

Exodus

Sermon #11: Villains, Heroes, and the Grandeur of God

Exodus 32 - 34

Dr. Matt Cassidy---- October 27, 2024

Good morning, Grace, it is great to be back. I missed you guys. The place looks great, you fixed it up while I was gone.

If you'll turn in your Bibles to Exodus chapter 32, I'd love for you to read along today. We're going to look at chapters 32 through 34. It's a section of Scripture that needs to be studied because it's one storyline. And so, we're going to have to hurry through it. We won't be able to spend too much time on any particular part. I want you to get the deeper meaning of the entire story. So, we're going to be looking at Exodus 32 through 34.

And kind of the word for the day is "potential." What's going to be displayed for us in these three chapters is the potential of mankind in both good and evil. And if you've read much in philosophy and the area of anthropology, scholars and deep thinkers have pondered the nature of man for years, centuries; because of this huge chasm between the potential of man to be evil and the potential of man to be good.

Geniuses and scholars like Blaise Pascal ... here's a great quote from Reinhold Niebuhr. He's a theologian and philosopher. He said that man can "ascend to the qualities of an angel or descend to the vileness lower than the most despicable animal." Higher than angels and lower than animals. That's the potential of mankind, isn't it?

In chapters 32 through 34 you won't find a denser packaging of this height and depth of what we're capable of. These chapters shine a bright light and amplify the three major characters in our storyline when we're studying the Exodus. The three major characters are Moses, the people of Israel, and then God himself. We're going to see that He has a major part in this storyline.

Before we get going with these three chapters, the context is going to help the meaning considerably. So, let me just review very quickly where we left off. Last week when Kevin was teaching, we were in Exodus 31. And in chapter 31, I would say, that is absolutely the high point of the storyline, because Moses goes to Pharaoh and says, "Let my people go so that I might

worship Yahweh.” Well, that’s where they are. They’re at Mt. Sinai and they’ve just been given the blueprints of how to build a tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant so that they might know how to worship. That’s chapter 31.

If you can just think of all the chapters, 1 through 31, as stairsteps in getting to this high point, this climax of our storyline so far, it starts in the beginning of Exodus. They’re in Egypt and they’re in slave pits where they’re making bricks for Pharaoh, and they’re screaming out for help from God. And then in each of these steps, each of these chapters, they’re rising up and getting closer to having this climatic experience of worshiping God. So, they experience God’s presence in all this time. *Who is Yahweh?* And Yahweh introduces Himself and shows the power of God. His attributes are being rolled out and the power of God is being displayed in the ten plagues and in the Red Sea crossing. They’re experiencing God’s provision when He gives them water and manna and quail.

He goes on from there and He gives them the promises of God. And when they get to Mt. Sinai, they’re working their way up. These 31 chapters, or steps—they get to Mt. Sinai. And chapters 19 through 24 is the Mosaic covenant. It could be a marriage covenant. It’s a covenant between God and the people. And then, ultimately, they experience His precepts, His teachings. More of the law is described, and it starts going into how to build a worship service, a worship sanctuary.

So, that’s absolutely where we’ve been. How’s the view from up top? Oh, right in the heart of God’s will, and it’s glorious. That’s chapters 1 through 31.

And then the next day—chapter 32, verse 1. Read along with me if you brought your Bibles. **“When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, ‘Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’**

“Aaron answered them, ‘Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.’ So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. They they said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’”

In a day everything changes—in a single day. I mean, I hope you’re appreciating the fast-moving mood that’s taking place here, this breakneck pace between one sentence earlier when

we were doing the final touches on the tabernacle, and one sentence later it's "this fellow" Moses is gone, and they're talking about how to perform cultic ritual worship—in a sentence, in a day. It's numbing how fast this takes place.

One scholar wrote this: "The reader is not prepared for the speed or the totality of their failure. In a single event they are unraveling God's entire plan"—speed and totality. There is no deliberation. There's no questioning or pondering. They assume Moses must be dead—that he got hit by lightning or maybe attacked by a mountain lion.

I don't know, should we check on him? Don't you think so?

No, I'm not going to check on him.

Why?

