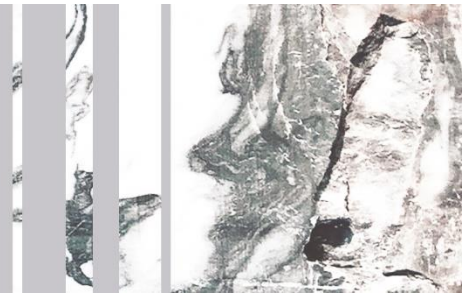


EXODUS

Daily Devotions Week 16



DAY ONE

Read **Exodus 33:1-11**.

To live or stay as a permanent resident; reside. This is the dictionary definition of the word “dwell.” A permanent resident—that is what God longs to be in our lives. Throughout the story of Exodus, we see God desires to dwell with his people. In Exodus 19, he gives the instructions for the Tabernacle to be created so that he may live among the Israelite people. However here in chapter 33, Israel has just built and worshipped the golden calf, disobeying God’s call for his people to abstain from the worship of idols. It would appear that Israel has almost instantly broken the covenant that they have agreed to keep. There is a problem and disconnect. God even tells his people in verse 3 that he will not go with them into the holy land.

Often times in our lives we think we can have a relationship with God but also a relationship with this world (see **James 1:22-25**). We don’t realize that our sin creates separation between us and God. We assume that because God is gracious, he will overlook our sin. While God does forgive sin, he is also righteous and just. He asks for obedience and when we don’t obey, separation from him is the consequence. Sin and holiness can’t mix in the same way water and oil don’t. In their very nature, their chemical structures are opposite and are immiscible. Read **Galatians 6:7-8; Isaiah 59:2; Numbers 32:23; 1 John 3:4**.

This is not the end of the Israelites story. God still dwells with his people regardless of what they have done. It’s important to realize that God didn’t need Israel for his plan. He could have started over like he did with Noah and the Ark. To keep Israel around would not benefit him in any way, but yet he does. Because Israel has disobeyed, there is need for someone to intercede on their behalf. Moses pitches a “tent of meeting,” which in its very name is no accident as it replicates the Tabernacle that God commanded Moses to build in Exodus 26. This tent was set apart from the people because God said, “I will not go with you” (**Exodus 33:3**). It’s here in this tent God would speak with Moses, who acted as a representative of the people. What sets Moses apart from all the people is his relationship with God. Moses would act as a representative to intercede on the people’s behalf before God. He served as the mediator for the sin of Israel.

The good news is that we have someone who will intercede on our behalf now in the person of Jesus. Jesus serves as our mediator. He has taken the guilt of our sin upon himself. We don’t have to stand at a distance, away from God. We can approach him with confidence, because of our relationship with Jesus (**Hebrews 4:16**). While God still calls us to live in obedience, we can dwell with him. When we live lives that are made right with him, we can see him in a whole new way. We can begin to see him at work in our lives and are able to see the life change all around us as well as in ourselves.

How would you define your relationship with God?

What in your relationship with God is keeping you from stepping into his "presence"? Why?

How has Jesus changed your relationship with God and others?

DAY TWO

What does it mean for God to dwell in us? This is something that we have been looking at throughout this entire series as it has always been God's plan to reside with his people. It can be easy for us to come to God in prayer and feel alone, or even feel like he is not speaking to us. It can be easy to forget, but God is with us always. If you take a look at nature, that is more than evident. He is in the leaves falling off the trees, in the sunrises we see in the mornings, he is present in the stars at night. He is constantly dwelling around us, but the question is, are we acknowledging him? We see through the intimate relationship between God and Moses that God dwelled with Moses through his "presence".

