

“Lessons Learned From Exodus”

Special Presentation

Scriptures in Exodus

The Rev. Ted Wood

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Ted: *“Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders,”* a God that reveals Himself, does not keep Himself hidden, reveals Himself to us as to who He is and who we are, and to who He calls us to be? We thank You that You are a God that we can meet face to face because of what Your Son Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, and by coming to live in our lives. And we thank You for these great and glorious things. In His name we pray. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Ted: Okay, folks. I don’t know if the speaker is close enough. What do you think? I don’t know; what do you think? It seems kind of far away to me.

Brave Man: Are you talking about the mike?

Ted: It’s the mike. What did I say, the speaker? I’m the speaker, and there’s the mike. Thanks; that’s as easy as it gets.

I got a call last Wednesday night that Jeff was not feeling well and was concerned that he might have COVID. I guess he already had it once. Yeah, I guess you don’t get it again. Well, at least that’s what they’re telling us now. So in any case I was asked to fill in.

I will tell you that I’m feeling fairly disoriented this morning. I just had a lot of things on my plate yesterday that I had to get done, trying to sell my business and a number of other things. And so I’m already apologizing in advance that this is a little rough.

But I’m glad to be able to do it because how long has this been going on with Brave Men? Twenty-some years? Twenty, twenty-five years? Twenty years?

Brave Man: Close to thirty.

Ted: Close to thirty.

Mike Davis: More than twenty-five.

Ted: You know, we are obliged to come and support it Friday after Friday; we are just obliged to do that, because there are very few things that go on for a long time in this world that have any persistence or longevity, and we’re just obliged to keep this up. And there are some of us that are not going to last another ten years. And God willing there will be others to take our place. But we just keep with this witness which is special amongst men. I think that in a world that seeks to eliminate or erase the distinctive qualities and character and calling of men, this is a place we need to maintain amongst it all.

When I said yesterday that I would do this, I’m teaching Exodus at my church, which is Elfinwild Presbyterian. And so therefore I said that what I will do is that I have been teaching Exodus since March; I just finished up chapter 16. So I’m taking it slowly. But I wanted to talk maybe a little bit about some of the things I’ve learned out of that teaching on Exodus.

Exodus is an absolutely significant book in the Bible. I would say that next to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Book of Exodus and the crossing of the Red

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Sea is a miracle, a phenomenal event that is second only to what Jesus did on the cross and His rising from the dead.

And so I’ve been watching and showing the class a movie, a video called “The Red Sea Miracle.” And I really didn’t realize that this is the same fellow who is doing the series of videos on “Patterns of Evidence,” which is about the story of the Exodus. Gary got me hooked on that, and so it’s part of my teaching.

But if indeed the crossing of the Red Sea took place at the Gulf of Akaba, the depth of the water there is anywhere from about 150 to 2000 feet deep. And that would take a miracle equal to the resurrection from the dead to accomplish that. So what happened to Israel, to God’s chosen people at the Red Sea and in delivering them out of Egypt through the Red Sea and on to Mount Sinai to receive the law is one of the great events that God has done. In fact that’s why I led the prayer from Exodus 15: *“Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?”* And that is a great question to be asked.

As I put the outline together yesterday I was pulling stuff out of my notes. And now that I see it I would rather kind of re-order it because it’s not where I want it to be. I really want to start with item #2, where Moses is questioned by God and given directions. Let’s look at that; Exodus 3:11-12. It talks about the burning bush. I’m beginning with verse 1.

“Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. And he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush.”

And then it goes on. And in verse 7 the Lord says, *“I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their suffering and have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.”*

And then verse 10. *“Come; I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”*

“But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?’”

“the LORD said, ‘But I will be with you. And this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt you shall serve God on this mountain.’”

And so that is the question. I’d like to start with #2 as I said. And the question that Moses asks is *“Who am I?”* And this is one of the three great questions that I’ve come to understand as the primary questions.

And the primary question is not *“What must I do to be saved?”* The primary question is who is God? That is the primary question.

The question that follows who is God Is who am I? That’s exactly what Moses asked. And then what does God want of me?

And as I began to study this I saw all these “who” questions in the Scriptures. I was thinking about that passage in 1 Kings the 18th chapter; I think it’s the 37th verse, where Elijah is fighting with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. And he comes up to the prophets of Baal, and he really questions who is there God. I mean, what is your god doing anyway? “Why is nothing happening to the sacrifice that we have laid out, to the two bulls that we have cut up and put on the altar? You’re praying that Baal will come down and consume this sacrifice, but nothing is happening. So who is your god anyway?” He doesn’t say “Who is he?” He asks, “What is he doing?”