Because we're in a hurry to break the heart of God. We've got to figure out how we can do that most effectively and most efficiently. What are those first three commandments, the first three about God? Oh, yeah. "You shall have no other gods before me. Never make idols in any kind of image of something that is created. Never use my name in a disrespectful way." Check, check, and check.

They name the bull Yahweh. The calf is supposed to represent the God who took them out of Israel. How does this happen? I mean, who does this? I mean, literally having a mountain top experience with God and then saying, *Oh, we're going to trust God, you bet.* And they do, up until a point. And then they become impatient because He's taking too long. And then they panic. And then they make a decision to take control of their lives again. *We'll take control since no one else is.*

Who does that? It's kind of a rhetorical joke. We all do this. We have some kind of experience ... St. Augustine said that living by faith can be summarized in a single word: waiting. And these people waited ... but not long enough.

You and I can have an experience at church or camp or a retreat, and we're up on that mountain. We're going to trust God. And usually when we trust God we have a deadline. And sometimes we don't even know it until we've passed it. We have some kind of finish point it needs to be done by, and then it's not.

And this is what Augustine would say: *Now you're living by faith, past the deadline. You're just getting started.*

And living and waiting is excruciating. We snap and then we panic. My will on my time. Not happening. I will seize control. And then we do something, anything ... *Let's just do.* And then we make a choice. Some of you are living with choices made in those kinds of situation for the rest of your life. There are consequences that go for the rest of your life.

Exodus 32:5-6

When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord." ⁶ So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

Wait, there's more to this story. Because not only are they worshiping a false god in the image of a calf and calling it Yahweh, but Aaron says, *Hey, get a good night's sleep because tomorrow morning we're waking up and we're having an all-day worship service.* Look what it says in verses 5 and 6: **"When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, 'Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.'" See, that's Yahweh's name. "So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry."**

"Indulge in revelry" could be translated today as "a drunken orgy." That's what it means. Now wait—what? Why and how has this happened? Here's how it's happening—here's why it's happening. It says seven different times in this chapter that Israel has left Egypt, Israel is out of Egypt. But Egypt is not out of Israel. Israel is thinking and acting like they were if they were Egyptian. They have an Egyptian worldview. And they've committed nothing to being transformed by the renewing of their minds. And so, they're going to worship Jehovah in the same manner that Egyptians worshiped their fertility gods. And drunken orgies were an act of worship.

And so, here they are. I mean, can you visualize the stairway now. They were on the thirty-first step working on the tabernacle and how to worship God. They've fallen off that. And then they've violated the covenant of marriage that they had. When Moses finds out he breaks

the commandments on the ground. They've gone back to the Exodus itself. They might as well be back in captivity.

The point is, they went from the highest point to the lowest point, maybe not by falling down the stairs but by jumping off the cliff. They were fast and they were effective. And the point of this storyline is to teach us and to warn us about the potential (there's our word of the day) depravity of every human soul. Every man and woman have the capacity to undo the great things that God has done in a day. Fear this capacity, this potential within us. We're supposed to be somewhat fearful of the capacity to make very poor choices.

Consequences of Sin

And one of the ways it can keep us from making bad choices ... a lot of this storyline is about the cost of sin. And the cost of sin is more than you and I can pay. We can't afford this. It's going to give us bills that we can't live up to. And sometimes just knowing that these choices are too expensive will be the very thing that holds us back from committing the great sin. This passage in chapter 32, the story I just read you, is used throughout the Bible. It's going to be referenced several times in the Bible, and it will be called "that great sin"—"the great sin" that Israel commits.

So, if we could grasp the cost of great sin in our life when we find ourselves in a lifestyle of gossip or contempt towards authority, cheating—whatever it might be—do you know what can help us stop it? Just by looking at this passage and saying, *Wow, what did it cost Israel? It cost them three things. It costs them that the anger of God is going to turn on them. God is going to leave them. They'll lose the presence of God. And they'll have shame.* Let's look at each one of those individually: the cost of the great sin and living in a sinful way this way.

We Risk Facing the Anger of God

Chapter 32, verses 7 and 8 say, **"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol in the**

shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.””

Exodus 32:9-10

“I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰ Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.