Read **Exodus 33:12-17**

We see here that God truly desired to dwell with Moses. Moses recognizes that God's relationship with him and what he promised for his people as a whole was what made them different from the rest of the world. If they didn't have him with them, they would surely be lost. While God would continue to dwell with his people through the form of the tabernacle, this was not his ultimate plan. He would ultimately send his son to die and now we can experience God with us always. This happens through the Holy Spirit. He is constantly dwelling with us. We don't have to enter a tent to experience God's presence, because he is always with us. God isn't asking for you to live a perfect life, but he's asking to be in your life. When we welcome the Holy Spirit, it changes the way we respond to the world around us, because he has changed our world. It might be good to review your notes from Week 13 in the Exodus series.

Read **John 6:63; John 14:26; John 16:13; Acts 4:31; Acts 9:31; Romans 8:2.**

Just like the Holy Spirit was at work in the lives of Jesus and those in the New Testament, he is active and working now. It is hard for us to hear or see him working when we are too busy, focused on ourselves, or living in contrast with the lifestyle that God is calling us to. When we draw near to the Holy Spirit, he will work. Take some time to see how he has revealed himself through your life.

Where are some of the places that you see God revealing himself?

How have you created space to let the Holy Spirit speak in your life? What did that look like?

Is the Holy Spirit "dwelling" in you and changing your life? Why or why not?

Spend some time welcoming the Holy Spirit to continue to shape you into the image of Christ.

DIG DEEPER

<https://thebibleproject.com/blog/presence-of-god/>

DAY THREE

Remember that dictionary definition of the word “dwell” from this week’s day one reading? *To live or stay as a permanent resident; reside*. God longs to be a permanent resident in each one of us. The question is, will we make room for his presence?

Read Exodus 33:7-11

In these verses, the Lord descends in the pillar of cloud as Moses speaks to God face-to-face. We see the people responding to the presence of God, recognizing the moment as holy and responding in worship.

It seems as though we would respond differently if God’s presence was as easily recognized by a pillar of cloud. How would you be affected if you could visibly see God’s presence? Would it change anything for you?

If we are followers of Christ and have surrendered our lives to him in baptism, we have received the gift of his presence through the Holy Spirit in our lives. He takes up residence in us!

Read Acts 2:37-39.

Read Romans 8:9-11.

God’s presence now dwells within his people through the gift of the Holy Spirit. How does it change your perspective to know the very same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells within you as a follower of Christ? How would your life be different if you spent time intentionally remembering this truth every day?

Read Exodus 33:12-16.

Moses requests God not send them out without his presence (**Exodus 33:15**). He recognizes the importance of God’s presence with them. The presence of God is what distinguished Israel from the surrounding nations. They looked different because of God’s presence with them.

How does your life look different than the surrounding culture because of God’s presence?

Moses also didn’t want to go anywhere without the presence of God. He was willing to wait on God to move and lead them. Describe a time in your life when you’ve moved ahead without God. How did this affect you? Is there an area in your life right now where you long for the presence of God to lead you? Take some time to lay that before God, being honest about your desires and inviting him to lead you. Write out a prayer to God about what he shows you.

DIG DEEPER

Take some time today to notice God’s presence. Using a prayer practice called the Examen, spend a few moments at the end of your day for the next few days reviewing where God revealed his presence with you. Ask God to open your eyes to see his presence at work.

St. Ignatius's Prayer of the Examen

A daily practice of praying the Examen helps us discern how God is calling us in small and large ways. The prayer is broken down into five steps. Do not feel as though you need to do these as a checklist. This is not about completing a task but about building a relationship.

1. Pray for God's Help

Begin by asking God to help you to see where he has been at work and for him to show you what he wants you to see and learn. With God's help, be attentive to how the Spirit was working in and through you, others, and creation. Let yourself see your day as God sees it.

2. Give Thanks

Gratitude cultivates our hearts and minds to see God in all of the workings of our lives. It changes the way we view our circumstances and the people around us in profound ways. Go through your whole day and give thanks for all of it—the large parts and the small things. Include the gifts of others, but don't neglect to look at the gifts within you as well.

