



# Message **Transcript**

## The Purpose of Godâ€™s Presence

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Pastor Jeff:

Father in heaven, we give you glory on this rainy day in Denver, Colorado, Lord, that you are providing for us. Lord, we thank you that you are going to speak to us this morning and that Lord, you have a specific word for everybody that is listening. Father, we give you praise because we believe that every time your word is opened up and it is faithfully and accurately proclaimed, Lord, that you have a message for us. And so Lord, our desire is to hear you.

So our hearts cry as speak, Lord, for we are ready to hear what it is that you have to say. So now for all those who have gathered who desire to hear the Lord Jesus Christ to will believe what he says and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you this very day. Will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word amen? Amen.

As we've been in the Book of Exodus last week, we talked about one of my favorite topics, which is the presence of the Lord and we talked about how important it was for us to posture ourselves rightly before him, how we needed to be of a mindset of Lord change me, how we had to commit time, how we had to be devoted to the relationship, how we had to have a hunger for worship.

All of those things are true, but we need to understand if God does manifest himself or he does come through, what's the purpose of God doing that? Why would God want to bother with his manifest presence in and through us in the world? We need to understand that there's benefit to us and there's purposes of God for why he

wants to do that. From time to time, you'll hear stories where you'll hear people talk about revival breaking out over here or over there, or you should have heard this speaker or you should have been at that camp or if only you heard that worship team, God's presence was all over that place.

And I believe that that's true. Very often when people speak that way, there's a presence of God that comes through anointed preaching, through anointed worship, through anointed camps that God's presence is available, but we have to ask ourselves, what was his purpose for manifesting his presence among us? In other words, if I'm going to spend the time disciplining myself to be in front of the Lord, to ask him to change me and I'm going to commit my time to that and I'm going to be devoted to that relationship and I'm going to hunger for the worship of God, what's the purpose in all that?

How do I benefit from that? What is God going to accomplish in and through that? And if you've ever wanted to know that I believe that God has a word for you today. God wants you to know his purposes for manifesting his presence in and through you. God wants you to know his purposes for manifesting his presence in and among us.

And to do that today, I want to encourage you to open up your Bibles to the Book of Exodus chapter 34, Exodus chapter 34. We're going to start in verse 10 today. And let me just tell you this, if Brave Church is your home church, I want to encourage you this week to read through chapters 35 through 40 as we look on doing a fly by at the end of this book next week, Lord willing, and I want you to be very familiar with those

chapters, chapters 35 through 40 in the book of Exodus for next week.

But as you're turning to Exodus 34:10, you'll remember what happened last week. You'll remember what happened last week. Moses was pleading with the Lord for his presence. He said, "Unless you go with us, don't even send me. Don't send us." Because isn't it true, Lord, that it's your presence that makes us distinct? Isn't it true today that it's the presence of the Lord working in through us that makes us distinct? There's nothing distinct about us as individuals. The only thing that makes us distinct is the presence of the Lord.

So he's pleading with the Lord, he's begging the Lord. He's saying, "Please be with us. Please go with us. We want you. We only want you." He's begging the Lord to go. And the Lord says, "Okay, I'll go." And he tells Moses get two new stone tablets because Moses said symbolically thrown the law down to show the people who had been worshiping a molten calf to show them, "You've broken God's commandments. You've broken his law." This is symbolic of what you've done and God being so gracious and God being so merciful, even though God punishes sin, even though God doesn't change His standard says, "Get two new tablets, come up and see me. I will write my law again for my people."

And this is where the story picks up. Moses is going to go back up to God, spend another 40 days with him, and in verse 10, we see him, hearing the Lord when he gets back up into his presence. We're going to talk about three truths about the presence of God for what his purpose is, for his presence. In other words, if his

presence is showing up somewhere, he has three distinct purposes for why he's bringing his presence into a situation.

And the first is this, that God's presence empowers allegiance to the worship of God. God's power, God's presence rather empowers allegiance to the worship of God. Notice verse 10, then God said, he's talking to Moses, "Behold, I'm going to make a covenant." That's God saying, "I'm going to make a promise and I'm going to be true to my promise. Before all your people, I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the Earth nor among any of the nations, and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the Lord for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you."

