

# EXODUS 24: MEET GOD

## SERMON-ALIGNMENT CURRICULUM

by Kevin McGill

### **Moving Toward God**

Exodus 24 shows us that faith is more than rules, law, or Sunday routine—it's about deep union with God. Whether in marriage, parenting, or our walk with Christ, the goal is oneness. This chapter outlines stages of faith, showing how people draw near to God.

Verse 1 says, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar." The elders could approach closer than the people, but only to a certain point. Then verse 2: "Moses alone shall come near to the Lord, but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him." The people had to stay back, the elders could come closer, but Moses alone ascended into God's presence.

It's like a concert: some remain outside, others get in to sing along, but only a select few get backstage. Moses has the ultimate access. Naturally, we wonder: if Moses could meet God, why can't I? That sense of being left out stirs in us. I felt it during the pandemic when, as an adoptive parent, I missed milestones—courtroom ceremonies, pediatric visits, even choosing my son's first glasses. Others experienced these moments, but I was kept outside. That same ache can exist in our spiritual lives.

Exodus 24 reveals a pattern: the people publicly proclaim their faith (vv. 3–8), the elders share a meal in communion with God (vv. 9–11), but Moses goes further into union with God (vv. 12–18). Dallas Willard notes this movement in spiritual life: obedience → communion → union. The invitation is clear: don't stop at the outer circle. Move past the wall. Go deeper, from words, to friendship, to oneness with God.

### **Group Discussion Question:**

**When you consider how close you are, how would you define your relationship?**

1. **Proclamation** - My relationship with God is most active in public. When I'm at a small group or at church on Sunday, my relationship with God feels active and alive.
2. **Communion** - I have a private friendship with God. We have discovered and have some things in common. Those commonalities is what makes my feel close to God.
3. **Union** - I enjoy simply being in God's presence. We've moved beyond needing to have something in common. God and I share a mutual, giving relationship.

### **I. Proclamation (vv. 3-8)**

Exodus 24 shows us the stages of faith. Verse 3 says, “Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, ‘All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.’” This was a public proclamation of obedience—a declaration, “I will follow God.” Baptism works in a similar way. It doesn’t save, but it proclaims publicly what God has done. Moses then built an altar, offered sacrifices, and sprinkled blood on the altar and the people (Ex. 24:4–8). The blood was the signature, ratifying the covenant. It symbolized the seriousness of their commitment: “By life itself, we will keep our word.” Public proclamation and symbolic acts of covenant are good. Accountability works best when we speak commitments aloud—whether in a diet plan, school, or discipleship. But words alone are not enough. Why? Because if our faith never moves beyond public spaces, it becomes hollow. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for this very thing. They made bold statements in front of others but had no private devotion—“You are like whitewashed tombs... full of dead men’s bones” (Matt. 23:27). A public faith without private obedience is hypocrisy.

We see this principle in everyday life. Out of 29 seasons of *The Bachelor*, only nine couples are still together. A public proposal didn’t guarantee private devotion. The same is true spiritually. Some of us have been baptized, expecting that moment to carry our faith for life. But later, we’ve asked: Is there more? The answer is yes. Faith must move beyond proclamation into communion—friendship with God—and further still into union—oneness with Him. Proclamation is the beginning. But God’s invitation is always deeper: to go beyond words, into communion and ultimately union with Him.

#### **Group Discussion Questions:**

**1. Like the Bachelor, what are other modern examples of people relying too much on public statements over private conduct?**

**1. In Exodus 24:8, the covenant was sealed with blood, showing how serious their promise was. What’s one way you’ve learned the difference between saying something lightly versus making a commitment that truly costs something?**

**2. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for being “whitewashed tombs” (Matt. 23:27). In our own time, what might be examples of a faith that “looks alive on the outside but is empty on the inside”?**

### **II. Communion with God (vv. 9-11)**

In Exodus 24, we see a movement from proclamation to communion. Verse 9 says, “Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness.”

The elders moved from the outer circle into a nearer place. They saw God and were not struck down (Ex. 24:10–11). Why? Because of their character. Back in Exodus 18:21, Jethro instructed Moses to

choose men who feared God, were trustworthy, and hated bribes. These elders represented Israel as men of integrity. Their reverence and obedience allowed them to draw near.

