

Exodus (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Knight, Ebenezer (1908 - 1990)

- [0 : 00] And I direct your attention to the book of Exodus, chapter 33, verse 19. The 19th verse in the 33rd chapter of the book of Exodus.
- And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.
- Amen. You will know the circumstances when the Lord spake these words unto Moses from the chapter which we read in your hearing.
- If we notice in the previous chapter, we see there how that when Moses was on Mount Sinai, Aaron made the golden calf.
- Solemn it was for Moses to come down from the presence of God, and there to find the whole of the multitude of the people of Israel worshipping a golden calf.
- [1 : 26] And in thinking about it, I was thinking of our need of being kept no matter who we are.
- How remarkable it was that Satan, for doubtless it was Satan's power made known, in Aaron's heart.
- Aaron was the one, he was the instrument, chosen to lead Israel to idolatry. For he made the golden calf, which the Israelites worshipped.
- One wonders how Moses must have felt when he came down from the mount and saw Aaron, the man whom God had provided for him, and the whole of the Israelites worshipping that golden calf.
- Well, we see here how the Lord spake very, very solemnly to Moses concerning the Israelites.
- [2 : 32] How he told them that he would send an angel before them. Not the angel of his presence. Not he himself.
- But that he would send merely an angel. A created angel before them. And the people mourned on account of it.
- And in this chapter we read of how Moses pleaded with the Lord on their behalf. He as their intercessor stood between the people and God.
- And how in the case of Moses he was brought to that place where he wanted the Lord to come and grant unto him some unmistakable token of God's favor.
- For as he said, well, Lord, thou hast said, bring up this people. Thou hast put me where I am. And now, Lord, I want from thee an unmistakable token of thy favor.
- [3 : 38] Not only to confirm that thou hast put me where I am. But that thou wilt be with us or with me in the future.
- My dear friends, I believe that by reason of the very nature of living faith in the heart, there are times when God's people are brought before God seeking for one unmistakable token of God's favor.

And when we are brought earnestly to plead with the Lord for that unmistakable token, I do not believe that our request is displeasing to God.

Now, there are times, I believe, when we are unable to look back upon what we believe the Lord has done for us, may be in providence.

And these words have come to my mind in connection with the beginning of this year. We may look back over what the Lord has done for us throughout the past year.

[4 : 46] There are those of us who, doubtless can say, we have seen God's hand. But now, my dear friends, in regard to the coming year, how do you feel about things in regard to the worship of God in this place?

How do you feel about it in regard to soul matters between yourself and your God? Do you sometimes, and maybe at this very moment, are you in this place where in your own heart you've already said maybe this morning or last night, now before I go any further, Lord, I want thee to come and grant me some token of thy favor.

Lord, I would not despise what thou hast done. I would not treat it lightly. And yet, Lord, come and grant me some token for good at the beginning of this year.

Come and grant unto me the word thou did speak unto thy servant Moses, and say, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

And do raise me up, Lord, to a good hope and confirm in my soul that thou wilt cause all thy goodness to pass before me throughout this year.

[6 : 08] Then maybe, as we pass from one year to another, you may be brought to feel a little the momentous nature of what it is to face the unknown future.

I dare say you've all had the thoughts as one year passes and another comes. You have tried into the future, and you have said, ah, now I wonder what this year holds for me.

Well, do I remember, friends, the last day in the year 1959, and the first day in the year 1960, or as we passed midnight, and we passed from one year into another, we thought to ourselves, ah, now what does the future hold for us?

Where shall I be this time next year? We often think about it. We had thought we would be here, and here we are.

And in some measure, we feel the same as Moses did. The Lord spake unmistakably to Moses as to what he was to do.

[7 : 33] I have no doubts in my own mind as to what the Lord spake to me, as to what I was to do. But I find myself in the very place now where Moses was in his day.

Lord, if thy presence go not with us, with me, carry us not up hence. And you know, dear friends, the Lord will not be angry for if you seek tokens of his favor.

I know some people have said to us, well, you're always seeking for tokens for good. I remember as a child, when I used to hear the minister speak about asking the Lord for tokens for good, I used to think, well, surely if the Lord does give you a token for good, then it will be for good.

Ah, but I didn't know the nature of faith then, and neither did I know the power of unbelief, or the power of Satan working in my own heart. My dear friends, we need the Lord to come again and again.

