



HEBRON

Sunday, July 30, 2023

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OUR MESS, OUR MEDIATOR, AND GOD'S MERCY

Exodus 32:1-35

Passage in a Sentence: Out of gratitude to the Lord and through His grace, let us do all we can to avoid sin, to quickly confess the sin we do not avoid, and to thank God for the mercy He extends to sinners.

1 Corinthians 10:6-7, 11 - "Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.' ... Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come."

THE FLOW OF THE TEXT:

- The people's committing of sin (32:1-6)
- God's refusal to compromise with sin (32:7-14)
- Moses' confronting of sin (32:15-20)
- Aaron's lack of confession of sin (32:21-24)
- The deadly consequences of sin (32:25-29)
- The cleansing/covering needed from sin (32:30-35)

WE CAN LEARN FROM ISRAEL'S FOOLISHNESS AND FAITHLESSNESS

- Their impatience
- Their ingratitude (Psalm 106:21; Acts 7:39-40)
- Their idolatry
- Their immorality
- Their consequences
- Sin has been the same since the Garden of Eden: a rejection of God's ways and an embracing of our own.
- If sin can happen in Eden and at Sinai then it can happen anywhere, which is why we are to always be on guard. Not just so we will not sin a lot, but that we will not sin at all.

WE CAN LEARN FROM AARON'S FEARFULNESS AND FAILINGS

- The purpose of the priests was to worship God rightly and to help others do the same.
- Nothing worse than a minister who gives the people what they want rather than what God wants.
- He let both the Lord and his brother be disrespected.
- Not only did he fail to stop their idolatry, he added to it.
 - Our putting the Lord's name on something is not the same as His putting His name in it.
 - It may have been a feast to the Lord, but it wasn't a feast with the Lord.
- He did nothing when their sin escalated into sexual immorality. (He let them break loose – v. 25)

- He minimized his role in the whole thing.
 - He had a clear view of the Israelites sin and sinfulness but not his own.
 - Duncan: Aaron's attempts at self-justification and self-protection are a picture of how sin infects us and makes us think, and they are a picture of how indefensible our excuses will sound before God.

WE CAN LEARN FROM MOSES' FERVENCY AND FORGIVENESS

- His God-centered prayers
 - He interceded based on the Lord's purposes, plans, and promises.
 - He appealed to God's faithfulness and not the people's.
 - Cole: Think about your prayers this past week and answer this question: How much did God's glory motivate and direct your prayers? Rather than just asking for what you wanted, were you consumed with the burden that God's person would be exalted, that His name would be hallowed, that His glory would be revealed?
- His dealing with sin
 - We cannot and must not gloss over sin.
 - Motyer: We are called to belong to the Lord and to be on his side and, therefore, to wage spiritual warfare against sin in ourselves, in the fellowship to which we belong and in the whole professing church.
- His love for sinners
 - Even after he knew they had disrespected him, he prayed for them.
- His insufficiency as a substitute
 - Moses the mediator - Blot me out.
 - Moses could not bear the sin of the others because of his own sin.
 - Moses was not sufficient for what he was volunteering.

WE CAN LEARN FROM GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

- His refusal to compromise His holiness
- His relenting from totally destroying the Israelites
 - Motyer: The Lord is changelessly faithful to his purposes, irresistibly set upon what he has, of himself, determined to do. It was not for any goodness in them that he chose Israel in Egypt, and here their lack of goodness did not make him change his mind. From beginning to end he loves us simply because he loves us (Deuteronomy. 7:7-9) and the love which brought us out will bring us in (Deuteronomy 4:37-38). God loves because he loves and is faithful because he is faithful. Our whole salvation is of God, beginning, middle, and end.
- His response to Moses' prayers
 - Grudem: God had said that He would send judgment, and that was a true declaration, provided that the situation remained the same. But then the situation changed: Moses started to pray earnestly. Here, prayer itself was part of the new situation and was, in fact, what changed the situation. God responded to that changed situation by answering the prayer and withholding judgment.
 - Our prayers are a part of God's providence.