

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

**"THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS...FOR WHAT?" | EXODUS 19 | PASTOR BRIAN**

## **WARM-UP QUESTION:**

What is the most unique or interesting phobia you've heard of? (or have yourself!)

### ***"Salvation by Grace, Obedience, Blessings" - (Exodus 19: 1-8)***

God tells Moses to remind the people that He rescued them from Egypt and now is asking them to obey Him in order to be His chosen people. What does it say about God that He saves first and then asks for obedience?

### ***"Terrifying Yet Beckoning God" - (Exodus 19: 9-20)***

God warns the people and shrouds His glory in a cloud to not overwhelm and destroy the Israelites. What characteristics of God stand out in this section?

### ***"Go Down Moses" - (Exodus 19: 21-25)***

God uses Moses as a mediator to connect to the Israelites, foreshadowing later how Jesus is our ultimate mediator through his sacrifice on the cross? How does knowing Jesus can be your mediator impact you?

## **REFLECTION QUESTION:**

Pastor Brian closes with showing how the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, how it leads to healthy obedience instead of legalism or behavior management. A true view of God's glory will remind you of how small and imperfect you are and that will lead to shock as you realize how much He loves you. When was the last time you thought of how holy God is? What needs to change so you can be more aware of His Glory?

## *The Fear of the Lord is ... for what?*

### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-6 AP: Men's. **Ladies**. ATOM. Community Groups. C@R.
- B. Slide7-10 I will intro **Jasmine** as our new *Calvary Kids Director*.
- C. This Wed Night pstr Dan picking up 1st Pete.
- D. Prayer: *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.*

### II. Slide11 Intro: *The Fear of the Lord is ... for what?*

- A. Listen to the story of a storm a **parakeet** named **Chippie** never saw coming!

One second he was peacefully perched in his cage. The next he was **sucked in, washed up, and blown over**. The problems began when Chippie's owner decided to clean Chippie's cage with a vacuum cleaner. She removed the attachment from the end of the hose and stuck it in the cage. The phone rang, and she turned to pick it up. She'd barely said "hello" when "**ssssopp!**" Chippie got sucked in. The bird owner gasped, put down the phone, turned off the vacuum, and opened the bag. There was Chippie - still alive, but stunned. Since the bird was covered with dust and soot, she grabbed him and raced to the bathroom, turned on the faucet, and held Chippie under the running water. Then, realizing that Chippie was soaked and shivering, she did what any compassionate bird owner would do . . . she reached for the hair dryer and blasted the pet with hot air. Poor Chippie never knew what hit him. A few days after the trauma, the reporter who'd initially written about the event contacted Chippie's owner to see how the bird was recovering. "*Well,*" she replied, "*Chippie doesn't sing much anymore - he just sits and stares.*"

1. Slide12 **Chippie** reminds me of what **Ezekiel** must've looked like after *seeing his vision of God* in ch.1 of his book, where he tries to explain it. [he sees a whirlwind. Then 4 living creatures w/wings, wheels, noise. Then he sees **God**, in brightness, rainbow, throne, sapphire, amber. Then in Ch.2 he falls on his face, God speaks to him to **get up**, he looks like **Chippie**, he can't get up. The Spirit picks him up & God commissions him]

2. Chippie also reminds me of what ***the Israelites*** must've looked like after Ch.19.
- B. Slide13 Ex.19 marks the arrival of the Israelites at Sinai.
  1. They'll meet with **God** and receive **the law** and **God's instructions for the priesthood, sacrifices, offerings, and the tabernacle.**
  2. Before Israel leaves Sinai, they'll have everything needed to **function as a nation** (except the land itself).
  3. **The law** informs them **how to approach God and live with their fellow citizens**. It was, in effect, **a national constitution** designed for Israel's theocratic kingdom. (it providing Israel's national and spiritual identity)
    - a) If Egypt was their **coming out**, then Sinai was their **coming in.**

### III. Slide14a SALVATION BY GRACE. OBEDIENCE. BLESSINGS. (1-8)<sup>1</sup>

- A. The Israelites *trusted Moses* and left Egypt with him. Buuut so far, he leads them in the wrong direction (*not N but S/E*), **and** there's no milk & honey ... in fact, *it's desert!*
  1. Maybe you feel the same way. Ever since you were born again things got worse not better. More desolate. More lonely. *But there in that lonely place, they met the living God. But, we have forgotten how dangerous it is to come into the presence of the living God.*<sup>2</sup>
- B. (Re-read 4-6) Salvation by Grace (4). Obedience (5a). Blessings (5b,6). (this order can never change) I saved you, now obey me. **Not, obey me and I will save you.** This is the past/present/future. This is the Gospel!
  1. Slide14b **Salvation by Grace/past/what He did (4)** - *what I did to the Egyptians & how I bore you on Eagles wings and brought you to myself.*
    - a) what I did to the Egyptians - He humiliated **Pharaoh's gods** one by one!
    - b) how I bore you on Eagles wings - You didn't fight your way out Egypt (or **we** didn't fight our way out of the world) **He** scooped you out. *On eagles wings* is

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Timothy Keller, *On the Mountain*.

