

## A PLACE TO STAND

Exodus 33: 21-23

In **Acts 7:55** we have the record of the first deacon of the church who learned the meaning of taking up his cross. God afforded Stephen a rare insight into heaven itself as his enemies were taking his life. *“When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, (what is that glory?) And **Jesus standing** on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”*

What man could stand at the right hand of God? Only the God-man, the Son of Man. He who glorified his Father on the earth. He who finished the work God gave him to do, which he fulfilled completely. Stephen beheld the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He saw his faithfulness, his justice, his love and his grace toward a people of his choosing that Christ paid redemptions price in full and God glorified Christ with his own self with the glory Christ had with him before the world was, by raising him again and standing him in heaven. (John 17:5) **The vision** of Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father in glory is a comfort to God's people. To know that our advocate, our Surety, our Mediator, our Representative, to God's satisfaction has accomplished our complete redemption, and ever stands to plead his righteousness imputed on our behalf. This is the gift of grace only experienced by those who see by faith Christ standing for his people. For we know, if we know anything that what we need most is one who is willing, able and qualified, who has the Father's ear, to stand for his people.

We know that no matter the station of life for any sinner, whether he be great in power or in the squalor of poverty he is still a sinner in need of a salvation of God's making. The Bible is replete with those persons of renown who evidenced their state of nature in so many foolish acts.

Solomon, wisest man who ever lived executed some perfectly stupid acts in his life. David, a man after God's own heart displayed in himself, a wicked heart.

Moses, the subject of today's message was a man of like passions as we. Though great in the eyes of Christendom, this man revealed himself to be a sinner with all the infirmities common to all. And though, as was Moses, God's people were *“raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:”* in our sojourn here on earth we have a common place to stand.

I have titled this message A PLACE TO STAND based on **Exodus 33:20-23**, with the emphasis on V-21. *“And the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me and thou shall stand upon a rock.”* God has appointed for his people a place to stand. The Psalmist rejoiced in this place in **Psalm 1:1** *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”*

Such is the way of all by nature, even God's elect. It is from HIS net cast into the sea and filled with all kinds of fish, does the Lord reveal a place already standing and filled with a number which no man can number out of Adam's fallen race. The question today is, where do you stand: where do I stand: in the way of sinners or **Psalm 1:2** *“is your delight in the law of the Lord?”* Do you delight in the law which curses where sin is imputed and blesses the ungodly based on law and justice satisfied and righteousness imputed?

It was Peter Marshall, Chaplain of U. S. Senate in 1947, who said, “Unless we stand for something, we will fall for anything.” This statement requires some qualifications because we can stand for something and still fall. God says of us in 1 Corinthians 10:12 “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” “Take heed” means to pay attention to where and on what you stand. What a tragedy that many “think they stand” who will fall, and Jesus says of their fall in Mathew 7:32 “great will be the fall thereof.”

**So how can such sinners, ignorant of where they stand, who know not where to stand and who know not for what to stand, how can they access the place provided wherein they must and shall stand?** By an act of pure grace.

**Read Exodus 33:13** “Now therefore I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I might know thee, that I might find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.”

Moses; you mean you don’t know God or his way? You who led the Hebrew Nation in exodus from Egypt. You who participated in the Pass-over ceremony in Egypt. You who witnessed the power of God in deliverance from bondage? Yes, even Moses.

No man by nature knows God in his redemptive glory. Of his adversaries in John 8:19, Jesus made this observation; “Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.” Until taught, all are ignorant of God’s redemptive glory in Christ Jesus as a just God and Savior and consequently ignorant of his person and work.

Our level of knowledge of God is in proportion to our understanding of his way. You can’t separate Christ’s person from his works. It is his works that give validity to his claims as the Messiah of God.

Moses knew something of the glory of God. In their first meeting, God gave this command, “take off thy shoes from off thy feet for the ground on which you stand is holy.” **Exodus 33:11** “And the Lord spake to Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend.” Even with the miracles and the manifestations of the Pre-incarnate Christ, Moses was desirous of more. **Read Exodus 33:18** “and he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” I’ve seen the miracles, I’ve seen the power displays, and I’ve seen the elements obey thy voice. **BUT**, I want to see again and in greater clarity your redemptive glory as a just God and Savior. Isn’t that what every justified sinner wants? a clearer understanding of Christ’s person and work? In **Exodus 33:17** God said “I will do this thing that thou hast spoken; **FOR THOU HAST FOUND GRACE IN MY SIGHT AND I KNOW YOU BY NAME.**”

**Exodus 33:15** “And he said unto him, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.”

We have here in Moses the servant of the Lord a picture of God’s salvation in Christ.

Moses was charged with leading the people to the Promised Land. Ten of the twelve spies he sent to spy out the land gave a negative report.