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And then he asks some kinds of pejorative questions along the way. “Is he busy doing something else? Is he gone aside?” Some scholars believe that “*gone aside*” means that he’s gone off to relieve himself. “Is he on a journey? I mean, what kind of a god do you have anyway?”

So this is the primary question: who is God? We start off with that in the very beginning. And Exodus 5:2: “*Who is the LORD, that I should obey Him?*”, says Pharaoh. Good question, Pharaoh; good question. It’s a really good question.

“*Who is like You among the gods?*”—Exodus 15:11. “*Who is like You, LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them.*”

Psalm 35:

“*Who is like You, LORD God Almighty?*

You, LORD, are mighty,

And Your faithfulness surrounds You.”

Psalm 89. And then we get into the New Testament as well. The same kind of question keeps coming up. “*When Jesus entered Jerusalem the whole city was stirred. And they asked, ‘Who is this?’*” In the storm the apostles and the disciples “*were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the winds and waves obey Him!’*” I mean, indeed, who is this anyway?

“*Who is this who even forgives sins?*” That’s a really good question. “*Your sins are forgiven.*” “*Go and sin no more.*” But who is that who can do that?

“*Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?*” “Wow, that’s an amazing healing! I’ve never seen anything like that. Well, who is this anyway that is doing this kind of thing?” So this is the primary question we need to ask. And the answer to that determines everything from this point on.

I mean, it’s interesting that Genesis does not begin in chapter 3, which talks about what Adam and Eve are doing. It starts off in Genesis 1:1. Remember Bruce Bickel. This is what he always talked to us about—the most important verse in the Bible. What is it? It’s not John 3:16.

Transcriber’s Note: John 3:16, ESV. “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*”

Ted: It’s Genesis 1:1, which says: “*In the beginning God.*” I mean, that’s where you have to start.

I just have a very curious mind. And I think about this. How significant am I, that I should start the question of my purpose and direction in life, that I should start that with me? How significant am I? I mean, if you think about the seven-plus billion people that live on this earth, how significant am I? You know, who am I anyway? If you think about the number of people who have lived since modern man, it’s 107 billion people. Who am I anyway amongst that? I’m as nothing.

I’m a big fan of Jordan Peterson. He’s not a Christian. Do you know who he is? For all of you who know who Jordan Peterson is, he’s a psychologist from the University of Toronto. He’s been getting into a lot of trouble because he’s advocating free speech, and he’s very much against people insisting that he call people a him when they’re a her, and things of that sort. If you know who Jordan Peterson is, raise your hand.

He’s worth listening to; he’s definitely worth listening to. His videos have 700 million views on YouTube. He’s a significant player, and very bright as he’s thought all of these things out. He has a regular podcast that I listen to.

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He’s not a Christian; he’s not a Christian yet. But he talks like it. And he shares very openly about Jesus and who Jesus is. He talks about a dream that he had. And he said that he was in a graveyard. And in this graveyard there was a resurrection of people out of the ground in this graveyard. And when he saw who they were, they were the greatest kings and rulers that ever lived. And then One rose among them, and it was Jesus Christ. And they all bowed down to Him and worshiped Him.

Now that is a man who doesn’t claim to be a Christian. But he gets it. So I listen to the podcast that he has. And he was having a discussion with Lawrence Krauss. Lawrence Krauss is probably the leading cosmologist and physicist in the world today. He’s the fellow that discovered that the universe is not full of nothing, but of dark matter.

I know. You may have read this in the last year or two or three. This is a big discovery: that the universe is not empty. I mean, there are lots of planets and other things out there. But actually it’s filled up with dark matter.

And Lawrence Krauss, as brilliant as he is, does not believe in God at all. He has been a very confirmed atheist. And to the question that Peterson asked him, “What is the purpose of life? Where do you get your purpose and meaning in life?”, Lawrence Krauss answered, “There is no meaning and purpose in life, but only accidental moments.”

I mean, as I’m driving from Cain, Pa. to back home to see a client, I was so stunned by some of the things that were being said that I pulled out a notebook. As I’m going down the road at 70 miles an hour I’m taking notes on what’s being said because it’s so amazing: “only accidental moments.”

