

Series: Exodus

Title: Repentance, Faith, Communion

Text: Ex 33: 1-17

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Proposition: As Moses goes between the LORD and the children of Israel we see how Christ goes between his people and God our Father to work repentance, faith and communion.

Through Christ our Mediator, God our Father shows us our sin in the face of God's faithfulness. By this, Christ, in Spirit, works repentance in us. As he turns us from our sin he also strengthens our faith toward God. As Mediator, Christ keeps us in favor with God. He restores communion with God and keeps God's presence with us.

Divisions: 1) Christ grants repentance 2) Christ strengthens faith 3) Christ restores communion

CHRIST GRANTS REPENTANCE

Exodus 33 1: And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto THY SEED will I give it: 2: And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: 3: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way. 4: And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. 5: For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.

In our text, in one regard, God speaks of the temporal promise God made to the patriarchs concerning their natural children. Even though the natural children of Israel sinned against God, broke the covenant of works, and broke all the law with the golden calf, still, God fulfilled his temporal promise for the father's sakes. God delivered the natural seed—natural children—into the land of Canaan as he promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Brethren, that typifies God's spiritual promises. God is faithful to fulfill all his everlasting covenant promises of grace to you and I who are his elect. God's elect are the spiritual seed of the fathers. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were God's elect—true children of God. But not all the children of Israel were the spiritual children of God. Most were the natural seed of Abraham. Yet if God fulfilled that temporal covenant, to the temporal seed for the father's sake, even though they sinned against him and broke his covenant, then we, as the chosen children of God made righteous in Christ, can be sure God shall fulfill every spiritual promise of grace toward us, not only for the father's sakes, but for the sake of Christ.

Notice, God's promise to Abraham, "*unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto THY SEED will I give it.*" Christ is the Seed of Abraham to whom all God's promises were made. It is by Christ the seed that they are all fulfilled. Christ has fulfilled the everlasting covenant of grace in his precious blood on behalf of God's elect. So for his sake, God our Father promises to give his elect all spiritual blessings, even as God promised Abraham, our father. God is faithful!

Galatians 3: 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: 14: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. 15: Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. 16: Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And TO THY SEED, WHICH IS CHRIST. 17: And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18: For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise. 19: Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till THE SEED should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Moses going between the LORD and the children of Israel with the temporal promises was a type of Christ the Mediator giving us new covenant promises. But in the next verse he shows us that Moses was not the mediator. He was only a type. Moses could only represent man since he was only a man. Christ is the GodMan who can represent both parties, God and Man.

Galatians 3: 20: Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. 21: Is the [old covenant] law then against the [new covenant] promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22: But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise BY FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST might be given to them that believe.

The promise of God is given freely to us who do nothing but believe on Christ, trusting that by Christ's own faithfulness, he fulfilled all the conditions for us.

Galatians 3: 23 But before FAITH came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the FAITH which should afterwards be revealed. 24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us UNTO CHRIST, that we might be justified by FAITH. 25: But after that FAITH is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26: For ye are all the children of God by faith in CHRIST JESUS. 27: For as many of you as have been baptized [unto] CHRIST have put on CHRIST. 28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in CHRIST JESUS. 29: And if ye be CHRIST'S, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

But how does God's faithfulness grant us repentance? A true knowledge of the exceeding sinfulness of sin comes by beholding our sin in the face of God's faithfulness toward us. When God grants repentance he makes us hate our sin because we see it is against God who has been such a good and faithful Father to us.

Another thing involved in repentance is a sense of losing God's presence. Notice, as God declared that he would deliver them, God also declared that his presence would not go with them, lest he consume them in the way—"*And I will send an angel before thee; ...for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.*" The angel was not Christ. It was a created angel. God declared that he was removing his presence from their midst due to their sin.

