients with his church. A church in which the lean seasons seem long and the spiritually prosperous seasons. Few far between. And all too short. So, we think ourselves so much better. Than israel. When we read about things like, The feast of yahweh.

Who had brought them up out of the land of egypt? And the golden calf. And thinking we would never. Celebrate god's redemptive work the way they did with a golden calf. That man himself made.

And yet in god's. Often strange, but always wise and good providence. On a day that much of the church. Calls by the name. Of the same goddess. That manasa had set up in the temple. In our second, king's reading this morning, The one who. Was associated with life and fertility in the spring.

Who in her? In another. Uh, name that she has Ishtar. Or esterray or asteroth. Astral was the one in the reading this morning, Ishtar and her husband tamuz. Uh, they would die every fall

and come back again from the dead. Every spring. Uh, tambuz of course. Being one, whom the The women of israel in the book of Ezekiel are weeping over in the temple.

Because it's the fall. Would we? Would we? Celebrate. God's. Redemptive work. Not in the way. That he has said to do. Put in the way that we would. And then it's easy for those who don't. Observe that day under that name. To have a fair cycle spirit. Towards those who do.

And what is presented to us in this passage. There's a word that i trust will humble us. All

And that is would you be satisfied? To have all all Of god's other blessings. If it meant that, you did not have him. If he was not, In the midst. If he was not working powerfully in a way, that is actually so great. And so holy that it is a danger to sinners.

Because this is what the lord proposes to Moses. At the beginning of our passage. Says, depart and go up from here, you and the people who you have brought out of the land of egypt and he's talking to him again. The, the way that they Had talked about this redemption back in chapter 32 and verse 1.

As for this moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of egypt. And you remember the lord talking to moses. In on the mountain in verse 7 of chapter 32 yahweh said to Moses, go get down for your people who you have brought out of the land of egypt have corrupted themselves.

And here again now in chapter 33 in verse 1. You and the people whom you. Have brought out of the land of egypt. Depart and go up from here. To the land of, which i swore to abraham, Isaac and jacob. He says he's going to give them the land.

He's also going to give them protection. Deliver them from all of the enemies that are waiting in the land. I will send my angel before you not in the midst of you, i won't go in the midst of you. Now, that's the proposal is, i'll send my angel before you and i will drive out they cannonia.

Canine amorite hitite, parasite, hivite jebusite. Or drive them all up, you'll you'll go and you won't have to fight battles. You won't have to. To clear fields, you won't have to plant trees, and and vineyards. Indeed, it will flow with milk and honey for you. When you get there.

It'll, it'll be something like, you know, Uh, jonathan. The son of soul, just walking along and here's honey and scooping it up with his stick and the land will flow with prosperity for you. You'll have possession of the land and you'll have peace from your neighbors and you'll have prosperity in in economic things and the pleasures of this life.

Only, i will not go up with you. Museum, i suspect That for many of us. Since we could have. Peace in the home and The husband and the wife madly in love with one another and the children, all getting along and harmony and things going well in the workplace and feeling successful, and admired by the those with whom We work and the bank account is healthy, the investment accounts.

Are healthy and we have all that we could ever want to enjoy of this world. And the only caveat. Is that the lord would not be with us? That our lives would never be disrupted. We could still have words about him. We could still have thoughts about him but as far as his actual presence and his power with us, To make a difference.

The the kind of difference there that paul was an example of this morning. The the kind of difference that that says unmistakably, there is a god who has made heaven and earth and this god has redeemed us and this god has taken us to be his people and made himself our very

own covenant, god And he makes a palpable disruptive difference in our lives moment by moment, day by day week by week.

If you could have everything else. And just have theological and spiritual status quo. You can even. Tell yourself. This is the land, which god swore To give to our fathers. This is the land which god has given us. By driving out the canaanites, this is the land that god is blessing.

By making it flow with milk and honey, and you can have all of your theology of god. And all of those other blessings from god. But not have him. Would we be satisfied? God, have mercy upon us. Apart from renewing, ongoing spirit given grace. I know that we would be I know that you would be.

But what is extraordinary? Is that this people who are just involved, And that calf worship. And in that reveling, Where their idea of a feast unto the lord. Was to get the sacrifices out of the way in the morning and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

That's their idea of a holy day.

God has done a work in them. Because they hear this word from the lord, this proposal And it says, When the people heard this? Bad news. This evil word.

Suddenly. A people who. Wanted their own pleasure in their own way. Says, we don't want our own ways and we don't want any or all of these other things, if we cannot have god himself. In them and with them. This is a stunning. Reversal.

Indeed, they mourn. The lord has given them. A commandment. No. Therefore Take off your ornaments. That i may know what to do with you. In verse 5, but in verse 4, They don't just take off the ornaments. They respond with their hearts. According to what god had told them to do in the outside, Not like, what?