So we would say to Krauss, “Then who is God?”

“There is no God.”

“Well then, what is the purpose of life? What is the meaning of life?”

He says, “There is no purpose. We only have accidental moments in which we have pleasure. We take pleasure in accidental moments. But ultimately you have no significance at all. You’re just taking pleasure in accidental moments; that’s all that’s happening.”

And even though Peterson is not a Christian he pressed Krauss on this as to the absurdity of that statement. So that’s why we need to start off with the question then. Who is in charge here anyway? Because I’m not going to find out what significance I have out of seven billion or 107 billion people. I’m not going to find that until I find out who God is.

And that’s where Exodus takes us. “*Who am I?*”, says Moses. And Moses says, “Who is like You among the gods?” And the point of Exodus is that if you start off with God that’s where everything starts. Who is God?

That leads to the second question: who am I? And God tells me who I am. “God said, ‘I will be with you.’” Well, up to that point I have no significance except that this God of the universe attaches Himself and pulls me into Him. That’s the only time I have significance. I have no meaning and purpose in life outside of being connected and attached to the Lord God Almighty—the God who can part waters that are 2000 feet deep and raise the dead from the grave. That has never been done before. That’s the only time I do that.

And that’s where I get my distinction. That’s another important idea in Exodus—the distinction between me and everybody else. This is a term that you see repeated again and

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again in Exodus. The Lord says, *“I will make a distinction between you and the Egyptians.”*

And you’re right; that’s exactly what starts to happen. And on what basis is that distinction made? I mean, that’s the question I would ask you. Why does God make a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites, and we today and everybody else?

What is the distinction that God makes? Is it because the Israelites were better people than the Egyptians were? Was it because they led a holier life? Was it because they were more faithful to God than the Egyptians were? Is that why God makes the distinction? On what basis does God make the distinction? Who is God? Who am I? Why am I different and distinct from others? You tell me; I’m opening it up. What do you think? What is the basis on which that occurs?

Brave Man: God has chosen them.

Ted: Yes. In Exodus it says, “You are My people; I’ve chosen you. What makes you different from the Egyptians? The Egyptians aren’t chosen.” But I am chosen; that’s what makes the distinction.

And I think I want to go into this now. I did not put this in the notes. But it’s interesting. We have this incident in Exodus 17; let’s move to that if you don’t mind.

They’ve crossed the Red Sea. They’ve gone into the wilderness. God has provided manna, which is this supernatural feeding—bread, or whatever it is, and He has also provided quails. So that’s in chapter 16. Now in chapter 17 they’ve got bread and they’ve got quail, but they don’t have water; they need water.

So in chapter 17 it says, *“All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the Wilderness of Sin.”* That’s not like sins as in committing sins; that happens to be the Semitic word for a place. *“The Wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of God, and camped at Rephidim. But there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, ‘Give us water to drink.’”*

“And Moses said to them, ‘Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?’ But the people thirsted there for water. And the people grumbled against Moses and said, ‘Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?’

“So Moses cried to the LORD, ‘What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.’

“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel. And take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb. And you shall strike the rock, and the water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.’ And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, ‘Is the LORD among us, or not?’”

Now just think about that last line. They’d gone through the Red Sea. They’d seen nine plagues in which the Lord covered them and prevented them from suffering any of the plagues. They’ve seen all of this. They’ve gotten quail; they’ve gotten manna. And now they’re thirsty and they say, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

Well that’s a good question, depending on who God is. Maybe He’s like the god Baal. Maybe He’s taken a journey. Maybe He’s gone off for a while. Maybe He’s relieving Himself. Maybe He’s just not here. I mean, isn’t that the question we always have to ask

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ourselves when we get really concerned or disturbed or upset about something? We have to ask, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

But this story is even more heavy than you would think in these seven verses because there’s a lot that’s going on here. The people are thirsty. And what we see here is the progression of dissatisfaction with God. There are four steps, one of which is not revealed here. But you can imagine it and maybe you can guess it.

There are four steps to dissatisfaction with God, when you get dissatisfied with God. First of all you become dissatisfied in your mind. God is just not producing. I mean, gee whiz! We’re His chosen people. He has picked us out of all the nations and made a distinction for us. But He’s just not doing anything. I mean, I’m thirsty, Lord! Can’t You see what the issue is? So we think it in our minds.

