

Series: Exodus

Title: Separated by Christ's Presence

Text: Ex 33: 12-17

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Subject: Separated by Christ's Presence

Proposition: Christ is our Sanctifier by his presence in his child and in his church—he is our Sanctification—being set apart unto him in the heart he has purified by faith is sanctification.

Exodus 33: 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. 15: And he said unto him, If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence. 16: 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 earth. 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.

Our Lord said he would give Moses and the children of Israel the promised land—the blessings. But the Lord's presence would not go with them. It was a test. If satisfied, it would prove they only loved the blessings, not Christ himself. But if they came pleading for His presence, it would show a true heart for God himself.

Would we be satisfied with every blessing God can give if we did not have Christ's presence? What is the value of the blessings? Think about it, was Canaan really a land flowing with milk and honey without God's presence? It was a wasteland that eats up the inhabitants. It was only God's presence that made it a land of milk and honey.

What are the blessings of God's blessings except Christ be in you? Even knowing they would have a created angel sent from God to go with them was not enough—Moses cried out for God's presence. True sanctification—is separation from every false way—by Christ's presence in our hearts and in our midst.

GOD'S WAY

Exodus 33 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

Christ's presence is how sinners are separated from the broad way into God's Way. Before Christ's presence enters our heart, we have no desire for his presence—only a desire for the broad way that leads to destruction.

Proverbs 14:12: There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Do you remember what Adam and Eve did after Adam disobeyed and died spiritually? They hid from God's presence. This is the broad way that all spiritually dead sinners love.

Genesis 3:8: And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

But what a difference God's presence makes. Christ's presence made Moses beg to know God's way—*"shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; and consider this is thy people"* Christ is God's Way.

John 17:3: And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Christ is God's Way of freely justifying his people from our sins from which the law of Moses never could. Christ is God's way of redeeming us from the curse of the law—from the bondage of a law we could never keep; He kept it for us and delivered us from it. Christ is God's Way of sanctifying us and separating us from this world unto him that we might know God. Christ is God's way of making us know we are God's people.

Do you know God's Way? Has his presence sanctified you in heart to know Christ and look to him alone?

REST

Exodus 33: 14: And he said, my presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest

God's presence gives rest because Christ separates us by leading us all our days.

Exodus 13:21: And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:
22: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

What rest! Having Christ lead us by night; in the darkest seasons Christ is our Light. What rest! Having Christ lead us by day; when the sun is bearing down Christ is the Cloud that covers as he leads. True sanctification is Christ's presence keeping us resting by him leading us all the way.

Christ's presence is rest because Christ separates us and protects us from all our enemies.

Joshua 1:5: There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Christ bore the sins of his people and was forsaken of God in our room and stead. So he promises he will never leave us nor forsake us. Instead, Christ carries us the whole way.

Isaiah 63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Christ's presence is rest because he separates us from lies uniting our hearts with his so that we fear his name and glorify him. Listen to this cause and effect.

Psalm 86:11: Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. 12: I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

There is only one way a spiritually dead sinner is separated from the broad way of destruction, only one way we are given rest and kept following Christ, only one way we are made to give God all the glory. It is by the presence of our Sanctifier in our hearts in Spirit. *Moses said, "If Your Presence does not go with us, carry us not up hence."*

SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD

Exodus 33: 16: 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 earth.

Christ's presence separates his people from this world.

One, Christ separates us from this world's mere form of religion and gives us true worship. Moses pitched that tent but it was only a tent until the presence of the LORD entered into it. It is not our gathering and going through this outward form that is true worship. It is God's presence that gives true worship.

John 4: **23:** But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. **24:** God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

If God's presence is not with us then all this outward form is as useless as dancing around a golden calf. God said,

Isa 29:13...this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Internal, spiritual godliness is by Christ's formed in you in Spirit. That is true worship not the outward bodily form.

1 Timothy 4: 8: For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

It is of God, of his grace, every part a free gift: faith, hope, love, fear. Christ's presence makes us truly worship God. It is by Christ speaking effectually into our hearts.

John 6: 63: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Philippian 3:3: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

SoS 1:7: Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

Two, Christ's presence sanctifies and separates us from this world's religion by the way he governs his church. Christ is Head of his church—he redeemed us, called us, teaches us, leads us, and governs us—and shows he is the Head by using an earthen vessel to lead by preaching his gospel. The LORD used one man, Moses, to lead the whole nation of Israel. It was a constant, visual reminder that Christ alone leads his people. He alone is our Shepherd, our Head, our Bishop. Moses was a faulty, fumbling, powerless sinner. Paul said Christ uses nobodies and nothings to preach his word *that no flesh shall glory in his PRESENCE but that those who glory shall glory only in the LORD!* Moses knew he was nothing. That is why he is here begging God on behalf of the people for the LORD's presence to keep them separated and lead them. Christ knits the hearts of his preacher and people by making us all know this about ourselves. Only those made teachable by the Lord understand this and submit to Christ in it.

