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Exodus 20 verse 18 through 26.

These are God's words Now. All the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet and the mountains smoking. And when the people saw it, they trembled and stood far off. Then they said to Moses You speak to us and we will hear. But let not God.

Speak to us. Speak with us. Lest we die and Moses said, to the people do not fear for God, has come to test you. And that his fear may be before you, so that you may not sin. So the people stood afar off but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was, Then you always said to Moses, thus, ye shall say to the children of Israel.

You have seen that I talked with you from heaven. You shall not make anything to be with me Gods of silver or gods of gold. You shall not make for yourselves and altar of earth. You shall make for me and you shall sacrifice on it, your burnt offerings and your peace, offerings, your sheep, and your oxen.

In every place where I record my name, I will come to you. And I will bless you. And if you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of human stone for. If you use your tool on it You have profaned nor shall you go up by steps to my altar.

That you're nakedness may not be exposed on it.

So, for the reading of God's inspired and inherent worked,

The Israelites had an option of what to respond to after the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. We see, even in our arrangement, in our English translation, they've split it up into two different sections, but they respond to one thing in verse 18. And then the Lord corrects them about what they ought to have primarily responded to They respond, first and foremost to that, which they have perceived with their senses, They could feel the shaking of the thundering.

We've had some of that here recently. I know that Tennessee is weird and you know we'll have a torrential downpour storm. You know, that makes you think of Noah's Arkham right here and up at the Patterson's of barely get a drop, although they were praying for it and we weren't but, but you hopefully have had that experience of thunder that shakes and lightning.

That is just brilliant. And you can even feel it. And the sound of the trumpet, which you remember had gotten louder and louder, and even the smell of the whole mountain smoking, And the people saw that primarily and their responding to that primarily in verses 18 through 21, But the Lord wants them to respond.

Primarily to what he said, You always said to Moses verse 22. Thus you shall say to the children of Israel. You have seen that. I have talked with you from heaven, And, of course, the talking had reassured them. Despite of all the greatness and glory, that God had displayed of himself hadn't.

He opened it up with. I am Yahweh. Your God who have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, that this great and glorious, and holy and dreadful. And the old wonderful sense of that term awful in, the old wonderful sense of that term terrible.

In the old wonderful sense of that term. And why don't we think those terms are wonderful anymore? Because we don't know that God has brought us near in. Redeeming love through Jesus Christ and that is the great ultimate proclamation of his work and so their response because they're responding to the wrong thing and we'll see that they're not wrong about themselves and their danger, but they're immediate responses.

We don't want to draw near Moses. You draw near will stay back. We don't want God to talk to us, even though his talking had been of grace His commandments given in the context of having saved his people for himself and giving them good laws by which they would be helped in loving him by which they would be helped and loving one another.

But they just wanted Moses. You go get the rules will stay back when you get them, we'll keep them. But God God had come He had saved him out of the land of Egypt so that they might worship Him so that they might draw near to him. This is the great presentation that he had made to Pharaoh.

Israel is my firstborn son. Let them go, but the going wasn't so much about leaving Egypt. It was so that the coming to Sinai the coming to God, that they might know the God who said that they might serve that they might worship the God who had saved them.

And we see that combination in verse 20 from which we get, our first two points. Moses said to the people do not fear for God has come to test you that His fear may be before you. Which is it? Moses Is it. Don't fear or do fear. It's don't have what we call that servile fear that slavish fear of someone who thinks that God is against him.

But do have that fear that reverence that honoring, that worshipping. That wonder at who God is, You see? It's the person who lacks the second fear that has the first one. It's unfortunately, who lacks the honoring of God, that is afraid that God is about to destroy them. And so it is do not fear first of all and that's where we get the draw near to God But it's draw near to God in the right way.

Do not fear for God has come to test. You that His fear may be before you as a first. We learn here that we are to draw near to God in reverence but not only that as fear may be before you, but so that you may not sin. So that we may draw near to God and repentance as people who have learned by coming near to God, to hate our sin, and that we would live lives of repentance because we've not just been redeemed unto God generally, but we've been redeemed to come near to him to worship Him and be like, those, those priests who had all the extra rules to be careful.

Not to touch or not to go in a certain places and so forth because they were going to come near. So draw near to God and reverence draw near to God and repentance. And then, in the last part, when God is calling their attention to the fact that he is the one who communicates himself to us and draws us near to himself.

And he's the one who comes to us and blesses us. He has given this worship to make his name to be remembered. And so, the New King James translates, where I record my name, and you'll notice the footnote is good. It's weird whenever they give you these good footnotes or it says, literally in the footnote and you say, well why didn't you just put that in the translation there?