God tells Moses that through the nation of Israel, he is going to do some things that he's never ever done before. Now why is that? Because our God is dynamic. Our God is awesome. Our God is unlike any other God. Our God is living and active. When we are worshiping God, we are not worshiping some dead figure or figurine that's sitting on a throne, we are worshiping the living God who is ruling and reigning over the universe.

As he is being worshiped, he is saying he's going to do something distinct with his people, which at this time is the nation of Israel. He's going to do something special with them. I still believe God is going to do something special with the nation of Israel and we can't just say, "Well, the church has replaced Israel because God is still doing some distinct things with Israel."

But make no mistake about it, Jesus Christ has established his church and his word tells us that he is able to do far more abundantly than all that we could ever think, ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us. Here's what this means. God wants to do things in and through you and God wants to do things in and through his church that are distinct and unlike anything else he's ever done.

Sometimes we think of God like, "I've seen you do that. I read about that in the Bible. Maybe you do that again." I believe God wants to do new things all the time. I believe our God is alive and he wants to move in new and fresh ways and he's saying, "I'm making you a promise. I'm going to do this." And then he tells him, "When I do what I'm going to do through this nation, other nations are going to be terrified." Why? Because God is not only a God of comfort and a God of love which he is, but God is the holy terrifying God of the universe.

When he moves and people see that he moves, nonbelievers are scared of who he is. So this is what he tells us. He tells Moses, he goes, "Go tell your people, I'm going with you and I'm about ready to do some things that have never been done before on planet Earth and I'm going to perform them with you and it will be a fearful thing that I'm going to do."

Now watch this. Here's your part verses 10, 11 and 12. "Be sure to observe," that means pay attention, "be careful to obey what I am commanding you this day. Behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Here's what he says, "I made a promise to

you. I made a promise to your forefather Abraham. I will continue through on my promise because I'm always true to what I say I'm going to do. I am always true to my word. I promise that I would give you the land. This land is currently being occupied by a lot of other nations. I'm telling you, I'm the one that's going to go before you. I'm the one that's going to drive him out. I'm the one that's going to make it possible. And when you see that I've done that, you'll know how awesome and terrifying that I am."

When God works in our life, oftentimes as a believer when we come to Christ, we begin to hear little whispers of the Holy Spirit of how uniquely wired we are and what are some of the things God might do. But when we look out on the broad landscape of life, sometimes we ask ourself the question, "How's that ever going to happen? I don't see how that is ever going to work out." I mean, it seems like the circumstances, situations and people that are involved in that, there's not room for the vision that you've given me to work itself out.

And here's what God says. "I'm going to make room for it. I'm the one that's going to make it happen. If I'm telling you I'm going to do something, I am faithful. He who calls you as faithful, he will surely do it. I'm going to do it. You'll need to walk by faith until you see it done." So why is God telling them this? We read the end of the story and we know that God takes him into the promised land. We read the end of the story and we know that God was with them in destroying all the nations, but we're reading before that story happened.

We're hearing about what God is going to do. It's one thing to see what God has done and then say, "Oh yeah, I totally believe." It's another thing to say, "God said it. I

can't see it, but I'm going to believe it and I'm going to walk into it." That's what he's telling them. He's like, "This is what I'm going to do. I'm going to drive out these nations before you. These are just some of the nations I'm going to drive out. So be careful that you observe and obey everything that I'm about ready to tell you."

Verse 12, "Watch yourself. That means pay attention to your own actions that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst." What is he saying? Worship the Lord your God and serve him only. He is saying, "I'm the only one that's worthy of all your allegiance. I am the only one that's worthy of all your worship." And he said, "In the land I'm going to take you into, there will be temptation for you to worship something other or someone other than me. There'll be a temptation to take some of their gods and blend them with me and call that worship."