They spoke of giants and walled cities. Moses counted the cost and saw the superior opposition he had to face and saw the impossibility of victory on his strength. He saw his only hope of victory in possessing Canaan was for God to go with him. He learned the lesson every justified sinner learns; No amount of planning, strategizing, practice, or engagement of prayer on the sinners’ part will gain him any part of God’s rest. **(King in Luke 14)** What we’ll see is that God had done all the gaining and maintaining the sinner needs. Left only is the revelation and

realization of what was already Moses' by promise. To attempt to enter into God's rest without God's presence and power is a dangerous, futile work. Moses' faith looked to God to "carry us up."

What does it take to "carry up a sinner" into God's rest? Simply this: Stand him in his place. Where are you standing? God's people shall stand by him. **How to know if I stand by God?** From where you stand, do you see Jesus standing at the father's right hand? If not, change places.

If we are standing with God we can know the world stands not with us. If we stand it is not in our strength but in his grace. **Read exodus 33:14.**

*(For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earthV-14)*

We define grace as all of salvation conditioned and accomplished on Christ Jesus, the Lord our Righteousness. Grace reveals this One, whom Stephen saw standing in heaven as he in whom God's elect stand eternally justified, who as our advocate stood for us in the court of divine justice and was declared guilty by imputation and sentenced to die the death we deserved. He suffered the wages of sin; eternal death by crucifixion. This truth is hidden from the elect of God and is revealed only in the true gospel. "God made him to be sin for us, he who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Though eternally chosen and justified, (our standing before God) it is all based on the satisfaction rendered by him to law and justice at the cross.

Though fallen in Adam and sinners by nature, our state does not change our standing in Christ. Those names written in the Lamb's Book of Life can never be unwritten or expanded. God's people are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, given us in Christ Jesus our Lord before the world began." From the moment he was appointed our Surety the burden of our sin was his to bear. Christ entered into covenant with the Father before the Elect were even created, therefore, though guilty and deserving of God's wrath, they escaped that wrath by way of Christ's satisfaction to God's law and justice against them.

His success at the cross affords sinners a "Place to stand." **Read Exodus 33:21** "And the Lord said, behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passes by, that I will put thee in the Clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by."

So, let's look at the life of this man and see how God blessed and used him to glorify and exalt our Savior in the standing God gave him.

Moses, benefactor of the favor of Pharaoh's daughter, grew to manhood in the house of Pharaoh. At forty years of age he had to flee from Egypt for killing an Egyptian. For forty years in Midian he tended his father in law Jethro's flocks. At eighty years of age, from the burning bush God called and commissioned Moses to be the deliverer of Israel from Egyptian bondage. At one hundred twenty years of age, God buried him in a valley in the land of Moab. During the forty years in the exodus experience God wrought by Moses many blessings and miracles upon the Hebrew nation. As Mediator of the Mosaic Covenant he received the law from God, constructed the tabernacle, instructed Israel and is thought to be the author of the Pentateuch. He was himself a type of the Anti-type, Christ.

And yet with all these qualifications and blessings, he was a sinner in need of the grace of God. He needed a place to stand and God provided him one.

### **A place to stand:**

- 1. Set by God the Father**
- 2. Secured by God the Son**
- 3. Sealed by the Holy Spirit of God**

**1 It is a place set by God the Father.** *“There is a place (already, itø always existed) by me.”* This place is where God is. Where is God? Is he not omnipresent? Can God be boxed into a particular place? To those he sends to preach the gospel, he sayø *“lo I am with you always, even unto the ends of the earth.”* To those who would minister in the church to teach, encourage, admonish and correct, God sayø *“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, (what is his name? The Lord our Righteousness) there am I Am in the midst.”* God instructed Moses to build the tabernacle to precise measures because it represented in types the Person and work of Christ in the salvation of Godø elect. It was in the tabernacle God met with and communed with Israel. The Mercy Seat in the tabernacle was where his Shekinah glory resided. There is only one place where sinners can meet with God. **It is where God’s shekinah glory** is manifested. That is where the preaching of the true gospel wherein Christø righteousness imputed and received by faith is faithfully and singularly preached.

There are not many places assigned to stand. **Read Mark 13:19-23** *“For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. 20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. 21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: 22 For false Christ’s and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. 23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.”*

We have this promise from God. *I will never leave you nor forsake you. Where I am there may you be also.* **Read Exodus 33:12-14** *“12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. 13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, (to know the way is to know thee.) that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. 14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.*

Where do you stand? Is it by God? Is it there alone the Just God and Savior is worshipped? Do you stand in his rest? (Righteousness)

**2. it’s a place set by God the Father.** *“There is a place by me.”* This place is not only with me, it is by me. I have provided the only place to stand. **John 10:9** *“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”* It was Christ himself who said, *“no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”* This place by God is a secure place.øThis place øby Godø is of his design and doing. Where is this set place today? Itø by me, (God) Where is God? He is where his people are. He is where the gospel of Godø free and sovereign grace is preached He is not where a false gospel is preached *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

**Read Exodus 33:14** “*And he said, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.*” Religious sinners seek rest. We fashion our lives around those things we think will please God. Trouble is everything we think and do by nature to please God is an abomination to him. Read **Exodus 32:22** “*Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.*” “*How can you who are accustomed to doing evil, do good?*” We by nature will always seek a place to stand other than by God.