And verses 9 and 10: “**‘I have seen these people,’ Jehovah said to Moses, ‘And they are a stiff-necked people.’**” “Stiff-necked” is a metaphor for a bull that won’t get in its harness, its yoke, and it’s being stubborn and proud. *I’ve seen this stiff-necked, stubborn, and proud people.* Then He says, “**‘Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.’**”

Now what’s happening here is that there’s going to be consequences for the choices that Israel’s made. And these are just what you’d call natural consequences. There are some parenting tips here where sometimes you just let your child make choices and you let the natural consequences beat the sense into them. And sometimes the consequences aren’t enough, and so parents need to step in and say, *Look, natural consequences plus logical consequences. I’m coming in, I’m going to turn it up so that we don’t have to do this ever again.*

In this case this is God stepping in, saying, *We could just start all over. These people are too stubborn and too proud.* And if you’re ever thinking about impulsively grabbing control of your life and not living by faith, if you waited for what you would say would be too long, this passage wants you to stop and think, *Do you want the anger of God to be turned toward you?* No, I don’t think you want that. Nobody wants the anger of the Lord turned toward them. And all the people said, Amen.

We Miss God’s Presence

The second consequence of this great sin that they have to live with—and this should open our eyes as well—is they miss God’s presence.

Exodus 33:3

“Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.”

In chapter 33, verses 1 through 3, it says, **“Then Yahweh says to Moses, ‘Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here’s what I’ll do—I’ll give it to all your descendants. I’ll send an angel before you to drive out all the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—all those guys. Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stubborn, proud, stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.’”**

Listen to what God is saying. He’s granting them everything they want. They’re going to have prosperity and protection. God’s going to send an angel ahead of them—not the angel of the Lord, but one of those military angels to do all the cleaning up ahead of them and protect them. And then they’re going to move into houses that they didn’t build. They’re going to harvest from fields that they didn’t plant. They’re going to be healthy and they’re going to be wealthy. But there will be no Yahweh. Jehovah said, *You go on without me. You get everything you want, just not with me.*

In our culture, our churches, oh, I can hear people say, *Oh, how do I sign up? Can I get in early on this?* There are a lot of people who would prefer God’s blessings over God’s presence. That’s a terrible cost. You can’t afford to pay that.

This passage is teaching us that you can’t be a stiff-necked, stubborn, proud person towards God and expect to enjoy His presence. You can’t have intimacy with God. And this presence of God, this intimacy with God, is the most treasured possession we have as believers. It’s the reason Jesus came and died and rose again, so that we could have the presence of God, intimacy with God. It’s the spiritual part of our lives that is other-worldly, that invades us. It is the twinklings of heaven on earth in our experiences—the closeness, the presence of God, the

intimacy we can have through the Holy Spirit. You can't afford to lose that. You do whatever you have to do to maintain that.

I've been very frustrated over the years when I sit down with people and we're just talking through ethical issues, and they'll say a stiff-necked, stubborn thing: "I'm going to do this anyway."

And I'll say, "Look, you can do that, but you'll have to go to the Promised Land without God. You can't have intimacy with God and rebellion towards God."

And too many times I hear, "What do you mean 'intimacy with God'?"

I'll say, "Well, joy, you know—joy independent of circumstances."

"I don't know what that is."

Since they've never surrendered completely for a long enough period of time, they've never enjoyed the most treasured possession in the Christian life. They don't know what they're missing. They don't know what they've lost. And so, they're making a decision without a full understanding of all that's at stake.

So, one way to apply this principle here is that if you've never surrendered that way, if you've never been submerged in the peace of God, if you've never heard God's approval for you specifically, then you need to do everything necessary, anything necessary, so that you could be completely surrendered to Him. And when you're surrendered to Him for a long enough period of time, and you trust that you're not kidding Him, then you're going to experience this presence of God and you're going to know what you're missing. And once you know what you're missing, you'll be willing to do anything to keep that presence of God.

And those of you who know what I'm referring to, this most treasured possession, next time you're toying with living your life around some other idol like your children or your job or your body or whatever it might be---something that's a good thing and you change it into an ultimate thing—you back up and say, *Whoa, I'm going to lose out on the presence of God. I've given myself over to that.*

Anyway, the passage helps us understand how low we can go in a very short period of time, and we need to be exceptionally careful and be warned by this, that God's anger could turn toward us; that we could lose His presence.

We Live with the Shame of Our Actions

And the last thing is that we live in shame for our actions.