What the lord warned us against doing like the Pharisees? You know, the the Ash Wednesday thing. They're putting literally putting ash on your head and disfiguring your face and And going around appearing to mourn in order. That others may see. But, Real morning. Real grieving.

When the people heard this bad news they mourned. What a marvelous? Work of god. You say, yes but didn't many of them fall in the wilderness and doesn't he say generally of them that they didn't enter his right? Yes, That's true. But if so, very many of them were unconverted, just like so many of the assyrians We're unconverted in nineveh.

You know, the book of nahim is written about Nineveh as well, not just the book of jonah.

If when god comes and god works, he works with such power that he moves people to grieve before him. And he does that even among the unconverted. Than how are we to long for the power of god? To come upon his church which knows him in christ and proclaims and believes the gospel.

Of justification by grace alone, through faith alone in christ alone. The gospel of salvation from start to finish that has not just that justification that hinge point. But the the love and calling the love and predestination and calling that brings it and the sanctification that flows out of it.

And the glorification in which it finishes And we preach these things, and we believe these things,

And yet, we may be so addicted to. Comfort. And to other benefits from god. That we may go a long time. Without knowing the powerful presence of god himself. And be comfortable with that. We could say, oh lord, who did such a work at cyani And we'll continue to see it next week in the week after.

As the people watch, Moses go out to the to the tent of meeting far outside the camp, but we won't. We want to open that all that up right now. Was a come in the power. In which you made israel to mourn. Come and the power in which you change nineveh.

Come in greater power than that. Oh god.

Come and do your work. And when we ask him to come and do his work, what we're really asking, Is that he would attend his word with power. You know, Moses had Had returned. And had had. Given this. Instruction. Whoever is on yahweh's side, come to me and the sons of levi had killed three thousand of them.

And even after that, after the the killing of the three thousand of them yahweh had made this statement about plugging. The people But it wasn't until The lord. Gave Moses this particular word. In verse 5. That it produced by his power, this work. And we see something here about the the freedom of god.

The we can't understand his timing and when he chooses to do things, but we do see something about what he uses when he works. That it's in response to the word in verse 5, that there is the morning. The grieving the repentance if we can. Put it that way in verse 4 and verse 6, For y'all way had said to Moses, you see, he doesn't just tell Moses.

The things in verses one through three. He tells moses. To tell the people. For yahweh had said, to Moses, say, to the children of israel. You are a stiff, necked people. I could come into your midst in one moment and consume you now therefore take off your ornaments. That i may know what to do to you.

Many a sermon of. Of depravity. Exposing rebuke from god, has been preached. That did not. Come with the same conviction of heart and produce the same brokenness of spirit and crying out to god, for which the gospel is the only solution the opposing blood of jesus christ. And his taking wrath, is the only solution for its guilt and the life and resurrection power of jesus.

In the christian applied for the spirit is the only solution for the presence of that sin. Many such a sermon has been preached that did not produce. The effect. And yet, there are those times when god comes in the preaching of his word and particularly in, in a word of rebuke like this, And his spirit comes in his power and he attends it and he convinces the cure.

This is true of me.

God's way of doing that work, god's instrument. Is his word. Not just a word about the people, but a word to the people. They plunder themselves of their ornaments. Verse 6. Because god had said to, Not to put on their ornaments, verse 4. And i say the word plunder because you might be familiar with with that translation of the word when it was the egyptians losing.

Their decorations and their treasures. It's the same verb in verse 6. When he tells them to take off their, where did they get those ornaments? Slaves, don't have. Ornaments of silver and gold and beautiful clothes. Well, they had gotten them from the egyptians The lord had stored up the treasure of the world in egypt and then he had given his people to plunder them as as they went out.

In fact, the lord had used that language of what israel would do to egypt, even at the bush, when he was telling Moses what he was sending him to do. And then when they came out, they had done that and now The lord says, take off your ornaments. Don't.

Don't rejoice. To have everything, but me Be willing to have nothing but me. And they actually do that. They plunder themselves of the treasure of egypt. Because they are as worthy of the judgment of god as egypt was That's what happened. When you all who it was in the midst of egypt, and he kept saying, they shall know that i am yahweh, they shall know that i am yall way.

And we here god's word and when his spirit blesses to us a word of rebuke, word of conviction, we realize that that we are no better. In ourselves or from ourselves, then anyone upon whom the wrath of god is port. And his word. Convinces, even this people. That that is true about them.

We've seen. How the lord used similar words? To provoke moses to intercession. You remember verse 10 of the last chapter, let me alone that my wrath may burn hot against them. And i may consume them and i will make of you a great nation. And god provokes moses to intercession.

Even as he implies that if Moses doesn't let him alone. If Moses prays for them, if Moses ministers on the lord's behalf to them and in their behalf before the lord that the lord will turn from his wrath, That, which is already displayed in the Passover sacrifice and other sacrifices, but especially the lamb who was slain and whose blood covered them and went between them and the angel of death, the consuming wrath of god, And god says, you know, if my angels in the midst of you You, i'm going to consume you, he'll go before you and consume them.