There is no more secure place than to be *ō*by God, *ö* in Christ. How can I tell if I *ām* in this set place?

**2. it’s a place secured by God the Son. Exodus 33:21** *ō*And the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock.”

This place in which you stand is upon a rock, this rock which once was to you a stone of stumbling and rock of offense. This rock which the builders rejected, the same has become the chief cornerstone of God’s church. It is this rock Christ spoke of in Mathew 16:18 “*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” (Not on Peter’s confession but on Peter’s Christ.)

Here in **Exodus 33:21** God’s promise to Moses is sure because it’s made by him who cannot lie. “*Thou shalt stand upon a Rock*” is a promise without conditions. In fact, your standing has always been on this Rock. Though our state is ever changing, our standing in Christ is fixed and eternal. There never was a time God’s elect were non elect. We have always been accepted in the beloved. That’s why Christ suffered, bled and died. Our eternal, unchangeable standing of justification in Christ necessitated Christ’s coming and satisfying the penalty and precept of the law against his people and establish for them a righteousness which the father freely imputed to every sinner for whom Christ died. It is on this basis that God declared Moses just and righteous in his sight.

**Read Exodus 33:17** “*And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight and I know thee by name.*”

This place by God is secure because Christ fully met and satisfied every condition and removed every obstacle to its security. **Read Hebrews 9:12** “*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*”

Our standing is secure because the conditions for that security are not ours to meet. They are already met by him who is our Rock. *ō*My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’s blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus name. On Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand. *ö*

Paul wrote in 1Corinthians 6:20 *ō*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. A place to stand is: Set by God the Father, secured by God the Son and:

**3. Sealed by God the Holy Spirit. Exodus 33:19-23**

How does God seal his people?

*“19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*

*20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. How does God seal his people? First, he reveal his goodness? What is his goodness? “Mark 10:18 “And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God.”* God’s essential goodness is Christ. He is the channel through which all God’s people are blessed. How does he make all his goodness to pass before his people? *“I will proclaim the name of the Lord. I will preach Christ crucified, raised and exalted to the Father’s right hand in glory, ending the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*

Then he says, *“I will **be** gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will **show** mercy on whom I will show mercy.* Being gracious is an attribute of The Gracious One. Showing mercy is premeditated love in action.

*“I will be gracious.”* Salvation is not of gratuity but grace. God is not influenced by the sinner’s prayers or performances but the sovereign will of God alone. John 15:16 *“You did not choose me but I chose you.”*

*“I will show mercy.”* Mercy is God’s grace dispensed. Salvation is not of merit but mercy. God is not impressed with our works. **Read Tit 3:5** *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”*

God shuts his people up to the righteousness of God imputed revealed in regeneration and conversion. He reveals how in **Psalm 85:10.** *“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”* God can and does declare ungodly sinners eternally just and holy based on the imputed righteousness of Christ alone, even Moses before the cross.

**Ephesians 1:3-4** *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

*4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”*

**Ephesians 1:12-13** *“That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”*

That’s God’s way with Moses and all of like faith as Moses. Those who stand by God and with God are put into the cleft of the Rock. They are *“in Christ”* by election, calling and faith. **Read Exodus 33:21-23** by *“And the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me, and you shall stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passes by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my Hand while I pass by. And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall thou not see.”*

What we see are things veiled, and rightly so. To behold the fullness of God’s redemptive glory, as Moses requested would mean death for there shall no man see me and live. **Read 2**

**Corinthians 5:6-8** *“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight :) 8 we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”*

I believe his meaning here is this: In this life we walk by faith, not sight. To see the face of God would be death because we live by faith and walk by faith and not sight. To view the face of God would be to walk by sight.

Therefore God puts his sheep in the cleft of the Rock; In the place of splitting in the wounded Savior and covers us with his hand, *“until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory.”* Sealed by the Holy Spirit of God we are kept by the hand of God.

In John 12:21, Certain Greeks came from Bethsaida with this request to Phillip; *“Sir we would see Jesus.”* Would you see Jesus? From where you stand can you see Jesus? Do you by faith see Jesus standing at the right hand of God? **STAND THERE BY HIM.** It's the only safe place to stand.

Ephesians 6:14-18. *“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”* 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. He stood alone that I might stand in him.

by **Winston Pannell**