Exodus 32:25

Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies.

Look what it says in verse 25 of chapter 32: **“Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies.”**

“A laughingstock to their enemies”—when we live in a rebellious way towards God, it’s at the expense of the reputation of the Church. And it’s not like we’re laughing within the Church. It’s the enemies of God who are looking at us and thinking, *Look at you guys. You look stupid.*

The laughingstock of Egypt—Egypt can say, *Look at these Israelites, they’re worshipping their deity the same way we worship our deity. Oh yeah, we’ve thrown a couple of those rage orgies before. They’re no different than us. Why should I believe what they believe? They’re a laughingstock.* They’re just fitting right in with the Egyptians.

The Potential for Goodness in Mankind

So, the potential for how fast and how bad is right here in this passage in chapter 32. But there’s more. Because there’s also an extensive amount of vocabulary and potential interest that we have as being saints—the goodness of mankind.

There’s a beautiful picture painted here of godliness. We’re going to look at Moses particularly and especially, and he’s going to be magnified, amplified. And we can be that, because of what is clearly stated in the Bible, that every believer is a minister, every believer is a priest. We have everything that he has. Actually, we have more than what he had.

Exodus 32:9-10

“I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰ Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”

I want you to look at all that he has to offer. In chapter 32, verses 9 and 10—remember how angry God is: **“ ‘I have seen these people,’ Yahweh says to Moses, ‘and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.’”**

Do you hear this offer? You can know a lot about a person by what they’re tempted by. God is tempting Moses here by saying, *We can just start over, just you and me.* And all these people—do you understand who the people are? The story starts with the quote “as for this fellow Moses.” These people had had contempt towards Moses since the day he showed up. No respect, no enjoyment of who he is and all that he’s done. And Moses is asked, “Do you just want to start over?”

And this is not the Moses of chapter 3 who was impatient and violent. This is one who’s been in the desert for forty years, and he knows the ways of God, and he’s humble. If he had a particle of pride he would have said, *I’m in Lord, let’s start over. I got the time.*

But he’s a saint. This is one of the profound expressions of how it can change our very values when we’re surrendered to God, because he says no to the Lord. You can tell a lot about a person in what they’re tempted by or not tempted by. He doesn’t do it.

And so, what he does do is what we can do as well—sacred things. We might take them for granted because they’re common. There are sacred things that Moses does to show the potential of the holiness that we can enjoy in life.

Moses Prays for Israel

The first thing Moses does is that he prays for them. He’s pleading with God, and the way he prays for them, he’s praying to God using values and thoughts of God. He’s appealing to

the mind of God, saying, *Listen, you don't want your enemies in Egypt to be rejoicing because you left Israel out in the desert. No, your reputation is at stake. Don't forget, you're the promise maker, the promise keeper. You've made promises.*

And then he says, finally, *Look at all the work that's been done.* I love this particular prayer, so much so, it completely changed my life I don't know how many years ago. And I want to teach you how to pray this kind of prayer. But I will in January. And we certainly do not have time right now to look at it. But the point is that he's focusing on God being glorified in all his reasons as he negotiates with the Lord for Israel's sake.

The potential of human saintliness is described here as when you and I understand the holiness and the privilege of going into the palace of God Almighty and into the sacred throne room, the Holy of Holies. And we pray for people because those people won't even pray for themselves. That's a gift, friends. And the desire to do that is evidence that there's a Christ-likeness inside of you—when you pray for people who won't pray for themselves. The potential of godliness is made clear here, when we talk to God Almighty about someone else. Don't ever take prayer for granted.

Moses Tries to Atone for Them

The second thing Moses does to show the potential of his saintliness is that he tries to atone for them. This is Christ-likeness, becoming like Christ in all of life, because Moses is going to try to take their punishment. He's going to try and step in and say, *Don't spank them; spank me.*

Exodus 32:31-32

So Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. ³² But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

In verses 31 and 32: **"So Moses went back to Jehovah and said, 'Oh, what a great sin these people have committed!'"** Agreed. **" 'They have made themselves gods of gold. But**

now, please forgive their sin—but if You won't forgive their sin, then blot me out of the book you have written, and not them.” *Blot my name out.*

You know, when you are born anew because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and then the Spirit of God comes into your life and you submit to that, you surrender to it, you are not stiff-necked; you're going to become like Christ and think like Christ and have values like Christ. And you're going to want to give yourself for other people, give your very life away.