He says, in verse 24 in every place where I caused my name to be remembered, that's what God is doing. And worship reminding us of his name, presenting himself to us again to respond to him. So draw near to God and remembrance. So in the first place, draw near to God in, Reverence we've already noted that it says that his fear may be in you and they say, Let not let God not speak to us.

Well, they were actually right to some extent. And I notice I've put the cross-reference further down on, on the note page here. But in Deuteronomy chapter 5, after they say, in verse 27, you go near and hear all that y'all. We are, God may say, and tell us all that Yahwe are, God, says to you.

And we will hear and do it in Deuteronomy, 5's account, which fills in a little bit more of the detail here. It says then Yahweh heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me. And Yahweh said to me, I've heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you.

They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh, that they had such a heartened them that they would fear me and always keep all my commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever. And so, rather than seeking, from God, a heart that fears him and hate sin, They just sought, as they thought it were, as they thought They just sought safety.

There is no safety is there because even if we don't draw near to him now, we will appear before him later. Won't we is not every worship time in your private worship and your family worship and especially in the Lord's day assemblies as it not a rehearsal for drawing near to the glorious and holy God.

Every time we worship, we come through the righteousness of Jesus. We come through the blood of Jesus. We ought to come in amazement at the glory of who God is and that such sinful creatures, as we are, might be brought near such a holy God and safety. It ought to produce and us reverence and God was right about there, being right?

Of course, God is right. We're shocked that he said they were right, But they were right about them being liking the fear of God. And so we're not surprised about that. But isn't that what happened in the very first worship service at the Tabernacle? As soon as I finished worship, what happens?

Two of Aaron's, four sons. You know, if you're doing the math, 40% of the priesthood got neron, 40% of the priesthood go and they grab strange fire and they come and they offer it. And they're incinerated that the first worship service of Israel at the Tabernacle 40% of those who were appointed to draw near were burned up by fire fraud.

That came out from God from the mercy seat where God had made his glory to descent. And what did God say to Aaron? Or what did Moses say? God had said by those who draw near to me. I must be feared Now. Is God still a consuming fire? Yes, He cannot change.

Do we know him to be that more or less after the coming of Christ? It's important question because there are a lot of people who are like, oh wow. That Old Testament. God, you already know they're wrong, right? Because God can't change. Even our two-year-olds learn to say that.

God, can't change. There's all that Old Testament. God, he was scary But the New Testament God, he's nice and approachable. Is he though? Does it not amplify? Does it not intensify the greatness of the glory and the holiness and the demands of coming near to God to find out that it had to be God?

The Son who atoned for our sin that. So great is our offense against the glory of God, that the glorious God himself had to die in order to atone for our sin and consecrate by his blood. Our coming near, we ought to have greater reverence. That's all the. We just did 12 chapters of the book of Hebrews and 30 seconds, right?

The glorious, God himself, became a man to save us and consecrated by his blood, a new worship in which we draw near. And how does chapter 12 conclude? Or almost at the end. Maybe it's the end. Let us have grace. Therefore that we may worship Him acceptably with reverence and all because our God is a consuming fire.

You see, it actually is a great error in the knowledge of God and the knowledge of Christ and the knowledge of the gospel. When worship is casual and flip it and superficial, we must come near to God in reverence and that's all the more true in the New Covenant, Then draw near to God and repentance coming through faith.

In Christ. Alone means coming in opposition to all our sin and they chose the wrong one. They they were right to be afraid to come near to God as sinners. But they should have been more afraid of being sinners, Then of coming near to God and more rejoicing over God, having a toned for their sin.

But in the last place draw near to God in remembrance, He refers to worshipping him. Wherever it is that he gathers us to worship Him as a place where he causes his name to be remembered. So it's him. It's he, It is he who is causing his name to be remembered, That's why he chooses how to be worshiped.

He said, you have seen that. I've talked with you from heaven verse 22. You shall not make anything to be with me, Gods of silver Gods of gold. You shall not make for yourselves and so forth. Now, if we were to go back to Deuteronomy and we won't take the time, these, these evening sermons are much briefer, We could look at chapter 4 and see how in the lead up to the restatement of the law.

This was the thing he zeroed in on. He said, when you came near to the mountain you saw no form. You only heard a voice. This God saying, I didn't draw a picture of myself or make a hologram of myself or or appear in a particular shape. It wasn't like the even the burning bush or the oftenes, the fire on the mountain was not God.

So that I chose to communicate myself to you through my word, through my voice. I choose how to be worshiped, and it actually doesn't stop there in our passage here, because he's the one who chooses to be worship through sacrifice as well. Why? Well, because Christ is the word and we find out that the word becomes flesh and even the that are resurrected and throned.