<sup>2</sup> Annie Dillard, book *Teaching a Stone to Talk*.

shear grace. This fierce bird of prey is also a bird of rescue. Wonderfully portrayed in J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy *The Hobbit*. Moses uses this same image in Deut, representing God's protective nurture & tender care, where it hovers over its young. Eaglets are especially hopeless, remaining in the nest for as many as 100 days.

- c) *and brought you to myself* - the Exodus was not just about getting Israel out of Egypt; it was about getting Israel close to God.

(1) This is also true of salvation. Salvation is never an end in itself. There's always **something greater**, and that is **God Himself** and our **fellowship with Him**. Hallelujah!

- d) So God delivered them, carried them, and saved them **to Himself**. And now God has brought us out, and now He is lifting us up and drawing us close.

2. Slide14c **Obedience/present/why He did it (5a)**. *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant,*

- a) Just as God saved the people of Israel first; then He called them to obey His law. So today God rescues us from our sins; then He teaches us **how to live** for His glory.

3. Slide14d **Blessings/future/plans for the future (5b,6) [3-fold]** *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.*

- a) God's treasure - this is one of the **highest titles** that anyone could possibly be given. The Hebrew word סֶגֻלָה (səgūllâ) indicates royal property. It's the most prized possession in a king's personal treasury. [read 1 Chron.29:3]

- b) a kingdom of priests - meaning **every single person** in the kingdom is called to serve and worship God.

- c) a holy nation - a nation or a people **set apart/holy** for God, and dedicated to serving Him in all of life. Israel was chosen not only **from** the nations, but also **for** the nations. *All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.* Gen.12:3

4. Peter took the words of Moses and applied them directly to the church of Jesus Christ, **You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,**

*a people belonging to God.* 1 Pet. 2:9

#### IV. Slide15 TERRIFYING YET BECKONING GOD (9-20)

##### A. Our God is not a *warm and fuzzy*.

1. Let's see how He's revealed Himself: He appears to **Jacob**, as a powerful wrestler. He appears to **Job**, as a hurricane/tornado. To **Moses**, he's a blazing fire, twice. He appears to **Joshua**, but as a man of war armed to the teeth. Again to **Moses** later in Exodus 33, he says to God, *show me your glory*, to which God responds, *I can't it will kill you*. What is so terrifying about God?
2. Why are the people so terrified? Were they just afraid of getting struck by lightning? No. It's much more profound than that. See the *holy* nature of God doesn't have to be accompanied by **visual** and **auditory** backup.
  - a) We are in deep denial of how bad we really are. We as good Christians know to say things like, *I'm the chief of sinners*, but we still believe in some degree we can look in the mirror & think, *I'm doing pretty good. I'm a pretty good person*. We still have a self-image based largely on our virtue.
  - b) But if we really knew how **sinful** we were, we would probably **die**, we would have (as Timothy Keller calls it) *a self-quake*.
    - (1) We are watching this unfold in the **Tokyo Olympics**. Men and women who have dominated their field, in their hometowns, in their states, in their countries. Now on the world stage ... we watch the devastating *emotional & mental pressure* to perform their best, *in front of man*. Then what is it to get into the very presence of **God**.
      - (a) A sense of the **greatness** of God makes you feel tiny.  
A sense of the **holiness** of God makes you feel so impure.  
A sense of the **beauty** of God makes you shrivel and feel ugly.
    - (2) See, when you read certain things in Scripture **you want to run for cover**. i.e. The sermon on the Mount: *look at a woman with lust, committed adultery in your heart. Have anger, it's like murder*.

(3) Martin Lloyd Jones, *If anyone read the Sermon on the Mount with an open mind they would fall down and cry out, God save me from the sermon on the mount.* Because what you're experiencing without the thunder and the lightning is *the holiness of God.*

B. Slide16 CS Lewis quote, *An impersonal God -well and good.*

*A subjective God of beauty, truth and goodness, inside our own heads-better still. A formless life-force surging through us, a vast power which we can tap-best of all. But God himself, alive, pulling at the other end of the cord, perhaps approaching at an infinite speed, the hunter, King, husband-that is quite another matter.* C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*

C. Slide17 (16) Note, He also comes **in a thick cloud** - The clouds that surround God's presence **show** his divine glory, **but** they also **hide** it.

