

Exodus: People and Presence

[Exodus 33:1–23](#)

Because of Israel's idolatry, God declares that he will not travel with them into the Promised Land, sending an angel in his place. In response, the people sorrowfully repent, shedding their riches in humility. Moses intercedes for them, begging God to go on with Israel. God graciously agrees, and even grants Moses' greatest desire: to see his very presence.

Application

1. Godly sorrow is marked by repentance and obedience. Is there an area of your life in which you are willfully sinning? What would it look like for you to mourn your sin and repent by giving up the source of your idolatry?
2. If you have recently repented of sin, are you, like the Israelites, humbly waiting to see how God will respond and guide you, or are you impatient for him and others to provide relief to the tension you feel?
3. How are you imitating Moses by desiring God's presence more than God's promise—seeking after God himself more than the benefits of a relationship with him?

Key Points

- The ultimate goal of the Exodus was for God to dwell with his people. All other benefits were byproducts of God's presence, and the same is true for us.
- It is out of mercy—not capricious pettiness—that God withdraws himself from Israel. Their rebellion makes them unsafe in the presence of a holy God.
- The journey from repentance to restoration is slow and full of uncertainty.
- The treasury of God's goodness is open to those who persevere and linger with him, who ask him for more of himself.

Other Scripture References

[1 Corinthians 10:1–7, 11](#)

[Exodus 29:45–46](#)

[Matthew 13:17](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:10](#)

[Colossians 1:24](#)

[Matthew 16:24](#)

[Matthew 7:14](#)