Jesus said in John 15 in the Upper Room, **“There's no greater expression of love than this, to lay down your life for a friend.”** And then later in Romans, it says that **“While we were still enemies with God, Christ died for us.”** So He didn't just die for His friends; He died for His enemies. That's Christ-likeness.

Romans 9:1-2

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit—² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

And what's happening here is like when you...is this not just a great picture of what it means to be selfless, to be saint-like, to be Christ-like? Paul has a passage in Romans 9. He's Jewish and he's talking about his Jewish brothers and sisters and how it's weighing heavy on his soul, his Christ-like soul. This is what it looks like. This is the height of man's potential to become in the image of God. He's trying to convince us that he's not just making this up and it's not hyperbole. In verse 1, he says, **“I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.”** For whom? For the Jews. You mean the Jews who on multiple occasions have tried to kill him and will ultimately frame him for a crime that will get him killed? Those Jews? Those are the Jews that he was burdened and anguished for.

Romans 9:3-4a

For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race,⁴ the people of Israel.

And here's what he says: **“For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel.”**

Paul is saying, *I'd go to hell if it meant Israel was going to heaven.* Wow. This is the height of what it means to enjoy being what you are meant to be, like Christ in all of life.

Some of you parents have had a taste of this. When your child gets in some kind of trouble, and it's probably not the first time, and it's almost like they're enemies with you, but you've tasted this Christ-likeness when you've stepped into a situation with an authority, or maybe even the police, and said, “Can I take their place? This punishment will break my little boy, my daughter. I'll do it. I'll pay that fine. I'll go to jail. Spank me.”

There's an impulse within us to atone for other people. That's from God. And it's also a clue on what to look for. Moses is an archetype. That means he's supposed to cast a shadow and a silhouette so we know what to look for later on. And Moses' request to atone for someone else was rejected. We can't atone for someone else—we've got our own sins to atone for. But he was projecting on a future Jesus the Christ, who could atone, because He was without original sin, and He never sinned in His life. And so, He, without sin, had the ability to atone for those who did have sin. And so, Jesus atones for us. That's Christ being Christ. And what Moses is saying here is very much like what Jesus said on the cross when He was atoning for the sins of the people who would believe in Him, when He said, “Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.”

We show ourselves to express our potential in being the saints we were meant to be when we pray for other people, when we love people so deeply that we even want to step in and take the punishment for them.

Moses Has God's Presence Restored

And because of what Moses is doing here, the presence of the Lord is restored to Israel.

Exodus 33:17

And Jehovah said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, my presence will go with you because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

Verse 17 of chapter 33: **"And Jehovah said to Moses, 'I will do the very thing you have asked, my presence will go with you because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.'"**

This is the power that you and I have as believers in Jesus Christ. We can change the direction of a culture or a people group or a person. We can help change the wrath of God by our prayers on their behalf. We can help negotiate with our prayer life to bring back the presence of God in their life. They get to have God's presence and go to the Promised Land. They're going to make it to the Promised Land with God.

The Grandeur of God

This is a beautiful section of Scripture in chapters 32 through 34 because it's showing how dark the human soul can become. And then it also shows how glorious the human soul can become. But the point of the passage is about the grandeur of God. The light is shining brightly so as to magnify and amplify. It also shines on the Lord himself. It's about His lovingkindness, His generosity, His forgiveness.

You're going to see in chapter 34 that God looks at the other two characters in the story, Moses and Israel, and knows the longing of their souls—their deepest longings. And He'll grant them.

He goes to Moses. Moses is exhausted. It's been a bad day. He's sick of these people, these stiff-necked people. And there's a conversation he has with Jehovah where he just looks at Jehovah and says, "Show me Your glory. Give me something. Show me Your glory. I just want to see you."

And the Lord says, "Okay. I'm going to have to do it in a way that won't kill you, because you can't endure seeing my face. So I'm going to wedge you between these two rocks and I'll walk by you, and I'll speak to you the most quoted words in the Bible about God from God. That will be your experience with me."