God is faithful through Christ to grant repentance. He reveals our sin through Christ through the preaching of his word. Christ makes us hear the law like they heard Moses. He declares into our hearts in spirit that we are the stiff necked one. He makes it personal to us individually. It is what we are in our sinful nature. Christ makes us know our sins through the preaching of the word. If I hear the gospel preached and I am thinking of someone else being the guilty sinner then I am not hearing the gospel in spirit. When the Spirit makes us truly hear the gospel, he makes us personally see only ourselves as the guilty sinner.

Still, God said he would fulfill his promise for their father's sakes. God would send an angel before them. He would drive out the enemy. But God said he would withdraw his presence from their midst, lest he consume them in the way. For Christ's sake—because he is our Righteousness and our Life—God will never leave us nor forsake us. But when God makes us perceive that he is drawing his presence from us, it breaks our hearts. Listen to the bitterness mixed with the relief in this admonition

Ephesians 4: 30: And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

We have the Holy Spirit and are sealed and shall never fall away because the Holy Spirit shall preserve us unto the day of the redemption of our bodies when Christ returns. But having the Holy Spirit, we perceive when he is grieved and makes us feel he has withdrawn.

So through Christ, through the gospel, through the Spirit—beholding our sin in the face of God's faithfulness, perceiving his presence being withdrawn—God creates true godly sorrow unto repentance—*"when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned."* The gospel is good tidings of good. But God also makes it afflicting news. He makes it news of God's displeasure by which God mortifies our old man—*"they mourned."* God makes his child know we have sinned against our faithful God. He makes us know in the inward man that we have displeased God who has been good to us. That is why it is afflicting to us. By it, God creates godly sorrow.

True godly sorrow is not simply because God exposed our sin. Godly sorrow comes from knowing we have displeased our faithful heavenly Father who is so good to us. When you genuinely love someone you want to please them; you mourn when they withdraw their presence. So as the good news renews our inward man, the gospel also mortifies our old man of sin. We sorrow because we desire God's presence more than anything else.

True godly sorrow works repentance—*"no man did put on him his ornaments...And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb."* This is a picture of putting off our old man of sin. The gold ornaments are what they made the idol from. It is called their sin in another passage. No man put on him his ornaments while others stripped themselves of their ornaments. Christ's church is his body. Each sanctified child is a member of that body. When the Spirit of God grants true repentance in one member, he works diligence in each member of his body. In the one who sinned, he makes us put off the old man with his sin. In another, Christ makes us diligent not to put on the old man with his sin. Not that any believer is ever without the old man of sin. But Christ works in each member to make us fearful of walking in sin. Only the power of the Spirit of God can make us mortify the deeds of the flesh. But he does indeed change our mind to hate all our old nature of sin. He makes us stop whatever sinful act we may be guilty of at any given time. At the same time, the Spirit of God works in our brethren, warning and teaching each member to be more diligent.

What is the fruit of repentance? The apostle Paul declared seven fruits of repentance produced by the Holy Spirit,

2 Corinthians 7: 10: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11: For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what CAREFULNESS [diligence] it wrought in you, yea, *what* CLEARING OF YOURSELVES, [apology] yea, *what* INDIGNATION [righteous anger against our old nature of sin], yea, *what* FEAR [reverence for Christ], yea, *what* VEHEMENT DESIRE [for Christ's presence and communion with God], yea, *what* ZEAL [jealousy for Christ's honor], yea, *what* REVENGE [on our own flesh]! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

But God will not chasten his child forever. He successfully corrects his child. Then in Paul's heart toward the one corrected, we see God's heart toward his child when he has brought us to repentance. Paul said,

2 Corinthians 2: 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8: Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.

CHRIST STRENGTHENS FAITH

Exodus 33: 7: And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, *that* every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which *was* without the camp. 8: And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose up, and stood every man *at* his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle. 9: And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the LORD* talked with Moses. 10: And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand *at* the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped every man *in* his tent door.

When God grants repentance he gives a change of mind. He makes us put off the old man. The Spirit mortifies the deeds of the flesh. At the same time, Christ strengthens our faith. He makes us put on the new man. Christ makes us go out of the camp unto Christ.