He says this, "I'm God. I'm the only one that's worthy of worship and I want all of your worship." Now, why is there so much talk in the Bible about worship? Can I tell you why? Because it's what we as human beings were designed and created to do. Believers we are designed and created to worship the God of the universe. That's what everybody's designed for. But if you don't wholeheartedly worship the God of the universe, you will find someone or something to worship.

Now, that sounds off Sunday theological. "Yeah, preach it, brother. I know." So let's make it personal. What is worship? Worship is what you dedicate your time, your focus, your energy, your initiatives, your money, your thoughts and all your attention to.



That's your worship. That's your worship. What did you worship this week? Who did you worship this week? Where did your worship go this week? You say, "Well, I'm not quite sure."

If you're married, ask your spouse. Where and who do you think I worship? If you have children, ask them, who do you think I worship? If you have friends, ask them, who do you think I worship? I'll tell you who you worship. You give me a look at your bank statement, I'll tell you who you worship. You give me a look at your calendar, I'll tell you who you worship.

I spend time, I get conversation with you, I'll tell you who you worship. Those are indicative of your worship. Here's what God says, "Worship me. I'm the only one that's worthy of your worship. I'm the only one who can satisfy, and I'm the only one on the universe that's worthy of all your worship."

Now, is that just for Israel? Can I just tell you this? It's true today too. Jesus Christ is the only one worthy of all of your allegiance. And there are so many temptations and so many distractions to keep you from giving God the fullness of all of your worship. So what does he say to do with some of these other gods in the culture? Notice what he goes on to say in verse 13, "But rather you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim," which were the poles that they used for worship. "For you shall not worship any other God for the Lord whose name is jealous is a jealous God."

Now, what does it mean that God's jealous? I thought jealousy was a sin.

Jealous means this. I'm jealous for your worship. I'm yearning after your attention. I'm God and I created you and I know you, and I love you, and I'm jealous for you to give back to me what I rightly deserve because I'm perfect, you're not. I'm awesome, you're not. I'm loving, you're not. I'm great, you're not. I'm jealous of you wanting to recognize me for all that I am." That's what the Lord is saying.

So he's saying, "When you get into a culture that's going to have other tempting gods, not only avoid them, not only pretend they don't exist," what does he say? "Tear them down. Smash them to the ground. Don't have any other God in the culture except me." That sounds hurtful, doesn't it? I mean in our world of tolerance where the world is tolerant about everything except for Jesus, that doesn't sound very tolerant. But think about all of the different gods we have in our culture. We serve a god of sports. We Serve A God Of Hedonism. We Serve A God Of Money. We Serve A God Of Success. We Serve A God Of Relationships. We Serve A God Of Popularity.

We serve all these different gods and then we come to church and say, "Okay, I serve you too." God wants your whole allegiance. Seek first the kingdom of God in his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. "I am the Lord that is my name. I will not share my glory with others or give my praise to graven images. I want wholehearted 100% allegiance."

You say, "What's that look like?" It means God's presence. When God's presence is showing up in your life, first and foremost, it's to get your attention that he's the one that's worthy of all your heart's desires, of your mind, of your will, of everything else, that Jesus Christ wants to be center. That's why God's presence

shows up. God's presence shows up so that you will worship him more. And worship doesn't mean just singing songs. Worship doesn't only mean coming to church.

Worship is my daily ongoing lifestyle of who I'm referencing with everything that I am.

So there's always a way. No matter how advanced you are in your worship, worship him even more. Worship is central to why God's presence shows up. Now, we've talked about this. God is everywhere. Psalm 1:39 says, "There's nowhere we can go that God isn't. He's everywhere." But there are times where God manifests his presence and shows up. Sometimes it happens in church. You're listening to a sermon and the preacher is preaching and he's preaching the word, but all of a sudden the Holy Spirit is preaching to you in your heart. You're not even listening to the words that the preachers saying because the Holy Spirit is using the word to speak directly to you.

