

“Birth of a Nation” (2-2-20)

Introduction: Through the Bible this year we will consider: “Little Picture” and “Big Picture”

Our reading this week: Exodus 16-34 (A few stories, giving of the Law, the establishment of worship)

Overview: God is establishing a new nation from a people who were 400+ years in slavery!

Consider how you view this 2nd half of Exodus, and the coming books of Leviticus & Numbers

It may seem tedious, but don't get lost in the details!

God is giving them a profound gift: A firm foundation for a new nation. Who they are to be, how they are to live. He is their King and the source of their new Identity.

Exodus 19:3-6 (ESV)

(3) . . . The LORD called to (Moses) out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: (4) You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. (5) Now therefore, **if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples**, for all the earth is mine; (6) and you shall be to me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

Note: God says this is what I plan to do with you - you will be my treasure and my reflection to the rest of the world I love.

Exodus 19:7-8 (ESV)

(7) So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. (8) All the people answered together and said, "**All that the LORD has spoken we will do.**" And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.

Note: The people say - we're in! There's just 1 problem . . .

***It only takes a few days to get them out of Egypt. It's gonna take a lifetime to get Egypt out of them.**

This Morning: 3 pitfalls to the establishment of becoming the “People of God”

1) Complaining

Exodus 16:2-3 (ESV)

(2) And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, (3) and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

The Problem: A Complaining Mouth sows the seeds of Bitterness which grows into a Hardened Heart

The Solution: Gratitude!

Exodus 15:2, 17-18 (ESV)

(2) The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. . . (17) You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established. (18) The LORD will reign forever and ever."

Note: Gratitude is an essential part of Worship, and the anti-dote to Complaining, Bitterness, & a Hard Heart

When you hear a good song, do you just nod your head and say - "I really agree with these lyrics"?

Of course not - you sing! Gratitude is meant to be expressed.

Worship - you don't have to do it a certain way, but expression is required! Gratitude has to be verbalized!

In the midst of their complaining, God provides a solution to their problem . . . Manna

2) Controlling

Bread from Heaven - The Daily Provision of Manna (Exodus 16:4-18)

1 stipulation - only collect what you need for today. Besides, it won't even last till the next morning . . .

Exodus 16:19-20 (ESV)

(19) And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning." (20) But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

Note: It seems so simple - just trust God he'll give you what you need. Yet the minute we think we can be back in control, we try to seize it!

***Things get even better - they get a day off . . .**

Exodus 16:25-26 (ESV)

(25) Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. (26) Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none."

Note: Not only is daily bread promised and provided for as long as they live in the wilderness, but a double portion promised on the 6th day so they could rest on the Sabbath!

Exodus 16:27-28 (ESV)

(27) On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. (28) And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws?"

Note: They are even "commanded" to take a day off, and they refuse to do it. They go out to work and it is un-productive.

Why do we control? When it comes to God's Grace (un-merited favor) we set our sight to low!

We not only try to arrange and control our circumstances, we try to control and manipulate His Grace!

The Problem: We fight for Control**The Solution: Surrender - (Trusting - Faith in Action) Choose to trust, choose to follow****Exodus 16:29-30 (ESV)**

(29) See! The LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day." (30) So the people rested on the seventh day.

Note: To my fellow control freaks - we have to choose to surrender control. When God invites us into His Kingdom, he makes it very clear - there can only be 1 King on the Throne.

***Will we decide to surrender and trust in His Grace?**

3) Compromising**Exodus 32:1-4 (ESV)**

(1) When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." (2) So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." (3) So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. (4) And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"

Note: Waiting on God is hard. Trusting in His character is difficult, especially when it contradicts what is most valued in the culture around us, or what we most crave in this moment.

We face real temptation to make arrangements for our own satisfaction, and the first thing we do is look around at how others seem to be arranging for their own satisfaction. . .

They most likely were not worshipping "other gods", but they were most definitely making a graven

image of God (settling for something less than). They learned this from the Egyptians.

Beware the dangers of looking back!!! (consider: Lot's wife, and the judgement we see here too)

Exodus 20:1-6 (ESV)

(1) And God spoke all these words, saying, (2) "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (3) "You shall have no other gods before me. (4) "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (5) You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, (6) but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Note: Accurate representation of God is absolutely essential!

The Problem: Compromise. We turn to the surrounding culture, and we make God in an image of our devising.

The Solution: Purity (Be holy as I am Holy!) This is about being set apart - leaving our old life behind.

The solution to the problem of compromise is to stop creating God in our image, and to allow him to form us into His image and likeness!

It takes courage to be pure, it takes real love to take a stand for truth . . .

Exodus 32:21-24 (ESV)

(21) And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?" (22) And Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. (23) For they said to me, 'Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' (24) So I said to them, 'Let any who have gold take it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."

Note: In this story Aaron and the People mirror Adam & Eve at the Fall

- It's time for more of us to stand up!
- To know the truth and holdfast to it and accurately represent it to the people entrusted into our care!

Conclusion: We are prone to Complaining, Controlling, & Compromise, but the solution is readily available . . .

Developing a heart of **Gratitude**, **Surrender**, and **Purity**. This is what it means to **Worship!**

Worship is what the 10 Commandments are all really about - Worship is the expression of Love . . .

Matthew 22:36-40 (ESV)

(36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (37) And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (38) This is the great and first commandment. (39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (40) On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Note: Loving God (The first 4 Commandments) **Loving People** (The last 6 Commandments)

This section of Exodus with the giving of the Law, and the failure of the people comes to a conclusion . . .

Genesis 34 - God re-affirms the covenant based upon His Character

Exodus 34:5-9 (ESV)

(5) The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. (6) The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "**The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,** (7) keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." (8) And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. (9) And he said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance."

- God says, "I am merciful, gracious, loving, faithful, and just"
- Moses responds with worship and repentance.
- May we do the same!