

## That's Close Enough

### *Exodus 3:1-6*

#### Introduction:

- One of the great things about regular Bible reading and Bible study is noticing the formation of patterns – there is an interesting one in the book of Exodus that I'd like to discuss tonight
- This pattern has to do with God's desire to be our God and us to be His people
- He wants to bring us close, but our sins have made a separation between us and our God (Isaiah 59:1-3)
- We will look at this pattern in six passages and hopefully come to understand why it is important and what God ultimately did about it

#### Body:

- I. The Burning Bush – Exodus 3:1-6
  - A. v. 4 – God calls out to him
  - B. v. 5 – “Do not come near”
- II. Israel at Mt. Sinai – Exodus 19:1-4, 10-15, 16-19, 20-25
  - A. vv. 1-4 – God brings them to the mountain to enter into covenant with Him
  - B. vv. 10-15 – “Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death”
  - C. vv. 16-19 – Even the mountain says “Do not touch”
  - D. vv. 20-25 – “Go tell them again”
- III. The Elders Eat with God – Exodus 24:1-2, 9-11
  - A. vv. 1-2 – God invites a select group to come near
  - B. vv. 9-11 – There remains a separation between God and the people AND a threat of harm – “and He did not lay his hand on the chief men”
- IV. Moses at the Top of the Mountain – Exodus 24:12-18
  - A. vv. 12-15 – Moses is invited by God into the mountain
  - B. vv. 16-18 – Moses is held outside of the clouded glory of God for six days
- V. Moses in the Cleft of the Rock – Exodus 33:18-23
  - A. v. 18 – “Please show me your glory”
  - B. vv. 19-23 – You can't handle my glory
- VI. The Tabernacle / Temple – Exodus 40:34-35
  - A. Even the area around the tabernacle / temple shows us these levels of holiness that must be observed
  - B. The court of Gentiles (and the sign) – “No foreigner may enter within the balustrade around the sanctuary and the enclosure. Whoever is caught, on himself shall be the blame for the death which will ensue.”
  - C. The Court of Women

- VII. People Who Fear Coming Close to God
- A. The Israelites – Exodus 20:18-19
  - B. Samson’s Parents – Judges 13
  - C. Isaiah – Isaiah 6:1-5 (Peter in Luke 5)
  - D. Ezekiel – Ezekiel 1:28
  - E. John – Revelation 1:17

Conclusion:

- **We see this tension**, this cognitive-dissonance between coming close to God but our sins putting us in danger in the presence of God
- This was the reason for the strict rules of holiness for who could approach the Most Holy place: the people, the Levites, the priests, the high priest
- This is the reason for God’s response to Nadab and Abihu and Moses’ statement to Aaron in Leviticus 10:3, “Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.”
- So there is our problem – because of our sins, we can only draw so close to God’s presence
- **That is, until Jesus died on the cross** and the veil of the temple was torn in two – making access to God possible and further eroding the dividing lines between who can approach God – **Ephesians 2:14**
- **James 4:8** – “draw near to God and he will draw near to you”
- “It is, at one and the same time, Israel’s greatest privilege and blessing to know the one holy living God ... and also their sobering awareness that Yahweh is not a god to be trifled with.” (Christopher Wright, Exodus, 28)
- **And so, James continues** – “Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double-minded.”
- 1 John 3:1-3
- So the God who says, “That’s close enough” is also the God who sent His son to die for my sins and now stands at the door, knocking, asking to come in.”