1. Yes God is actually impossible to bear. And yet He is shrouding, not abandoning or diminishing His glory. So that He could accommodate Himself to live amongst his people. To grace them with a **Presence**, which in its **awful holiness**, would otherwise spell their destruction.

Alec Motyer

2. God is saying, *I still want you to be in My life, and I know we have a problem.*

a) But how can such a **holy God** dwell w/sinful mankind? Ohh, it's the Fire AND the Cloud.

b) He wants *holiness and justice and truth*, **and** to hold us in his arms. *How is that going to happen? It will take a Mediator.*

V. Slide18a **GO DOWN MOSES (21-25)**    Heb 12:18-29 and 1st Peter 2:9.

A. Moses, go down and be their mediator. Moses is the Man on the mountain, *Moses go down.*

1. Moses will **warn** them, Moses will **keep** them from perishing.

2. Now read Heb.12:18; 22-24 it lets us in on this, *Jesus is our mediator.*

- a) **Slide18b** 18 *You have not come to a physical mountain, to a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai ...*  
 22 *No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering.* 23 *You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.* 24 *You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.*
3. So Moses kept them from being killed by God, but Jesus kept us by his blood crying out from the cross, “Grace. Grace! Accept them! Yes, they have sinned, but I have paid their penalty.”
4. **Slide18c** What Jesus experienced on the cross was *Sinai*: Mt.27:45;50,51  
 45 *Now from the 6th hour there was darkness over all the land until the 9th hour ...* 50 *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.* 51 *And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.*
- a) *The curtain torn* (i.e. *the cloud*). The *curtain* kept the people from being killed by the Shekinah glory. Jesus was shaken. *The darkness came down on Jesus. The judgment came down on Jesus. The thunder & lightening came down on Jesus.* Thus we don't any longer need the veil because the holiness of God comes down & dwells within us. We are the Temple now.
- b) This should change our prayers. This should change our holiness. This should change our very character. *Let's behold our God.*

## VI. **Slide19** *The Fear of the Lord is ... for what?*

A. *The fear of the Lord is* starting w/the right view of the **Holiness** of God.

1. It is NOT the idea of fearing an abusive father, or any unhealthy fear that would make us want to run away from Him.
2. It is NOT the idea of standing before the ocean where you feel a sense of reverent awe ... because that's so *impersonal*.
3. Instead, it is like when Peter 1st saw *the glory & power of Christ* his response was, *depart from me. I'm a sinful man*, Luke 5:8.
4. When you see God for **who He is**, you would never think of trying to solve your sin problem yourself.
  - a) But *a true fear of the Lord* realizes you can't run from God, and the only option is *to run to Him*. And when you do, you find the embracing arms of a loving Father.

B. The fear of God is incredibly *Practical*. [Proverbs, *fear of Lord* 13 x's]

1. In Proverbs it says, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*, and wisdom isn't just *knowledge*, it's knowledge applied.
  - a) It's not just smarts, it's *street smarts*. It's the *know-how*. Jeremy Treat, TGC
  - b) It's **God-centeredness** that shapes everything else in your life. It's building your life **around God**. It's **taking God more serious** than anything else.
2. And this has very practical implications on *how we battle sin*.
  - a) If you have accountability groups, you can lie to them.  
If you have filters on your computers, you can learn the workarounds.
  - b) \*We often try to manipulate and manage our behaviors, but that's **behavior management** instead of ... (listen) ... *true growth and holiness* comes from seeing God for **who He really is**.
3. He's holy. He deserves our reverence, and our respect, and our obedience.
  - a) Don't confuse **legalism** with **obedience**. Legalism should be rejected (trying to work our way to God), but **obedience** is a good thing that comes from the commands of a gracious Father *who knows what's best for us*.

4. It seems counterintuitive. But the more you *fear the Lord* and *see Him as high and lifted up*, the more you actually get to experience Him *in intimacy*. We fear that *if we fear God*, He'll be so distant we won't be able to relate to him. **But** it's just the opposite biblically ... it's actually the person who *gets to draw near to Him*.

C. Keywords: fear of the Lord, Sinai, grace, obedience, blessings, eagles wings, chosen people, treasure, holy, priesthood, terrifying, thick cloud, Moses, mediator.