We cannot rest. You know, what the Lord gives is like the manna. And the children of Israel couldn't lay it up. And you can't lay up God's favors.

[8 : 48] You want him to come again and again and to say unto your poor soul, I am thy salvation. I need him to come again and again unto me in the ministry.

And in this path wherein I walk, and you, if you are an exercise child of God, you will want him to come again and again in your pathway.

So then maybe, friends, as some of you have trembled to think of the future, you have stood with a reverential awe before God, and you have wondered, ah, now what does this year hold for me?

Well, I'm going to say this. Bless God if, to begin this year, he brings you to feel your own weakness, to feel your utter dependence upon him.

It is not pleasing to the flesh to be a poor beggar at the mercy, at the mercy of God. But, my dear friends, it's profitable.

[9 : 54] It is indeed. Do you know, do you sometimes pray that the Lord might keep you close to him? What is it to keep close to him?

Let one of our poets answer it. Thy whole dependence on me fix, nor entertain a thought, thy worthless schemes with mine to mix, but venture to be not.

Now, there's one thing I want to bring to your notice, in particular, in regard to what lays before each of us in the future. Seek, dear friends, to walk tenderly before God.

Seek that you might have a conscience kept tender in his fear. For we have left on record the sad departings of the children of Israel of old.

All what havoc disobedience has wrought even among God's people from Adam's day even to this day. When we look abroad in the world today, all that evil we see as the result of the fall, it all comes about from disobedience.

[11 : 13] There is one verse of our poet which so beautifully and yet solemnly and sadly describes where the world is today.

O thou hideous, monstrous sin, what a curse hast thou brought in. All creation groaned through thee, pregnant cause of misery.

Thou hast ruined wretched man ever since the world began. In the garden of Eden, Adam disobeyed. And my dear friends, beware in what the future holds.

Beware of the sin of disobedience. You may be sure of this, God will surely visit for it. And whilst on this point, oh let me emphasize it, the Lord will never look lightly upon sin.

A parent may look lightly upon the disobedience of a child. God will never look lightly upon the disobedience of his children.

[12 : 24] We have left on record his dealings with his ancient people and friends, it is left on record for our good. we are warned again and again to remember how the Lord dealt with them, how he made known his mercy day by day, and yet how they rebelled against him, and how solemnly he dealt with them because of their disobedience.

And coming right up to the time, the days of the Lord Jesus, you will recall the words of the Lord Jesus as he looked upon and wept over Jerusalem, O that thou knewest the things which belong to thy peace, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen doth gather her chicks, but ye would not.

Well now here we see at the beginning of this chapter, Moses is in that place where as far as the sins of the children of Israel were concerned, he could only confess them before God.

We read in the days of Ezra, before the restoration of the temple, how Ezra came before the Lord interceding on behalf of the Jews, and see how he began, Lord I am ashamed, and blushed to lift up my face unto thee, because we have sinned, and he rehearsed the sins, not only of the common people of Israel, but of their princes and of their nobles.

Daniel in his day, shortly before the restoration of the Jews to their land, he was in the same place. He came before the Lord, Lord he said unto us, us, belongeth confusion of faith.

[14 : 28] It belongs to us, to our fathers, and to our princes, because we have sinned against thee. But, here was his plea, as if he would say, but Lord all go, shame of faith belongeth unto us, yet Lord, to thee belongeth mercies and forgivenesses, even though we have sinned.

And Moses stood on the same ground here. And Moses in his entreaties, he brought before the Lord those very words he had spoken unto him.

Moses brought his own being, his own standing before God and before his people. He brought his own standing and pleaded with the Lord on account of it, Lord, thou hast said unto me, bring up this people.

Lord, thou hast told me that thou knowest me by name, and that I have found favor in thy sight. Lord, you've told me this, and yet you're not going to come with me in this way.

Oh, see here how by faith and in reverence before the holy God, Moses brought in this plea, and maybe my dear friend, some of you have a plea over what the Lord has spoken to you.

[15 : 58] You can bring that plea, you can bring that promise before the Lord and say, now Lord, at such and such a time, maybe you can look back to the very date, maybe you can look back to the very place where the Lord spake a promise to you, and you can say, now Lord, make good that promise.

Lord, art thou not a faithful God? Lord, hast thou not spoken? Lord, thou didst speak that word to me, come and make it good in my soul, come and make it good in my life, come, dearest Lord, and remember unto thy servant the word upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

Lord, can it be that thou hast brought me, taught me to trust in thy name, and thus thou hast brought me to put me to shame?

