



## Spring Study Discussion Guide #2

**Sermon Title:** If Thy Presence Go Not with Me

**Biblical Reference:** Exodus 33

**Date Preached:** Sunday, January 22nd, 2023, @ 11am

**Fall Study Date:** Wednesday, January 25th, 2023

### Sermon Summary

This past Sunday we learned about the spiritual consequences of sin. In the previous chapter the children of Israel failed to wait for Moses until he came down from Mount Sinai with the commandments of God. They made a golden calf and proclaimed that it was their god. The immediate consequence of their sin resulted in the death of three thousand people and God plaguing the people.

In the passage before us we see the lingering spiritual consequence of sin. We see Moses and the people working out, with the Lord, what their relationship with Him would be like going forward. Their sin caused the Lord to remove His presence. He told Moses and the people that they can go to the Promised Land. The Lord promised the patriarchs their children would inherit the Land. This was based on the character of God and not their performance. God told Moses he would send an angel before them, but His presence shall not go with them.

Many Christians are satisfied to live in this condition. Satisfied to live without the presence of God, so long as they can go to Heaven when they die. But for the children of Israel, that experienced the presence of God, this arrangement was met with much consternation or dismay. Moses went before the Lord and said, “If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” They understood there was a difference between the “omni” (God being everywhere) presence of God and the “manifest” (discernible) presence of the Lord.

There are many principles we can learn from this:

1. Sin breaks fellowship with God.
2. Success does not matter without the presence of God.
3. The presence of God is the thing that makes God’s people different from other people.
4. Punishment for sin is not the point, God is looking for reform.
5. Individually or corporately: the thing that will set us apart and make us effective agents for the Lord is the presence of God.

*Nothing could be more important. The good news is they again received the Lord’s presence. And we can have it as well.*

## Quick Review

### Ice Breaker:

To get to know each other as a group let's go around the room and have everyone answer the ice breaker question.

What is the most memorable meal you have eaten?

### **Ask a volunteer to read:**

*Exo 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 swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it:*

*Exo 33:2 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:*

*Exo 33:3 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.*

*Exo 33:4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.*

*Exo 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.*

*Exo 33:14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.*

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

*Exo 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.*

- Were there any insights the Lord showed you or anything that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you? Either from the sermon or from your personal study of this passage?
- How did the Holy Spirit speak to your heart from this passage/sermon?

## My Testimony

- Share a time in your life you sensed the presence of God in very powerful way.
- Have you ever felt a sudden withdrawal of the Lord's presence? Please explain.

- Can you tell us about a meeting you have been to where it was obvious the Lord's presence was there in a powerful way? How did the people respond?

## Digging Deeper

### 1. Do Not Be Content with an Angel

In the following verses we see the promise of an incredible experience and successful accomplishment of their goal met with mourning.

*Ask a volunteer to read:*

*Exo 33:2 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:*

*Exo 33:3 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.*

*Exo 33:4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.*

#### Discussion Questions:

- What are your thoughts about angels?
- The children of Israel wept. If it had been our church, what do you imagine our response would have been?
- The Lord said He would not go with them because they were “stiffnecked” (stubborn, obstinate, resistant). What has your personal experience with resistance to God been like?
- Can you describe your struggle with resisting God and what helps you yield?

*Mat\_23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

- Why do you suppose we have such difficulty yielding to God? During your life has it become more or less difficult?
- In verse 3, The Lord said lest I consume thee in the way. If looked upon with critical eyes this passage can put God in a negative light. How would you explain this to an unbeliever?

## 2. Stop Pretending

In the following verses we see the children of Israel refusing to put on their ornaments and the Lord commanding the ones that had them off to put them off. Ornaments were the jewelry or accessories they used to make themselves look better. Not putting them on represented walking humbly and honesty before the Lord.

**Ask a volunteer to read:**

*Exo 33:4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.*

*Exo 33:5 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.*

*Exo 33:6 And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.*

### Discussion Questions:

- What, in this passage, is the most significant to you? Please explain.

*Ornaments are what you use to make yourself look good.*

- What are the most common ornaments we put on? Could you be transparent and give us examples of ornaments in your life?
- What can we do, as a church, help each other not feel the need to pretend?
- What are some of the benefits you have received by taking off your ornaments?
- Why do you believe God required them to take off their ornaments before He knew what He was going to do?

*When you take off your ornaments God can put His ornaments on you.*

*1Pe 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;*

*1Pe 3:4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

- Describe to us what it looks like to have God's ornaments on you.

### **3. Stop and Ask for Directions**

In the following verses you find Moses going out of the camp away from the people and pitching the tabernacle. He was not going to take one step further without the presence of the Lord.

***Ask a volunteer to read:***

*Exo 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.*

*Exo 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.*

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- In many of our experiences by the time we recognize that the Lord's presence is not with us much damage has already been done. How do you think we can learn to stop sooner and ask for directions?
- Moses said the Lord to show him God's way. How can we remember this simple approach to life?
- Can you share with us some areas you want to know the way of the Lord?
- Are there any areas of your life that you are apprehensive to find out the way of the Lord? Why?

## Taking It Home

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they can do because of discovering the truths and principles in the text:

1. What truth or principle in this text was most impactful for you?
2. How did this truth or principal challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?
3. How will you put into practice what you have learned today?