Hebrews 13: 12: Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13: Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14: For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15: By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

He makes us go out of the camp of our own sinful flesh, turning from our sins. The Spirit of God makes us go out of the camp of our own lukewarmness, making us zealous for Christ and his glory. He makes us go out of the camp of our own self-righteousness, that we might flee to Christ in submission and humility at his feet. In other words, Christ separates us unto himself.

Faith with God is through Christ the Son of God. It is submission to Christ and worship of Christ who mediates between us and God. We see a type in the people's respect for Moses—

"And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle." This was respect unto Moses. All eyes were on Moses. So Christ brings us to give Christ all-reverence; he turns the eye of faith to Christ. Like as this was in their tent, so God does this in our hearts.

With this reverence, the Spirit gives us submission and worship of Christ—*"And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped every man in his tent door."* The pillar talking to Moses who stood between the people is a type of Christ mediating between his people and God our Father. When they beheld the LORD they bowed in worship at their tent door. Christ does this for us in our hearts in spirit. He makes us go to Christ without the camp. He makes us reverence Christ. He makes us submit in worship through faith in Christ.

COMMUNION

Exodus 33: 11: And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. 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, 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.

Christ restores to us communion with God. God the Father speaks with Christ *"face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend."* And Christ speaks into our hearts, calling you and I who are his disciples, "friends." Christ said, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (Joh 15:15).

Our communion with holy God is in Christ alone. He alone is our Righteousness and Holiness with God. Christ is our Propitiation, our seat where we find mercy with God despite our sins. Christ is the Advocate of his redeemed people, our Righteousness, our acceptance with the Father for whose sake God forgives his penitent child all our sins.

Communion is ours because Christ mediates in our hearts as well as before the Father continually. He makes us both meet in him. Notice, when Moses went back to the children of Israel, Joshua stayed in the Lord's presence—*"And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle."* Joshua is the same name as Jesus; it means "the one by whom we shall be delivered." Moses went to the people, Joshua stayed with God. In both we see Christ. When Christ comes into our hearts to minister to us, he is yet in the bosom of the Father. As the Mediator, Christ is in us while, at the same time, he is always with the Father. Therefore, Christ is "the one by whom we shall be delivered."

Moses said, *"thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight"*—in Christ God knows each of us who he bought with his precious blood and he knows

us by name. In Christ we find grace in God's sight. Christ draws us to ask the same thing in prayer as Moses asked, "Lord show me thy way; make me know thee; remember my brethren who are your elect, your holy nation; your peculiar people set apart by your grace." Christ intercedes presenting our petitions perfect before the Father.

By Christ's intercession God continues to give us his presence. God our Father is in Christ his Son and Christ is in us and we in him. Thereby God's presence goes with us. In Christ he freely gives us rest. And it is God's presence that makes us know we have found grace in his sight—"he said unto him, *If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. 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?*"

Christ in you is the hope of glory. It is Christ in us in Spirit that makes us know that "of God is Christ made unto us Wisdom." By the Spirit of Christ dwelling in our hearts, every sanctified believer has "the mind of Christ." It means we look to Christ for all! Christ in us in Spirit makes us know we have found grace in God's sight. Only in Christ is God's free grace toward his people. Like as Moses found grace in the LORD's sight and thus did the children of Israel, so God's elect are recipients of God's grace for Christ's sake.

By God's presence with us in Christ we are sanctified—"so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." God alone sanctifies. God the Father sanctified us in Christ when he chose us in Christ before making the world. Christ perfected those God had sanctified in him by his one offering on the cross. When the Holy Spirit of God enters he gives us life separating us from death. When he creates a new man within us in true holiness then we are meet (fit) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. When he enters in Spirit he sets us apart for his holy use. God hedges us about, keeping us separated from all the people upon the face of this earth. Not everyone is given this sanctifying grace, only his people. "I and thy people", Christ says, "are separated from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

Christ grants us repentance. He strengthens our faith in him. Christ intercedes with the Father on our behalf restoring communion to us. Therefore, for Christ's sake, the LORD's presence continues with us—"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."

Amen!