Needing God’s Presence
Exodus 33:12-23

Objective: Motivate people to earnestly value and solicit the Presence of God in their lives.

Reading: Exodus 33:1-3, 15-16.

Memory: John 14:23, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

Introduction:
1. Do you have God present and active in your life? Are you sure? Maybe you are simply living in the world? Maybe you have not experienced the very Presence of God in your life?
2. If you have known God, what would it be like to loose Him? For Him to be angry or upset and to simply leave you on your own?

We ought earnestly value God’s Presence. (WHY?)

In Exodus 32-33, Moses has gone up Sinai to receive ten Commandments. While gone, the people solicit Aaron to build a golden calf, false god. God is understandably upset and indicates that He will leave. A desperately fearful concept for anyone who comprehends. This passage highlights why it is so desirable and essential for us to have God with us in whatever we do.

We ought value and desperately hang on to God’s Presence in our lives because...

I. God’s Presence is so immensely desirable.

A. There is unimaginable blessing in God’s companionship.
1. The Creator, the Power, the Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
2. Like having a Big Brother to watch your back! Success is assured if we are doing His will and He is blessing us. Even the crops will be successful and abundant.
3. How can you live, without the very source of life? He IS our hope.
4. With the Presence (or “Glory” –they are synonyms) all things are possible – we can do anything!
   Matthew 19:26, “… with God all things are possible.”
5. Ephesians 3:20, “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us…”
7. Same is true today – same God, same Presence! With God there is victory over sin and death.
   Romans 7:24, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 8:1), “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,”
8. With God’s Presence, we can’t fail. Without His Presence, failure is assured.

B. It is possible to loose God’s Presence.
1. In Exodus 33, God is refusing to accompany them. Exodus 33:2-3, “I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 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.”
2. That is devastating and frightening. It is tragic to live without the Presence of God.
3. Ephesians 2:12, “…remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.” You were there once. Maybe still are. Maybe you are there again because of your own “stiff-necked” lifestyle.

C. There are conditions to having God’s Presence.
1. I know this is not a popular thing to say; we want to hear “unconditional love”. We want to hear that everybody is okay. This is simply not Bible and is simply not Truth.
2. The whole OT is about teaching people (Israel) how to live so that God will abide with them.
3. The New Testament teaches the same thing; though it is not simply about legal obedience, it is about the Spirit of obedience and obedience to the Spirit of the law. Which includes true and proper doctrine as well.
4. John 14:23-24. “Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”

5. Israel wanted God’s Presence. Moses had experienced it. Unless you have experienced it, you cannot miss it, but once you have experienced it you never want to be without it.


We ought value and desperately hang on to God’s Presence in our lives because…

II. God’s Presence is fundamental to the identity of who we are.

A. The very people of God!
   1. Exodus 33:12-16. “Moses said to the LORD, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ 13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.” 14 The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” 15 Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

2. In the New Testament, the world will see who and who’s we are by the very nature of God the very glory of God living in us. John 13:34, “…As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Here is HOW we are seen as true disciples, seen to be “children of God”!

3. Moses proceeds to ask the privilege of seeing the glory of God. God places him in the cleft of the rock; READ Exodus 33:19-23.
   a. Manifested here as God’s nature; God is merciful. God is demanding. God is faithful. God is true.
   b. Moses was privileged to see God’s “back”. In Christ we get more! KJV = “back parts”. One translation = “where I have passed” = It is a wonder to see even where God has been in His glory! Even that is visible! Surely anyone can look and see where love has been – where creative force has been – where compassion, where Truth have been. Christians ought to manifest all this! If God has been with us!

4. In Christ, we get to see the glory of God - and live! Cf. John 17:22-24. “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”

5. Acts 4:13. “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” Can people at least see that you have been with Jesus?

6. Let the Glory of God be seen in you! Let it shine through in everything you do!

B. Have you seen God? Do you know His “glory”?
   1. It is not a physical view that God promises to Moses, but a recital of character. Exodus 34:6. “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, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished…” God parades His NAME before Moses; “Name” is what He is like = what is His nature and character. Presence of God is identified by repetition of His Name; I AM, and this is what I AM; i.e.; by a description of His Essence that is Present and comprehensible.

2. God is NOT physical, He is spiritual. To see God, one must look for the right stuff – spiritual stuff, like love, honor, truth, “glory”, “goodness”. This is the essence of deity. This is what Jesus wanted disciples to see in Him.

No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”

4. Displayed in the church. Ephesians 1:22-23, “And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

So What?
God wants to be present in our lives. Wants to walk with us (you). To accompany us. Actually in us and amongst us! To be our God and for us to be His people. He “chose” Israel for that purpose, but they wandered, they were stiff-necked” and would not follow Him. He created you for that purpose. God wants to love us and abide with us, to lift us up on eagles’ wings, to hold us as His treasured possession. But for God’s Presence to accompany us, we must keep ourselves such that He can abide with us!

Closing Prayer:
Needing God’s Presence
Exodus 33:12-23

We ought earnestly value God’s Presence.
Why it is so desirable and essential for us to have God with us.

I. God’s Presence is so immensely desirable.
   A. There is unimaginable blessing in God’s companionship.
      Matthew 19:26   Ephesians 3:20   Romans 7:24   Romans 8:1

   B. It is possible to loose God’s Presence.
      Exodus 33:2-3   Ephesians 2:12

   C. There are conditions to having God’s Presence.
      John 14:23-24

II. God’s Presence is fundamental to the identity of who we are.
   A. The very people of God!

   B. Have you seen God? Do you know His “glory”?
      Exodus 34:6   John 14:6-10   Ephesians 1:22-23

So What?
We must keep ourselves such that He can abide with us!