It doesn’t say it in these first seven verses of chapter 17. But then we say it with our mouths. And we grumble.

Now the word *grumble* is not here in chapter 17, but it’s certainly in 16. If you read 16 the word is *grumbling*. The Israelites grumble. And the Hebrew word there means “to whisper.”

So there was a whispering campaign. “Oh gosh, things are tough, aren’t they?”

“Oh, I know; I know. We could have stayed in Egypt and not really have had to worry about it. You know, it was bad in Egypt; I understand; it was tough. But you know, at least we had the basics. Now we don’t even have the basics of life. We’re having to depend every day. We’ve got to go out and pick up this manna off the ground if we can store it. And if we store it for more than a day it goes rotten. And we just have to depend on this God. Who is God anyway? This Lord, we’ve got to depend on Him.” So they started to grumble.

That’s the next stage. You think about it. And then this dissatisfaction with God goes on to whispering about Him, gossiping about it.

And then the third step is that you quarrel. And the word *quarrel* in Hebrew has the sense of becoming an adversary to God and bringing a charge against Him. And there are people at this point that opt out of the faith, don’t they? Things get really tough and they start to quarrel. They become an adversary to God. The dissatisfaction is too great.

And then finally—and be sure you didn’t miss this one!—from the mind to the mouth—that’s the grumbling—to activism (quarreling), actually becoming an adversary to God, and then to violence, because what does Moses say? He said, “*What shall I do with this people? They are ready to stone me.*”

So dissatisfaction is from the thought to the whisper to the actual activism against God, and finally to violence. And it follows that path when we’re dissatisfied with God.

And this is what happens; watch this. Look at verse 5 in chapter 17. “*The LORD said to Moses, ‘Pass on before the people. Take with you some of the elders. And take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile.’*”

What was the staff that God used that was put into Moses’ hand? What was the purpose of that staff? Every time he did it, it was in opposition to Egypt and the gods of Egypt. It was the staff of judgment on the Egyptians. They said that Pharaoh was God. And Moses and the Israelites said, “No; the LORD Yahweh is God.”

So he took that staff. This is a staff of judgment. And the Lord says, “*I will stand before you on the rock of Horeb. And you shall strike the rock, and the water shall come out of it.*”

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Now why was God standing on the rock? Because it had moved from thought to grumbling to becoming adversarial. And they were going to judge God. They put Him on the rock before the elders. And they were going to judge God to see if He was really God, and if He would produce.

So they've come to this point. They feel like they have the authority to judge who God is.

But we find that today, don't we? Not only in our own personal lives, but we find it in the communities that we live in and with those we talk to. “That's good for your God. My God would never do what you're talking about.” But basically who is your God,. Then?

So this is an amazing scene, where God gets put on a rock and tried, because they talk about tempting. But the Hebrew word there also means “to put on trial.” They're putting God on trial. And God comes through as He always does. But He says, “I'm going to name this place to remind you that you quarreled and that you were actually activists and adversarial against Me, and that you were testing Me. You were trying Me; you were putting Me in the dock, as if I was one of you. And you asked me, ‘Is God among us?’ Well, here's the water. What do you think now?”

“Okay, we're convinced.” No more quarreling, no more murmuring, no more activism, no more violence. No, that didn't happen; it just goes on and on.

Let me just stop there for a second. I need to clear my brain for a second. Any thoughts that come out of this? Don?

Don Maurer: We've seen this throughout history too.

Ted: Yes.

Don: Karl Marx and Charles Darwin went through experiences of loved ones dying, or something like that. They turned against God. And as a result we have Communism and evolution, which pervades the scientific community today.

Ted: Yeah.

Don: And of course the violence that goes along with that.

Ted: Yes, those are the big boogie men. But there are much smaller boogie men that haunt our world. And that is the irrelevance of God; God is not relevant. In fact, the momentary accidents are very satisfying and we're content with them. That's where we are right now. There is not a concern for the things of God. Not that that's especially unique in history; we've gone through that. But we could be pointing to the Marxists and the Communists and everything else that's going on politically. But we would miss the whole issue of what's really going on in men's hearts, which is basically acting as if God is irrelevant. They don't disbelieve. They just don't want to be bothered by Him. That's the issue. Thanks. Yes. Please, Mike.

Mike: Thinking about my own life in regard to this, there are periods in my life where I'm unhappy with the way that God seems to be doing things.