Lord, let not the enemy triumph, let not the enemy say unto me, where is thy God? Make, bear thine arm, and remember that word.

Well, Moses was here, and then again, you see, friends, as far as the position of Moses was concerned, he had gone so far in the way, and in a manner of speaking, there could be no turning back, but he said, Lord, as far as the future, come with me.

[17 : 29] You know, friends, I thought of this word only this morning in particular, in regard to our own selves here, as a church and people, there's much room for faith and prayer.

There is indeed, the Lord has heard and answered prayer that has been made, and we dare not dispute it. Oh, may we not then plead with the Lord.

Lord, thou hast heard and answered our prayers. Lord, thou hast given us the earnest. Oh, may there be a fulfilling of thy word. And as thou hast brought us to the birth, in these our desires, or may there be a breaking fall.

Well, you know, here, Moses so pleaded with the Lord, that the Lord spake to him. The Lord said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

For Moses, he said, Wherein shall it be known that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us?

[18 : 39] Yes, friends, that's the token. That's the token that you as an individual has found grace in the sight of God. And that is in that God goes with you.

And that's everything. And if the Lord doesn't go with you throughout this coming year as an individual, what token, what evidence have you that you have ever found grace in God's sight?

More particularly, perhaps to us collectively, if we have found grace, wherein shall it be known that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight?

Is it not in that thou goest with us? Oh, my dear friends, I thought in prayer particularly the needs be that God might make, by his Holy Spirit, might make one in our midst.

It's all important. It's all important that he should dwell in your hearts individually by faith. It is all important that the Holy Spirit of God should dwell in your homes.

[19 : 53] Oh, friends, do we covet the presence of God above all? You know, I think I've spoken before about earthly friends.

On many, many occasions we've had reason to bless God for them. And there are those on earth today concerning whom we can say, as the apostle Paul did to the Philippian church, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.

but friends, with the greatest respect to all the new friends I've met here, I've come to that place where I've never been before.

I've blessed God for earthly friends, and yet we come to the place where the Lord removes us from them. God's love.

And so you see, that even though a friendship may remain, in the providence of God, there may be a separation. But oh dear friend, the solemn thing is, to be separated from the friendship of God.

[21 : 05] Our heavenly friend, our best friend, that friend which sticketh closer than a brother, oh what a solemn thought is that. And therefore, even though we would bless God, poor earthly friends, there is one friend above all we would seek his friendship, and that is the friendship of our God, even of our elder brother in the family of grace.

Lord, if thy presence go not with us, then with me, then carry us not up hence, as if Moses would say, Lord, I can go no further, unless here and now thou dost grant me an unmistakable token of thy favor, and renew thy promise to me, that thou wilt be with me.

And the Lord graciously did so. The Lord spake unto Moses, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

and my dear friends, Moses went forward in the strength of that presence, in the strength of that promise. Moses could say, and in effect did say the same as Job did, probably around about the same time.

We're not quite sure of the time when the words of Job were spoken, when Job said, my foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined, neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.

[22 : 48] You know, there was a time when Moses made many excuses. When God appeared unto him at the burning bush, you'll remember, God set before Moses, his purpose respecting him, and Moses began to make excuses.

And you remember what they were, but the Lord told Moses that he would be his mouth, and that he would put words in his mouth, and moreover he sent Moses, he sent Aaron to be his mouthpiece.

And yet you see, here in this previous chapter, Aaron had fallen into sin, and had led Israel into idolatry. Moses, here in a particular way, is brought face to face with God.

Lord, be with me now. Lord, remember me in the future, for wherein shall it be known that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight?

Is it not in that thou goest with us? And then he says, so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

[24 : 05] That's where separation, friends, is a fruit of what God did for Israel. And you know, I believe it is true in the professing world today.

For I know that God's people, those who are rightly taught of the Spirit of God, they can't walk with everybody in the professing world. God, I've no doubt, although I'm not aware myself of the circumstances of many places of worship here, I can speak about them in England, but I've no doubt that what here as well as in England, there are many places, indeed one has only to look at the newspapers and to see what is advertised as to what goes on in those places.

My dear friends, there's no room for God there, no room for the Spirit of God in many places today, and therefore, if the Spirit of God dwells among us, it will produce a separation.