Exodus 34:5-7

Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed His name, the Lord. ⁶ And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

And so, in chapter 34, here are the most quoted words in the Bible about God from God. **"Then Jehovah came down in the cloud and He stood with Moses and proclaimed His name, Jehovah. And then He passed by in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'Jehovah, Jehovah'"**—the name of God— **" 'the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.'"**

Jeremiah 29:13

You shall seek me and you shall find me after you have sought for me with your whole heart.

You go to the Bible Project online and watch what they do with this. It's gorgeous. No time for that—I'm afraid I'm over time. But the point is that He gives Moses the greatest longing of his heart. He fulfills the promises He makes to Jeremiah when He says, **“You shall seek me and you shall find me after you have sought me with your whole heart.”**

Do you want an experience like Moses had? Just seek the Lord with your whole heart. Just anytime, anywhere, to do anything with anyone. When you consider Jesus, consider Him as Lord Jesus. He's king of creation. He holds all things together. It means being completely surrendered, no stiff-necked pride. And when you pray that with your whole heart—*Lord, show me Your glory, show me Your glory*—it can happen. And you might experience a common sunrise and it's just existentially so deep that you wonder, *Was that just for me? Was that You just talking to me?* Seek Him with all your heart.

The second application of the grandeur of Jehovah in this storyline, is He looks at Israel and sees what they need. And so, chapter 34 begins with God telling Moses, *You know those tablets you broke? I want you to make some new ones.* So, he has to make a second round of tablets. *And God says, I'll fill in all the details with the Ten Commandments there. But here's what you need to know, because this is what the people need.*

Exodus 34:10

Then the Lord said: “I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you.”

It says in verse 10, **“Jehovah said: ‘I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, Jehovah, will do for you.’”**

And then just read chapter 34 and you’re going to see that it sounds like a rerun. It’s just going to go on and on about things that you already know. And the reason is that God is renewing the covenant that they broke. It’s like they fell down these thirty-one chapters, thirty-one stairs, and they’re down in the mud. And God himself picks them up, and He climbs them up the stairs. And He reminds them of all the steps they had taken, because He wants to restore them to chapter 31, back when they came to worship God and God alone. He wants to start at the top. Chapters 32 through 34 are about the steadfast love of God. Sure, it’s about the problem of the evil of men; sure, it’s about the potential of goodness in mankind. But the climax of the story is this—here’s the story: Israel has a wedding covenant, a marriage covenant with Jehovah God, and on their honeymoon, she cheats on Him. That’s the story of how bad it can get, and fast.

And then Yahweh forgives and restores. And He wants to make sure that she understands, *Okay, let’s go back all the way to the beginning. Let’s go back and renew our wedding vows.* And after He does that, He restores them as His bride. And so, the next section of Scripture after chapter 34 is *Now let’s get that tabernacle built so we can worship together. And let’s start heading out to that land of milk and honey. And I’ll be with you.*

In chapters 32 through 34 is a God story. And it’s about the glory of God and His consistent love.

So, Grace, let’s show the world what it’s like for a whole church to be absolutely surrendered to Jehovah. Let’s show our neighbors what it’s like when we collectively say, *Show me Your glory, show me Your glory.* Let’s show the world what it’s like when we can’t be bought because of the cost. They can’t afford it because we will never let go of the presence of God in

our lives. We can revolutionize the world. Let's show the world that we're holy priests, by praying for them, hoping and desiring that we would atone for them if we could, but we can't.

This is all about Yahweh. What a great God He is. Let's pray.

Lord, what a marvelous story that's being told about who You are and what You're like. Oh, dear God, we are so grateful for that. Lord, I'd ask that You would help us understand the fullness of Your desire to keep us holy. I'd ask, Lord, that You would haunt people right now who have never experienced Your presence in their lives, who have never been saturated in Your peace, who have never experienced joy, who have never heard Your approval on their heart. Lord, I'd ask that they would give up all control and would turn their hands and their lives over to You, that You might give them that precious treasure.

Lord, I'd ask that You would help us commit to doing anything and everything, that we won't be tempted by things of the flesh or of the world, desires or ambition, that could contaminate intimacy with You. Lord, we just love this story—not about the men in this story, but about who You are and the way You respond to us. I'd ask that You would help us enjoy that.

Lord, we praise You by our worship today. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.