Ted: Yeah.

Mike: And while who am I to complain about God, I certainly have fit into this category over the years at many different times. And when I see myself in that mode I think of Nehemiah who said, “*The joy of the LORD is my strength.*”

Ted: Yeah.

Mike: And when I see myself, and when I realize that I'm grumbling or frustrated with God, I certainly don't have the joy of the Lord at that point. My fear of the Lord has dropped.

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Ted: Yeah.

Mike: And when I begin to realize that, it’s time for repentance and turning back to the Lord.

Ted: Right.

Mike: It’s going to affect that relationship. My salvation doesn’t fall off the charts. But my relationship does.

Ted: Yeah.

Mike: So I find myself in that roller coaster from time to time whenever I don’t like what’s going on. So right now in the world we see so many different things happening that we should be grumbling about right now and saying, “God, what in the world are You doing? Don’t you know that this should have happened or that should have happened?”

Ted: Right, yes.

Mike: “Things should have happened differently politically in our country.” It’s easy to get discouraged about what happens.

Ted: Yes. If I were to say to you, “Mike, are you dissatisfied with God?”, you would say, “Oh no; I love Jesus.”

But I’d say, “Okay. It sounds like you’re dissatisfied with what’s going on in the world. And is He not still in charge? Does He not have the final say?”

I mean, somebody—a Christian--said to me the other day, “I’m really scared; I’m fearful.”

I said, “No, you can’t say that. I mean, Somebody said, ‘Fear not.’ Maybe He didn’t know what He was talking about.”

Mike: Right.

Ted: Maybe He made a mistake. Maybe when He said, “Fear not” again and again and again,--

“But wait a minute, Jesus. You didn’t think about this incident. That’s a fearful incident. That’s worth getting fearful about.”

“No; fear not.”

Mike: “Fear not,” except when—

Ted: Yeah, that’s right; exactly. “And I’m just not really satisfied with Your answer on that one; I really am not.” But I agree; it’s time for repentance.

I kind of liken it to this. And I’m not speaking to you personally; I’m just using you as a guinea pig. I would say, “Well what are your options, Mike? I mean, what options do you have? You’re not very happy with what God is doing in my personal life—with my wife, my family, my kids, my job, the political situation, my church. I’m not very happy with that, God. Maybe I need to do something.” That’s a good one. Well then, you need some of the prophets of Baal to come over here; maybe they’ll help you out. Get that fire going!

Really, what are your options? I mean, when Lawrence Krauss says that life has no purpose or meaning; it’s accidental moments in which you take pleasure, I say, “Do I have any other options beside that?” And you know, they said, “Well, there’s the Lord God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That’s an option that maybe you could consider. Why don’t you think about that?”

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“Why can’t you think about it?”

“Well, because that’s faith and that’s not fact,” or science, or whatever.

“Okay.” You see, it’s interesting that even Peterson who is not a Christian says that there is a built-in mechanism in all human beings that thirsts after God. He sees that. And he says to Krauss, “We know that to be a fact. Science has found that for the longest time, but you still won’t accept it. Why won’t you accept it?”

Well, if you listen to Krauss talk for two hours—which I did on the podcast; it was a long podcast; it got me all the way from Cain into Butler County—that’s how long it lasts on the back roads. But in the end, if you listen to Krauss speak, he’s really an angry person. He has a chip on his shoulder, and it comes out. He controls it; he’s a mature man; he understands how to control it. But in the end he’s got a chip on his shoulder. And he’s angry because he knows that his answer doesn’t work. Any option except God, any option. “Give me something else, please.”

“Well, I’m sorry; that’s all there is really.” And if you want love and justice that’s where you go; that’s where you get it, in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks, Mike, for sharing that. That’s exactly right. I mean, you highlighted that beautifully; thanks. Any other thoughts? Yes?

Ron Baling: You know, you were talking about the chosen. A lot of people say this about being predestined. How could a God of love condemn some and save some? They say, “That’s not a God of love.”

And I say, “Well, wait a minute. The only other option is that we’re all the same. (*Unclear*) I say, “Is that a God of love?”

Ted: You’ve got to start with this. The Scripture says, “Let God be God.” I mean, you’ve just got to let God be God, regardless of how uncomfortable it is, in the awful things.