Lord, Jesus is the one who addresses us and sings through us and, and mediates, our prayers. And that he is the one who's speaking throughout the whole thing, but and he is the one who sacrifice through whose sacrifice we come. So God is the one who chose to be a God, who is worshiped?

Very verbally. And God is the one who chose to be worshiped by sacrifice, But he cautions them. And altar of earth. You shall make for me and you shall sacrifice on at your peace, your burnt offerings, and your peace, offerings, your sheep and your auxin in every place where I cause my name to be remembered.

I will come to you and I will bless you. Well, who made the dirt, right? The, the classic question. I don't know if it's ever been put that way in your home. But you know, we just use evolution as a bad word. Now, we've so disproved it, and hate it, and all the godlessness of it, and denying the image of God.

And man, and the first Adam, which robs us of a last atom, and all of that stuff. But what we used to say, okay? You say we came from dirt who made the dirt? That's the point here. At least about the altar. God made that dirt God gave the offering God is the one.

Who's going to give the sacrifice? That's actually going to take our sin away so that we can come near Him. In fact, God made stone too. So here's like, well, can we make altars out of stone? He says, yes, you can. But don't you use your tool on them?

And so, you have God saying, I my and so forth in verse 24 and then he turns around. He says, if you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of human stone, that's carved. Stone for. If you use your tool on it you have profaned it.

What do we tend to do with the worship of God? Oh, we love God. So much. We are just going to try to make it prettier. Make it more beautiful, make it more worshipful, those stones are fine. But if we carve a little bit here and carve a little bit there, we can make it more orderly and symmetrical and and attractive.

That's just no. Creativity in worship. Does not improve it. It profends it. We need to be told bluntly because we think we mean so well who can't make it better and we certainly shouldn't try to make it bigger. His first of all, you can never make your worship as big as God, right.

Those sacrifices on that altar. They looked forward to Jesus, He is God. That's one of the glorious truths of the gospel he says nor shall you go up by steps to my altar? What's he describing there? So describing the make the altar so big and alter-worthy of God that you you would have to take steps to get up there just so you can put the sacrifice there.

Well you know what? There were false gods. There were idols in the ancient Near Eastern religions who had alters like that. You know what they did on them things that you have to use big Bible words to talk about in mixed company. They fornicated on them. They committed adultery things that some of your children, shouldn't even know what that is.

Except that it's a sin against God and it's a sin against marriage and you can even hear it here. Can't you that? You're nakedness may not be exposed on it because trying to make the worship bigger or grander ends up, not with greater expressions by God of who he is.

But more of what we are coming out of us, this isn't just done with you know giant alters and temple. Prostitution This is done by anything in which we try to make more of an expression of ourselves instead of seeing God's expression of who He is and trusting in the spirit to use His Word as He's produced in us, that new nature of Christ.

We don't want to express ourselves at least not who we were an Adam. We want to express who we are in Christ. We want the new nature to call upon God's name, We want to have Psalm emotion, You don't have emotion less expression, less worship, But we certainly don't come to express ourselves and when we do, we don't make worship greater.

We make it smaller and we can even make it wicked. There's a lot of worship out there isn't there? That is the indulgence of fleshly desiring desire for a particular feeling because we think that makes it great, You know what God sees in worshiped like that the exposing of our

nakedness, the expression of disordered desires and appetites that aren't satisfied with his infinite.

Glory in himself, in his son, in his sacrifice, in his word and think that somehow expressing more of what's in us is going to make it bigger.

So Does God want us to shrink back and be afraid and never worship again? That's utter nonsense. Isn't it? But he does want us to draw near to him in, reverence, to have grace to worship him in reverence and all to draw near to him in repentance, not to be afraid to come, but to be afraid to sin and turning from that sin to come, You'll never be ready to worship God.

If you're talking about sinless enough but whatever the sin is, don't let it keep you from God. Let God keep you from the sin and to draw near to him, in remembrance rejoicing that he makes his name to be remembered by his way of worshiping that comes from through His Son and His blood, and that he has given us to express even things that he produces in us from himself.

Amen. Let's pray how we thank you. O. God forgiving us to come near you through. Jesus Christ. How great is your holiness? And therefore how marvelous is this good news that you have brought us near to you through Jesus, the Son who has atoned for us and does our righteousness and is our anchor in the veil and does the one to whom you're conforming us.

And from whom you are producing in us, that holiness that you will have perfected. So that we may see you face to face in his own face, So we praise you for Jesus. We confess that he is worthy of our coming to you only in the way that you have commanded so that we may come only through him.

And we ask for your spirits help that you would give us that grace that when we come we would come in reverence and awe for you the Blessed God or consuming fire. And you don't diminish who you are to bring us near but you redeem us in Christ and exalt him in his name.

We pray it. Amen.