Every time Israel had a problem, it was because the people tried to lead and push Moses aside—it was attempting to push Christ aside. The people rose up and told Aaron make us gods; Korah rose up with his followers, “Moses you take too much on yourself, we are all holy”; Aaron and Miriam, Moses own brother and sister, rose up against him at one point. In each case it led the whole congregation into grave error. But each time, Moses hit his face before the Lord, like he is doing in our text (meekest man on earth)—begging Christ's presence in their midst. Each time the Lord sent Moses to preach his word; each time the LORD turned them to him; each time the LORD led them in the right way.

Brethren, that is different from how every church in this world is governed. I once met with a religious banker. He told me about all the committees in his church that keeps everyone in check. Then he asked me, “Who keeps you in check?” Christ makes us know Christ is the sovereign Head of his church by using an empty earthen vessel, who is a sinner like all the rest. But blessing the word Christ preaches to the hearts of his people in spite of his earthen vessel. Christ makes his people know that Christ alone is the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls leading his church. Men who think they saved themselves apart from this means never bow to this truth. They are not teachable because they have not experienced Christ's presence and power through the gospel.

Also, Christ's presence sanctifies his church by making his preacher preach Christ alone. Someone might object that Christ leads using an earthen vessel by pointing out how papacy looks to one man to lead them. But that is not the only way Christ separates his church, Christ also makes his preacher preach Christ. And the pope does not preach Christ. He blasphemously calls himself the vicar rather than Christ. Christ's presence makes his preacher declare, “I am not that Light. I am sent to bear witness of that Light!”

Christ's presence chastens, restores and strengthens with the message that gives God the glory in the face of Christ Jesus! We preach God's glory in sovereignly electing a people unto salvation in Christ his Preeminent Elect. We declare God's glory in redeeming his particular people, justifying and making us complete IN CHRIST. Our message is God's glory in regenerating each one effectually making us rest all IN Christ our separation. We declare God's glory in sanctifying us by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth—by the Spirit of Christ our Sanctifier who is our Sanctification. Our gospel is God's glory for working good works in his people according the measure of the gift of Christ's grace. The

message that is separate from all other churches in this world is that all things are of God, through God and to God who gets all the glory.

Romans 11: 33: O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

Christ's presence makes his church *walk by faith which works by love*. Christ gives us a heart to obey Christ. Every believer in whom Christ dwells has a will to obey Christ and gives due diligence to do so in his life. But Christ especially makes this apparent in trials—his presence makes his church deal with one another differently from this world in the midst of trials. His presence makes us walk by faith really believing that it is Christ who sovereignly sent the trial. We believe Christ sends trials to convince us we are sinners incapable of saving ourselves even in the weakest trial.

He shows us our inability by how fleshly we respond to trouble at first. But Christ's presence keeps faith and love reigning over judgment. His presence keeps faith looking to Christ, believing he will work it out for our good, so we patiently wait on him. His presence makes us love as brethren. His presence makes us ask ourselves, "How would I deal with this brother if it were my son? How would I want others dealing with my mother?"

Love is the mother who shows up at the car wreck and runs to her hurt child, comforts him, gets him to the physician. Law is the police officer who shows up finding fault and charging.

But sometimes Christ lets us go to Moab—either in the sin of our sin or the sin of our self-righteousness. He lets us run until Christ takes away the fool's gold and leaves us saying, "*Don't call me Naomi, call me Mara (bitterness).*" All the while he provides brethren walking by faith and love to put up with us, to cover our sins, to give us the good news that the Lord has visited his house with bread. The Spirit's presence leads you back to our great Boaz, restores union and creates fruit.

The worldly church lays hold of men suddenly: finding fault, casting blame, constraining by law, casting out devils, glorying in what flesh made flesh do—cut the baby in half! Flesh goes to scripture to justify being mean as a snake and cast out. But the love of Christ makes us go to scripture to remember how Christ deals with me the sinner so I can remember how to love and restore my fallen brother.

I am telling you what I have learned, not in a commentary, but by experience of fellowship with the same local assemblies for over 30 years. Christ's presence keeps faith and love reigning so that mercy rejoices over judgment—that is separate from this world. That's true sanctification—that is Christ our Sanctifier and our Sanctification. When it comes to our enemies—in our flesh and without—what makes them fall and makes us conquerors?

Psalm 9:3: When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

Amen!