When I was teaching this last Sunday one of the members of the class said, “They’re talking about the thirst of the Israelites in the desert. And the folks are getting to the point of activism because they’re not quarreling with God; they’re putting Him in the defendant’s box.” And the person said, “It’s interesting in this whole story that nothing is said about those who are thirsty.”

I mean, that would be the story line today, wouldn’t it? If they were reporting on this the news would say, “Oh my gosh! We had ten thousand people who were dying of thirst.” They would show the pictures of the babies, and they were dying. And there’s nothing like that in the whole story. There’s nothing in the whole story about the suffering of humans. It’s not “How are you suffering?”, but “What do you think about God? Can He still produce?” I mean, it’s really interesting, if you get your mind around it. It’s all God; it’s God-centered all the time, whether you like it or not.

And you might say, “I don’t like it, God!” But that’s the way it is. Well, there’s one other thought there. Who is God? Who am I? I thought when I was reading that, when Moses said, “*Who am I?*”, “that I should do this,” I said, “I’ll tell you who you are. You’re from ashes and dust; ‘ashes to ashes, dust to dust.’ That’s who you are, Moses. Do you want to do something? Do you want to be connected with God, or do you just want to be dust and ashes?”

I mean, those are your options. Once again, what are your options? There are really only two. Either you are dust and ashes and you go into nothing. You are nothing; you come from nothing; you mean nothing. There is no purpose or reason. Or “I can begin to

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use you. If you want to get connected with Me, that’s how we do it.” That’s where the meaning comes from.

“Well, that’s an illusion. That is a fairy tale.”

“No more of a fairy tale than believing that there’s meaning in ashes.” I’m trying to think who said it. If you don’t know the God who is loving and just—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—if you don’t know Him, then basically you’re saying that dust and ashes have meaning. And I’m sorry; I don’t buy it. It doesn’t make any sense to me.

And so we have who is God? Who am I? And what does God want of me? And God tells Moses what He wants him to do. It’s the third chapter, verses 11 and 12. *“When you have brought the people out of Egypt you will worship God on this mountain.”* And that’s what the purpose is; it moves in that direction. Let me see if I can find it on this sheet here.

Yeah, that’s on the back. What does God want of me? God tells Moses what He wants him to do. *“When you have brought the people out of Egypt,”* “you all”—plural—*“will worship God on this mountain.”* And so that’s really what He wants us to do. He wants us to worship Him.

We have a dilemma there, because in worshipping Him we must approach Him. And we’re approaching a holy God. We cannot approach a holy God. In Leviticus God is talking to Moses. In the 11th chapter He says, *“Be holy because I am holy.”* We cannot be holy; we cannot approach God on this mountain. We’ve been told to come to the mountain to worship God.

We have a huge dilemma. We cannot worship God unless we are holy. And therefore we must rely on Someone to make us holy. And we know that happens through the blood of Christ which covers our sins, but also by being put into Christ—Christ in me and I in Him.

The union with Christ means that when I approach the Father, it’s the same thing as Jesus approaching the Father. The blood covers my sins, but it’s a bigger thing than that. It’s a much bigger thing than simply the blood. It’s the unity with Christ. When I’m tied in with Him I embrace Him; I am pulled into Him. And so that’s how we end up with what I’m to do. I am to be holy and therefore to worship God, with all the things that God wants me to do. And therefore, once you get to Sinai in Exodus 20, from that point on you get the law. And there are all of those things you’re supposed to do. And after you get all the 600-and-some laws you’re supposed to do, you’re still left with a dilemma. I can’t do it. It’s like what Cain said after he slew Abel. He said to the Lord, “My burden is greater than I can bear.” If I think about all the things I need to do to be okay with God—to be holy—*“You must be holy because I am holy”*—after all that I’m still not good enough. There’s nothing I can do; He must do it for me.

It’s interesting. In the opening prayer of the Anglican Communion service the prayer ends up saying, *“Cleanse the thoughts of my heart, that I may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name.”*

“Cleanse the thoughts of my heart.” You know, if I just quit doing all kinds of bad stuff, my thoughts. It’s the same problem with the Israelites’ dissatisfaction with God; it starts in the mind. My thoughts are the problem. I can quit cussing, chewing and going with girls that do. (*Laughter*) I can get rid of all of that. I’m disciplined; I can become a monk. I can go sit on the top of a pillar like the monks did in Egypt back in the fourth and

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fifth centuries. I can do all of that. But I still have a problem with my head and what’s going on there.