Friends, it can't be otherwise. If the Spirit of God is in you, it will produce a separation in your life. It will mark you out in the factory, in the shop, or with others wherever you are found.

People may look at you, they will gaze and they may admire, but they'll probably hate the change. They will see something different in you, something in you which they themselves do not possess.

[25 : 36] So shall I and thy people be separated. Yes, there is the fruit of the working of the Spirit of God in your soul, both individually and collectively.

It's separation. good Philpot refers to separation as being the hallmark of real religion.

Separation, separation, separation, so it has been and so it ever will be. So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

And then the Lord appeared unto Moses. He said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee. What a wonderful promise is this. All my goodness, all your need.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Philippians, he said, my God, shall supply all your need according to the riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

[26 : 52] What a wonderful promise is that. Now, dear friends, all that you need and all God's goodness is not all that we necessarily want. There is a difference, you know, between our wants and our needs.

our mercy will be for the Lord to so work in our heart, so as to teach us to want what we need. Oh, you may need many things that flashed its lights.

I think I mentioned yesterday you may need ballast. You may need the Lord to keep you in check and hold you with a tight rein. I hope you'll do it. The fleshed its lights the way, but faith approves it well.

I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee as if the Lord would say, now, Moses, whatever your need where you stand, I'll be with you in the way. Oh, that my goodness, all my goodness I will cause to pass before you and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you.

Oh, what a wonderful promise is that. And the Lord caused all his goodness to pass before Moses and he proclaimed his name before him.

[28 : 18] If the Lord proclaims his name before us throughout this coming year, we shall be brought face to face with his almighty power. Is there anything to have for our God?

Oh, the mercy to have a God, for your God and his my God, before whom we can bring all those things which are impossible with men.

Oh, to have recourse to not only a God who hears and answers prayer, but a God with whom there is nothing too hard, no mountain too big, who art thou, great mountain, before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a flame.

Some of you doubtless will find before the end of next year great mountains in your pathway. You may be brought to the place where you do not know what to do, brought right to your witch's end, brought where you will cry out with Jehoshaphat, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee, friends.

There's nothing to harm for the Lord. When most we need his helping hand, this friend is always near, with heaven and earth at his command, he waits to answer prayer.

[29 : 45] If he proclaims his name before us, we shall know him to be an all wise God in all our problems, in everyday matters, or to be enabled to bring them before him, many, many are the times doubtless in our pathway where we are brought to that place not knowing what to do, but ought to have recourse to an all wise and an almighty God, but chiefly his goodness and his mercy and his truth.

I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon all them that fear him.

And when the Lord passed by before Moses, he said, the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth.

Those, dear friends, are his attributes or at least some of them. And though if the Lord be pleased to proclaim his name before you individually, before me, and before us collectively, then it will indeed be well.

Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, another thought, if he proclaims his name before you, you will know this, that he will by no means clear the guilty.

[31 : 31] Ah, now, dear friends, beware of that thought, whereby we would look for God's mercy, whereby we would look for him to make all his goodness pass before him, before us, whereby we look for the good, and yet we turn away from that which the Lord spake unto Moses here, and that is that he would by no means clear the guilty.

Now, if this God is your God, my dear friends, you will find that he will by no means clear the guilty, he will by no means treat lightly of your sin.

In fact, throughout the coming year, if this God is your God, sin will ever be a burden to you, because you will find that sin is part and parcel of you, that as you stand by nature, so, even from the head to the feet, there is nothing but wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, and you doubtless will be brought before God even, as the apostle Paul was of old, when he cried out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

But he could say, I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. My presence shall go with thee, and in the words of our text, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.

I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy, or may that mercy be ours.

[33 : 34] Dear friend, may we be found much in prayer. May the Lord grant unto us peace, that spirit of wrestling and prevailing prayer, even at the beginning of this year, whereby we can say, in effect with Moses, now Lord, we want thee to be with us.

Lord, do not, wilt thou not in thy mercy, look upon that desire which thou hast put in my heart. Lord, do come into my heart, come into my soul, come among us, help us to repent of our sins, and plead for mercy, and make known thy long-suffering mercy, and cause throughout this coming year, cause all thy goodness to pass before us.

One said to keep thine eyes on Jesus fixed, and there thy hope to stay, the Lord will make his goodness pass before thee in the way.

Oh, may that be our portion. Here I'll leave it. The Lord and his blessing to these few remarks, for his name's sake, Amen.