But notice what else verse 11 says: “They beheld God, and ate and drank.” Why include this detail? Because it matters. Meals in Scripture signify friendship. Jesus ate with sinners and tax collectors. Revelation speaks of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Food represents communion. The elders were not only near God—they shared fellowship with Him. This is the essence of communion: friendship with God. As C.S. Lewis described, friendship begins with the recognition: “You too?” In communion, we discover things we and God share—His Word, His mission, His love for people. Many here live in this stage. You love Scripture, missions, or theology. And in those shared loves, you sense closeness with God.

But friendship alone is not enough. Friendships can fade when common interests shift. If communion is only built on shared passion—missions, theology, or community—then when those change, faith feels distant. This is why many young adults deconstruct. Their faith was tied to church culture or youth group friendships, not deeper union with God Himself. Communion is good and necessary. God invites us further still—not only friendship, but oneness. Communion points us forward to union.

#### **Group Discussion Questions:**

**1. The elders “beheld God, and ate and drank” (Ex. 24:11). Throughout Scripture, meals often symbolize relationship—Jesus ate with sinners (Luke 5:29–32), and Revelation describes the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).**

***What does it mean for you that God invites His people not just to obey Him, but to sit at His table as friends? How might that reshape the way you think about prayer or worship?***

**2. Exodus 18:21 says the elders were chosen because they feared God, were trustworthy, and rejected bribes. Their integrity allowed them to draw near. Yet later, friendships and passions can fade if they’re not rooted in God Himself.**

***What qualities or practices help keep your relationship with God steady, even when your interests, stage of life, or community changes? (See John 15:4–5 about abiding in Christ.)***

### **III. Union with God (vv. 12-16)**

What Moses had—and what Jesus modeled—was a relationship with God that didn’t need a mediator, a purpose, or even something in common. It was simply love for the other person. This is what we call union. In Exodus 24:12–18, the Lord called Moses up the mountain, past the people and the elders, into the cloud of God’s presence. Moses experienced a depth of relationship that went beyond proclamation and even beyond communion. Naturally, we ask: Why Moses and not me?

Numbers 12 gives us the answer. When Miriam and Aaron challenged Moses, the Lord intervened. He said, “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known in a vision... Not so with my servant Moses. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord” (vv. 6–8). Moses alone spoke with God directly, as one speaks with a

friend. Why? Verse 3 tells us: "Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people on the face of the earth."

The key to union with God is humility. Humility doesn't mean thinking less of yourself or more of yourself—it means thinking of yourself less. The best human relationships are formed not by two people seeking to take, but by two people coming together to give. Union with God happens the same way: not through agendas or shared projects, but through surrender.

This is what Jesus embodied: "Though he was in the form of God, he humbled himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:6–7). In John, he prays that we would abide in him, and he in us, just as he abides in the Father (John 15:4; 17:21).

Proclamation declares, communion befriends, but union gives itself wholly. My prayer is that we would not settle until we experience that union with God.

#### **Group Discussion Questions:**

**1. Numbers 12:6–8 shows Moses had a unique intimacy with God—"With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord." The text points to Moses' humility as the key (Num. 12:3).**

*How does humility—thinking of yourself less—practically open the door to deeper union with God in your daily life? What might it look like for you this week?*

**2. In Numbers 12:6–8 God distinguishes Moses from all other prophets, saying He speaks to him "mouth to mouth, clearly and not in riddles." Yet in Christ, we are told "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory" (John 1:14), and through the Spirit we are invited into abiding union (John 15:4–5).**

*How should we understand the shift from Moses' unique union with God to the New Covenant reality in Christ, where such intimacy is extended to all believers?*

**3. Philippians 2:6–7 describes Jesus humbling himself, taking the form of a servant, while John 17:21 records his prayer that we would share in the oneness he has with the Father.**

*What does it mean for you that union with God is not just about your surrender to Him, but also about God opening Himself to you in love? How might that change the way you approach prayer or worship?*