

## **The Safety of God**

**Exodus 19:7-25**

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In last week's passage, Exodus 19:1-6, we were shown God's highest calling for our lives—to be a people who know what it means to experience His gracious rescue and then take it to people we meet at the intersection of hurt and hope. In this week's passage, if we are going to move forward in this, we are going to have to deeply know our God. Because *our view of God determines how we will live our lives, and how we live our lives determines how we impact the world.* Exodus 19:7-25 shows us how the God of Israel continued to prepare His people's hearts in a very graphic and even frightening way, so that they would deeply know this holy, powerful, and glorious God who was sending them on this divine mission of being a "kingdom of priests" (19:6). Several key themes surface from this powerful experience.

### **Develop a Balanced View of God**

This is undoubtedly a difficult passage. The way in which God comes to His people through the very "elemental" natures of fire, smoke and thunder is strange for those of us that live on this side of that dark, starry night in Bethlehem where God showed up clothed in the utter humanity of an infant. God seems to reveal Himself throughout His Word in very different ways. From the power and glory of God in the raging fire and smoke above the mountain to the "weakness" of God in Jesus Christ who walked on tired feet and sore legs to proclaim a marvelous and compassionate freedom—it's the same God—the same story—given to the same broken-hearted people who need to know God's tremendous power and His compassionate freedom. If we leave out either aspect of the character of God, then our faith will be impoverished and our impact in the world will be diminished.

### **Live in the Fear of the Lord**

The Israelite's experiences and emotions are so raw and visible in this passage. As the scene of God's fiery descent unfolds, we can feel the trembling and "trepidation" by which they approach the mountain to meet their Heavenly King. Moses reminds them to not be afraid but to live in the fear of the Lord (Exodus 20:18-21). Moses reminds them that if they really are going to be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests with a divine purpose and calling to live out the redemptive power of the Creator God, then they must not only develop a "balanced view of God," but they must also live with reverence and awe at the power and glory of this redeeming God. If we really are going to be this redeemed community of people who live at the intersection of hurt and hope, it is going to take a lot of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7, James 1:5, 17).

## **Experience the Power and Glory of God**

God is preparing His people for the way forward into an unknown and uncertain world. And if they are going to live as His people in the world, they will need to experientially know His power and His glory. They will need to be able to draw upon these “sacred” experiences where God showed up in powerful ways. The people of Israel for ages told the stories of the parting of the Red Sea and when God descended upon Mt. Sinai. Now we tell stories of God’s power and glory as He showed up not only on a mountain in Exodus, but also in a manger in Bethlehem. We tell stories of the power and glory of God in the Cross and the Resurrection. We tell stories about how He came in the Holy Spirit, like a “violent, rushing wind” (Acts 2:2) as he formed these ragged Christ-followers into the world-changing Church. And as we experience the power and glory of God in our own lives, we tell the stories of how this amazing God has rescued and redeemed us—how He has healed our lives, our relationships, and how He is using us to heal this broken world.

*“Heavenly Father, may we know who You really are in all of the ways that You show us Yourself in the Word and in our experiences. May You form us into the people You want us to be so that we can live out Your divine calling to live at the intersection of hurt and hope.”*

## **Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion**

### **Your View of God**

This week, we talked about the idea that our view of God determines how we will live our lives and how we live our lives determines how we impact the world. Spend some time thinking and writing about your view of God. Do you tend towards the “huge, awesome, and powerful” God, or more of the “gentle Jesus, meek and mild” view? Or, are you somewhere in the middle? Are there elements of God’s character that you tend to “leave out” of your view of God? Why?

### **Healthy Fear**

Why is living in a healthy fear of the Lord so important? Explore the connection between the fear of the Lord and wisdom. Some scriptures to explore are: Proverbs 1:7, Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 8:12-14, Proverbs 16:16, Job 28:28, Psalm 5:8, Psalm 119:38, Jeremiah 32:40.

### **Tell Your Story**

Throughout redemptive history, the people of God have told the stories of the power and work of the Lord in their lives. What are some of your stories? Write them down. Share them in community this week. Consider how they shape your life and allow you to bring healing to the world around you.