Sometimes you're worshipping with a song and the Holy Spirit is ministering directly to you. Sometimes you're praying. The Holy Spirit is ministering directly to you. Sometimes you're just sitting there like, "I don't even know what's going on." But God's presence is so strong. He's ministering to you for the purpose of that you would see that he's worthy of all your praise. And he's jealous for you. He yearns for you. He wants your worship. He wants your attention. He wants you to know that he created you, that he loved you enough to send Jesus for you. His own son was slaughtered on a cross for you who died. He rose from the dead for you. He wants to offer life to you. He loves you. He's wanting it to be reciprocated. That's what worship is.

It's you living your life knowing how thankful you are for the glory of God and all

the wonders that he has done for you. And he says, "Tear down their gods. Don't listen to them. Don't participate. Don't show love to them." I mean, we live in a culture where we're afraid to talk about the culture because that's mean.

Friends, I believe in two genders because the Bible teaches two genders. I'll tell you on pride month, I believe that God created male and female and there are no other genders. I'll tell you that. And I'll tell you that why he created those two genders was for marriage. And the reason he created for marriage is because he wanted to have godly offspring. And the reason he wanted to have godly offspring is so that he would be worshiped from generation to generation to generation.

We can stand in church and clap because we as Christians, we all believe there are only two genders. We all know that. "And Pastor Jeff, you say that all the time. We're good." Yeah, we're good. I'm telling the nonbelievers there's only two genders. And I love you enough to tell you there are only two genders because the Bible makes clear that no practicing homosexual will enter the kingdom of God.

I love you enough because I don't want you to go to hell that you should repent and you should trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior. Not because I don't like you, but because I love you. I'm telling you this. That's what God was saying to do in the culture, in a culture where we hate kids and we hate the unborn, and we offer them as a sacrifice. In the same way that when Moses was being raised up as a deliverer, they were killing all the boys under the age of two. In the same way when Jesus was being raised up, they killed all the boys under the age of two.

The same way that God is raising up delivers in our generation and we're killing all the babies in our culture. You can't call a nation Christian that kills all the infants. That's not just a church speak, that's for the culture to hear that Jesus Christ is Lord and we want to worship you. So we're not afraid to tear down that idol to child sacrifice for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ because he's the one who created life and that's wrong. That's what he's saying to do.

I knew I was only going to get a golf clap because many of you think that's the pastor's job to preach against. I'm not preaching against, I'm preaching for what is true. And if we don't take what's true to the culture, then how will the culture ever change. If we only sit in little huddles in the church and say, "Well, we all believe this, but those people out there don't. Let's pray for them." Here's what I would say. Let's believe it. Let's pray for them. Let's go tell them why they need to repent and trust Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior and do something about it. That's what the gospel would teach.

It's worship. It aligns our worship. He says, "If you don't do that," verse 15 says what might happen, "otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods. And someone might invite you to eat his sacrifice, and you might take some of his daughters for your sons and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods."

What's he saying? "If you don't destroy and point out the false gods in your

culture, you'll probably partner with them. And when you partner with them, then you're not serving me anymore. I am the Lord. I don't have a partnership. You can't worship sports and worship God and call it Christian. You can't worship America and worship God and call it Christian. You can't worship money and worship God and call it Christian. You can only worship God. There is no other way to worship."

So he says, "Tear it all down, and if you don't, you'll end up partnering with people that don't love me. You'll give them as daughters to your sons. They'll intermarry. And when you have a Christian that marries a non-Christian, you know what kind of marriage you have? You have a non-Christian marriage. And then you have non-Christian offspring and then you don't have generations of faithfulness and fruitfulness. He says, "My worship is so important. I show up with my presence so that you will know that I'm worthy of all your praise." That's what he says.

Worship is awesome. The true worship of God when his presence comes is awesome. One of the first times I ever had an experience with a presence of God, I was serving at a charismatic church when I was in seminary for a weekend. I'd never really been in a charismatic church. I'd heard things about charismatic churches. I'd heard there were going to be like healings. I'd heard there might be deliverance. I heard people spoke in tongues. I knew nothing about any of those things.

