

Closer Week 3

“Closer to His Presence”

Message Recap

I. On the Move

God is on the move and He is inviting us to join Him. Just as God called Abraham and the children of Israel out of the place they were living, He is calling each of us out of the place that we are in. Whether spiritually, emotionally, or relationally, God is calling us to come closer each and every day. He is on the move and He is calling us to be as well. When we decide to stay and sit, we can become spiritually complacent. We have a degree of knowledge and closeness, but instead of pursuing Him further, we plateau and become like the Pharisees. We know *about* Him, but we stop *knowing* Him. When we stop getting closer, we begin to rely on traditions and not His presence. Imagine getting to know a friend very well but not being able to see or talk to them for a while. What if you decided that, instead of re-connecting, you would just watch the shows you used to watch together, eat at your favorite restaurant, and talk about how good things used to be? This is what our relationship with God can look like when we stop getting closer to Him on a daily basis.

II. Intentional

Moses was intentional in setting up the “tent of meeting” outside the camp. He knew what he was going to do - speak to God. Joshua was also there, right in the middle of God’s presence. Moses was teaching Joshua that seeking God was not haphazard or random, but completely intentional. Joshua learned this lesson quickly, and he would linger in the presence of God even after Moses had left. Joshua was inviting God to use him by staying intentionally staying close. He was unknowingly guarding and setting up his destiny in those times. In a marriage relationship, it can be easy to get into the routine of life and not intentionally spend time together. But any couple who has a successful marriage will tell you that spending intentional time together is what keeps a marriage strong. Our relationship with God must be intentional if we are to grow closer to Him. Many years later, in Joshua 3, Joshua would rely on that closeness as God led the children of Israel into the promised land. Joshua’s intentional approach to closeness with God set up his future.

Read and Discuss

Read Exodus 33

1. Is there a time in your life where you felt God asking you to move in an area of your life?
2. What are some ways that you personally use to move closer to God?

Read Joshua 3

1. How has drawing closer to His presence prepared you for your future?
2. What blessings and direction have you encountered as you move towards God?

EXODUS 33

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' **2** I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. **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."

4 When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments. **5** For the Lord had said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites, 'You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.'" **6** So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb.

The Tent of Meeting

7 Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. **8** And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. **9** As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. **10** Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent. **11** The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

Moses and the Glory of the Lord

12 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?"

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

18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

19 And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. **20** But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

21 Then the Lord said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. **22** When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. **23** Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Joshua 3

3 Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. **2** After three days the officers went throughout the camp, **3** giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. **4** Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits^[a] between you and the ark; do not go near it."

5 Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you."

6 Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them.

7 And the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. **8** Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: "When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river."

9 Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. 10 This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. 11 See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. 12 Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. 13 And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap."

14 So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. 15 Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, 16 the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. 17 The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.