But just as god had provoked, Moses to repentance and intercession here. God, provokes them. Because he has said, Take off your ornaments that i may know what to do with you. And when we repent before god, when we realized how sinful, we are, how offensive to his holiness, how if we were in his presence forever in the condition that we are now in the reason you, and i cannot go to glory.

This way, is because he was consumers in his glory, if we were still like this, The one who gives the broken heartedness to see that and to grieve to offend god that way. The one who gives that to us is the one who also gives the atonement of christ for us on the cross and the holiness of christ upon us.

So that we may be fit for the heaven that jesus has earned for us. And he uses his word to do it. Not only to convince us of things. Yes, certainly of that. But also his word has the power in, it doesn't it to produce the brokenheartedness. You say, lord, i am not Sorry for my sin.

I'm not undone by my wickedness, like i should be like, like i have by your grace in the past and i know that i ought to be But your word gives the brokenness. Oh lord, give it to me. Give me the repentance. Give me the faith. You see, even Even in the creation, he made display that has word has within it.

The power to affect what it commands. When we see some of that here, For. He says, Take off your ornaments that i may know what to do with you. And his word produces in them, the brokenness. Of heart. The contrition of spirit. To which he responds. So gods, we see god's powerful work, we see god's way of doing that.

Work by his effective word, producing the change in their hearts. What all dear congregation? Don't we see a warning?

Because maybe the lord has worked like this in your life in the past. Oh, i i hope if you have never experienced that kind of being undone before him, but realizing that he has a toned for you and that even though his wrath would consume you, as you are has wrath itself has been consumed upon christ.

I hope you've had those those moments and which has word has come and produced that response in your heart. But, you know it's possible, isn't it? To have had one of those moments and that moment just be a memory. For it to be hours and days and weeks. And months.

And years. And for some decades. Since you interacted with god, in that way.

And that's dreadful. Because we do remember, don't we? That it was those who had These amazing spiritual benefits. That we've seen here. Who fell in the, in the wilderness? Of whom the lord says in psalm 95. They will not enter. My rest. And of whom hebrews 3 and 4 says, This possible for new testament, christians.

To come to. New testament worship led by jesus from heaven. And be in the church. And yet be among those who do not enter his rest. When we leave this world, not that you have real repentance and faith. But that you can have very moving moments and you can be among others who have repentance and faith.

All of those things in hebrews chapter 6, The heavenly gift and tasting of the work of the spirit. That word some in first corinthians 10. You can. Flip over there because we're going to finish. There, this this afternoon. That word sum is and encouragement. It's not, it's not all.

We're over brethren. I do not want you to be unaware. That all our fathers were under the cloud. All passed through the sea. All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea. All ate the same spiritual food and all Drank the same spiritual drink for they drank of that, spiritual rock.

That followed them and that rock was christ. Sorry, the word is most that is the blessed word that we're looking for in verse 5. But we can insert their can't, we From Exodus 33 verses 1 through 6 and even on into next week. Many. Of whom. Mourned over the bad news.

And stripped themselves of their ornaments and were unwilling to have everything else that was promised, except for god himself. But with most of them, God was not well pleased. For their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now, these things became Our. Examples. To the intent. That we should not lust after evil things.

As they also lost it. In verse 11, all these things happened to them as examples and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore, let him who thinks he stands. Take heed. Lest he fall? You hear what he's saying there? He's saying Don't rest upon previous experiences of god's word and god's work on you.

Yes the the lord may have been greatly merciful to you then but continue to look to him for new mercy, continue to look to him for current mercy. Current repentance current faith. There's a warning. That we would continually look to god himself who has done the work. That we would say, oh, lord.

If i cannot have you. I would not have. Anything else? And if i have you, I don't need. Anything else?

Oh, look to the lord now. Rejoice marvel. That the same instrument that he used by which he produced that change in Israel. There's what he is doing among us this afternoon. What he's been doing among us all day. Coming by his word. And addressing us. Look to him that his powerful word would produce in you.

Such a love for him, such a longing for him. That refuses to be satisfied without him. And cannot be dissatisfied. If you have him. Oh man, let's pray.

Lord. We thank you and praise you. For what you did for the church in the wilderness. In the passage that we have just heard preached. We pray. Oh, lord. That you would do, similarly. And even more greatly. In us and for us and your church at this time, Give us so god to whatever extent.

We would indulge ourselves. Or worship in the way of the world or according to the imaginations of men. Forgive us. And grant to us, instead. To long for you yourself. In the way that you give yourself to us. And even with all the repercussions, Of what that might mean.

If you were really to be present among us in your power, Help us. Oh god by your grace and jesus christ. By the spirit of your grace from jesus christ. Which we ask in the name. Of jesus christ. Amen.