I was journaling the night before and I was writing in my journal like, "Lord, how come I don't speak in tongues yet? How come I've never really seen this stuff? Lord, are you holding out on me? Am I missing something?" That was my prayer the night before. The next day there were about 17 of us that were going to be ministering to

kids throughout the weekend. And the guy that was the speaker got up and he said, "Before you guys meet the kids tonight, I want to minister to you now."

I thought that meant he was going to speak for a half an hour or something. And next thing I know, all I remember is somebody started strumming on the guitar and it was as if in this room a heavy cloud came on us and just... I almost began to weep. I'm like, what in the world is going on? What did I walk into? I'd never experienced anything like this in my life. There were stairs around the platform of the worship center which we were in, which is about a room this size. And I went up and sat on them. And as he began to lay hands on people and pray for them, and I was watching and I couldn't even hear what he was saying. I just began weeping.

I mean, I was tearing up and I was asking the Lord, "What is this? What's going on?" I was about the third person and he pointed at me and he walked over to me, and he walked behind me. When he put his hands on my shoulders, I began to sob. Not oh, I mean like sob, uncontrollable snot coming out of my nose, sob. But I felt the presence of the Lord so strong and this guy whispers in my ear and he says, "Stop looking for signs and wonders. You'll cast out demons, you'll heal people, you'll see the dead rise, but rejoice because your name's written in the lamb's book of life." And then he went on to tell me about planting churches and all these other things.

Everything was resonate with my heart. My heart was totally warm. I'm sobbing. I'm like, "How does this guy know me?" When that experience was done, I didn't want to get to know that guy better. I didn't want the gifts he had. You know what I wanted?

I wanted to worship Jesus even more because it was a touch from heaven. Amen?  
God gives gifts in the church and God shows his presence in the church, not so that we'll look for people and not so we'll worship people or not so we can learn how to do things.

It's so that we can see how alive and real God is. Do you realize when we get to heaven, what we get to experience, the ongoing forever eternal presence of the Lord? If your heart does not yearn for that, you don't know him well enough yet. The great pastor AW Tozer from a generation ago said it like this. He said, "I can safely say on the authority of all that is revealed in the word of God, that any man or woman on this earth who is bored or turned off by worship is not ready for heaven."

"Is that all we're going to do is worship?" That's what we're going to do. We're going to worship. It's going to be the most filling experience that we've ever had that's ongoing forever and ever. Amen. Worship alone changes us. It satisfies us like nothing else. It's what you were designed and created for. It changes our perspective, our focus, our heart, our peace. When you're worshipping the Lord, you can experience greatness in your life even if nothing around you or the people around you never change.

You Notice what he says in verse 17. I love this because God's so practical. He tells him again, "You shall not make for yourself no molten gods." Here's what he says. Don't do what you already did. Don't go back to the gods that you once served. You already made a golden calf. Don't go make another one.



Some of you are tempted to go serve the gods that you served in grade school, or the gods that you served in high school, or the gods that you served in college or the gods that you served last decade. Here's the truth. God is a forgiving, loving God. He's willing to forgive your whole past. And then he would say this. So don't go back. Just don't go back like. Crush that. Put that out of your life. I know you experienced that. I forgive you for that, but now come with me. Let's go on a journey. Worship me. Put me in the center of all that you are.

So keep in mind God's presence doesn't show up just so we can get all giddy about his presence showing up someplace and get on a plane and fly there and be like, "Oh, he's cool." God's presence doesn't show up so that you'll tingle. God's presence doesn't show up, so you feel cool. God's presence shows up because he yearns for your life to worship him with everything that you are. That's the benefit and the purpose of his presence. He wants more worshipers. Why do we share the gospel? Why do we want to see people saved, so we have more worshipers? Why do we come to church so we can grow in our ability to worship with our lives?