“*Cleanse the thoughts of my heart.*” We pray as we approach God at the start of the Communion service. And we’re coming to be in the presence of God. Calvin saw the Communion as being picked up and taken into the presence of God, into the holy banquet with God. God blessed them for seeing it that way.

So we pray. “*Cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration*”—the breathing out; the inspiring “*of Your Holy Spirit, that I may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy name.*” Somebody was going to say something. Yes, Mike?

Mike: In regard to the question “what does God want of me?”, Micah 6:8 says, “*What does the LORD require?*”

Ted: Yes.

Mike: “*But to act justly and love mercy, and to walk humbly with the LORD your God.*”

Ted: Right.

Mike: And so act right and have a right attitude before God.

Ted: That’s correct. I like it. But it is never enough. Do you understand what I’m saying? What does Micah say? He says, “*Is this what I require of you?*” It says—

Mike: “*Act justly and love mercy, and walk humbly before the LORD your God.*”

Ted: So you know, the question then becomes, how are you doing with that? Well, I’m acting justly and walking humbly. But in my head I am dissatisfied.

I mean, even Bruce Bickel. Like I said, after sitting there at that great banquet we had,—thank you; that was a great event!—and the testimonies that were filmed. As I shared last week, after I sat through that I said that if Bruce Bickel is a Christian, I am not.

Brave Man: Amen.

Ted: I mean, you know that’s not true; I’m not saying that. But that’s the way I felt because of the man’s humility, the man’s discipline, the man’s devotion; I mean, unflapped. “We didn’t see you at the event. You weren’t there at the event.” For his place of work it was the Gay Pride event. “We didn’t see you there.”

“No, you didn’t.” I mean, I wish I had that within me. You know what I’d be doing? I’d be coming up with lots of reasons to make it okay, lots of justifications as to why I wasn’t there. Bruce didn’t care, did he? And he didn’t care because he cared about what God thought more than what he thought about his boss and what he thought. You know:

“Let goods and kindred go;

This mortal life also.

The body they may kill;

God’s truth abideth still:

His kingdom is forever.” (A Mighty Fortress is Our God.)

So I wish I could be like that. Yet even Bruce, as disciplined and as consistent and as committed as he was, he still has a big problem. So I’m not saying no; that’s what we need to do. But that still doesn’t leave me satisfied, because I see all the requirements of the law bearing hard on me and pressing me down all the time, unless I can become one with the One who made the law, and one with the One who satisfied the law. That’s my only joy in it.

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And then I love that verse where Jesus said, “*Where I am, there my disciple will be also.*” And it’s not only a challenge to have the disciple be consistently following Jesus, but it’s also a promise that wherever Jesus goes and He’s doing His work, He has promised to take us with Him, because I’m in Him. And because I’m in Him He’s taking me there. This is my satisfaction in life: that I am with Him and I’m going with Him because He has taken me in, not because I’ve been better than Bruce Bickel.

I apologize, guys; I’m just rambling a bit right now. But it’s good stuff, isn’t it? Any thoughts? I’m going to wrap it up in just a moment. There’s lots here; you can look it over.

Ron: You talk about comparing each other. You and I and someone like Mother Teresa, we all have one thing in common with the thief on the cross. (*Unclear*)

Ted: That’s right.

“Who was the guilty?

Who brought this upon Thee?

Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone Thee.

‘Twas I, Lord Jesus; I it was denied Thee.

I crucified Thee.”

That’s me. Luther said that in every one of our pockets are the nails. Luther said a lot of great stuff. He also had all kinds of issues though. Gary?

Gary: I just wanted to say that Jesus told us to trust God and know He is God. People don’t stop and think that the world was much worse then than it is right now. And we don’t realize that it was in the midst of difficulties that he said that. And we’re to have the peace of God working in our circumstances, wherever they might be.

Ted: Yup. There is no question that the world is a better place materially today than it was two thousand years ago. But the more satisfied we get with the world the less satisfied we get with God. That’s the issue. You know, it’s all good news, brothers and sisters. No sisters here; sorry. (*Laughter*)

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, we give You thanks for Your great mercy and kindness to us by incorporating us into Your life, by making us one with You, that in doing that we satisfy the requirements of the law. And You’ve given us a life, Your life to live, so that where You go we may be also. And we thank You for this. In Your name we pray. Amen. (*Applause*)