3. Pray through the Significant Thoughts and Feelings of the Day

Pick one or two strong thoughts or feelings and pray through them. Ask God to help you understand what stirred those thoughts or feelings and where they led you. Ask these questions—Did they draw you closer to God? Did they help you grow in your faith, hope, and love? Did they make you more generous with your time and talent? Did they make you feel more alive, whole, and human? Did they lead you to feel more connected to others or challenge you to life-giving growth? Or did the feelings lead you away from God, make you less faithful, hopeful, loving? Did they cause you to become more self-centered or anxious? Did they lure you into doubt and confusion? Did they lead to the breakdown of relationship?

4. Rejoice and Seek Forgiveness

Rejoice in those times God brought you closer and ask for forgiveness for those times when you resisted God's presence in your life. Thank God for the gift of awareness. Put on grace for the entire situation.

5. Look to Tomorrow

Just as God was with you in this day, he will be faithful and will be with you tomorrow. Invite God to be a part of your tomorrow. What do you need God's help with? Commit the day to him. Thank him for his grace.

DAY FOUR

Throughout Exodus we see the remarkable friendship between Moses and God, a relationship that has been forged over a lifetime in the furnace of faithfulness. Moses stands before Yahweh interceding for Israel, petitioning for the Presence of God.

In the midst of the supplication, Moses presents an interesting request.

Read Exodus 33:15-23.

“Now show me your glory.”

This is not something I think most of us would ask to see. The Hebrew word for glory used here is *kabod* meaning “heaviness, burden, importance, honor, weight, manifestation of power, riches, splendor.” Moses wanted to see the full extent of who God was. He wanted to feel the weight of God’s magnificent presence.

To understand this Hebrew word, let’s think about a pool of water. If you throw a beach ball into the pool of water, the weight of the water is greater than the beach ball, so it will float and none of the water is displaced.

On the other hand, if you throw a boulder into the pool of water, the water will make room for the boulder by splashing everyone around the pool. Because the weight of the boulder is greater than the weight of the water, *the water is moved by the weight of the boulder*.

It cannot stay where it is.

When we see the glory of God in our lives and fully receive the weight of it, we cannot stay where we are. Seeing God’s glory revealed in our lives means we are displaced. The word *displaced* means “moved or put out of the usual place.”

God moves us when we truly meet him. We cannot experience his splendor and the weight of his power and not be put out of our usual place. Where have you seen this to be true in your life? Where has your life been disrupted by God in a way that points to his honor and importance? What maybe needs to be disrupted by God? What might be keeping you from allowing that disruption? What would you like to say to God about that?

Read Exodus 34:8-14.

What do you notice in this passage that applies to your life right now? What might God be inviting you into as a result of what you have read today?

DAY FIVE

Beach vacations are amazing—the kind where you come home tan and everyone knows you’ve been in the sun. Moses’ experience on Mount Sinai gave him a bit more than a sun-kissed glow, and he didn’t realize it had left such radiance.

Today we’re going to use an ancient practice called *Lectio Divina* to encounter the Scriptures. We’ll read through the text four different times, looking for the word or phrase the Holy Spirit wants to speak to us for today.

Sit quietly for a moment before you begin. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak and show you what the Lord wants for you in this passage. Read **Exodus 34:29-35**. Mark words or phrases that stand out as you read.

Read the passage again out loud. Are the same words or phrases you marked the first time still standing out? Write them below. How do these words or phrases apply to your life right now?

As you read the text for a third time, ask yourself, “How is God inviting me to respond?” Write out what comes to mind.

Read the passage one last time and answer these questions: “Why is God showing me this now? What does this mean for my life?”

In light of what you’ve read in Exodus, read through **2 Corinthians 3:12-18**.

How do these two passages connect in your own life? What are God’s invitations to you today?

Prayer for the day:

Loving Father, you have made a way for me to come directly into your Presence through Jesus Christ and his work on the cross. I pray it will be as evident as it was with Moses when I have spent time with you. Would you radiate your love through me to others around me? Grow my desire for your Presence. Help me to carry the light of your Presence to the world around me. Amen.