

EXODUS 19 - Meet on the Mountain

Sermon Outline Handout

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Meet on the Mountain – Exodus 19

I. Meeting God: Israel's Betrothal

Israel is about to meet God at Mount Sinai. They have heard stories of Him from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They've seen signs and wonders. But they do not yet know Him deeply.

Michael Fishbane notes that *"brought you to myself"* is deeply relational and intimate, suggesting divine wooing.

How does God woo us?

1. **Rescue** – He saves us to know us.
 - Exodus 19:4 – "I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself."
2. **Unhappiness** – He allows emptiness so we seek Him.
 - Ecclesiastes 1:2 – "Meaningless, meaningless... everything is meaningless."
 - The pursuits that once satisfied – games, money, sex, grades – begin to feel hollow.
3. **Doubt** – A sign you want the real God or nothing.
4. **Joy** – Every joy is an agent pointing to Him.
 - Psalm 16:11 – "In your presence there is fullness of joy."

II. Prepare to Meet God

Exodus 19:10-15

God calls Israel to consecrate themselves, wash their garments, abstain from sex, and set boundaries around the mountain.

Why?

Preparation is natural for love.

Like dating and marriage:

- First dates require preparation.
- Engagements require preparation.
- Weddings require preparation.

Preparation is an act of love and respect.

Preparation Plan:

1. **Wash garments.**
 - Symbolic of removing sin's stain.
 - In their culture, robes carried dirt, bacteria, and disease (products of a fallen world).
God's holiness requires cleansing.
2. **Set boundaries.**
 - God is holy, entirely other. This protected them from destruction in His presence.
3. **Abstain from sex.**

- Sexual intimacy is a profound act of bonding. God wanted their full, undivided focus as He entered into covenant with them.

Like the fable of **The Wind and the Sun**:

- The wind could not force the man to remove his coat.
- The sun simply shone brighter, and the man willingly took it off.

God's holiness is not a forceful tearing away of your sins. It is His radiant love shining so brightly that anything not of love is burned away.

III. Meeting God: Terror and Love

Exodus 19:16-25

Thunder, lightning, thick cloud, trumpet blasts. The mountain trembled as God descended.

Israel trembled too. This was not the shepherd Jesus they expected. This was God in His full holiness.

The Challenge of Incompatibility

This is the moment in every romance story where incompatibility seems insurmountable:

- God is holy, perfect, powerful.
- We are frail, sinful, finite.

Tim Keller says:

"If you met someone you really admired – a famous person, a brilliant thinker, a world leader – you would feel nervous. How much more then to come into the presence of the infinite God?"

IV. Sinai vs. Zion

At Sinai, they met God with fear and trembling. But God does not leave us at Sinai. He brings us to **Zion**.

At Sinai:

- Thunder, lightning, fear.

At Zion:

- Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.
- God Himself died so that we could meet Him without fear.

"You have come to Mount Zion... to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant... to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word." Hebrews 12:18-24

Conclusion

God moved from Sinai to Zion so that **He could be with you**. The story of Exodus, and the whole Bible, is God's desire to dwell with His people.

Today, He invites you: **"Meet Me on the mountain."**

Not in terror, but in love, because Jesus has made the way.