I can tell you this. I mean I've been in lots of services over the time. Music may not do it for you in every place. I mean, the speaker may not do it for you in every place. I mean, the routine or ritual, you may not do it, but I'm telling you this, when the presence of God shows up, it doesn't matter where you are. I was in a church in post Texas one time. It was the pastors last Sunday thereafter being there for three years. You know how many people were in the church to say goodbye to him? Everybody came. There were 24 people there including me, and the presence of the Lord was so

strong calling me to ministry in this little west Texas town that I cried so hard, my contacts popped out of my eyes.

I don't even remember what he preached on, but all I remember is this little old lady that was like 80. Afterward she came up to me. It was just me and she's like, "Y'all want some saline?" And I'm like, "Yeah, I guess I do because I need to get my contacts back in my eyes." But God was speaking to me so deeply about my calling to ministry, but I wasn't expecting it, especially in a church. The way they started worship was the son of the pastor said, "What hymns y'all want to sing?"

Somebody said Amazing Grace, so we played that and we sang that. I don't remember what the pastor spoke on. I know that God was speaking to me about my calling to preach the word and I was undone. That's presence. That's a benefit. We talked about dedicating time. We talked about dedicating devotion. We talked about saying, "Lord, change me." That is your heart. You will experience the presence of God. And here's why he does it, so you'll worship him better. That's number one.

Here's number two. God's presence not only empowers allegiance to the worship of God, God's presence empowers alignment to the ways of God, alignment to the ways of God. Not only allegiance to the worship of God, but alignment to the ways of God. Notice what he says in verse 18. He's going to tell him how to worship. "You shall observe the feast of the unleavened bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread as I commanded you at the appointed time in the month of Abib or in the month of Abib, you came out of Egypt." Abib would be around March or April.

He says, "The first offspring from every womb belongs to me. All your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep. You shall redeem with a lamb the first offering from a donkey, and if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. None shall appear before me empty-handed." What's he doing? He's saying, "I'm going to prescribe to you the way I want to be worshiped, and I want you to worship like this. I want you to do exactly what I'm telling you."

The New Testament tells us how to worship. New Testament says, "Go to a place where the word of God is read. Go to a place where the word of God is proclaimed. Go to a place where the worship of God is prominent. Go to a place where people gather and pray. Go to a place where people are committed to gathering together. Go to a place where people are committed to reaching the lost. Go to a place where people are committed to the glory and honor of my name."

I mean, he tells us and spells it out. For Israel, here's what he tells him. You're going to celebrate three festivals. This is the first one, the feast of the unleavened bread. For seven days during this festival, eat unleavened bread. Now, you can imagine year one, I'd be like, "Okay. Well, eat unleavened bread." You're 11. What are you going to say? "Dad, why do we have to eat this unleavened bread every day? Can't we just cheat one day?"

No. Why? Because this is what God prescribes for us to worship his name. Here's what I want you to do. And then he says this, "Every bit of prosperity you have,

it comes from me." Because this is an agricultural society. "Hey, when your lambs give birth, when your donkeys give birth, the first one belongs to me. I want you to sacrifice your first to me because I want you to know that when you prosper, I'm the one that's bringing you prosperity."

Now, I know most of us don't struggle with breaking the neck of a donkey versus giving a lamb. What was he saying? He was saying, "Since donkeys are good creatures for working, I'll let you keep the donkey, but you're going to need to redeem it with something, so bring a lamb. In other words, you can't just receive blessing from me without giving me the worship and honor I deserve for what I'm giving to you. By the way, when it comes to your children, I want you to present them to me. I don't want you to offer them as a sacrifice like pagan nations do and killing their babies, I want you to offer them to me and dedicate them to me so that you will know that your family belongs to me and that the next generation belongs to me."

Because God believes in the family for the propagation of the gospel. So dedicate them to me. That's kind of what Hannah did for Samuel. She said, "If you give me a son, just give me a son. I'll dedicate him to you." She dedicated him to the Lord. He became the first prophet of the nation of Israel. "Dedicate your kids to me," he says. Then he says this, he gets into the Sabbath. He says in verse 21. Now notice this, "You shall work six days, but on the seventh day, you shall rest. Even during plowing time and harvest, you shall rest."

Now, we've talked about rest before. Rest does not mean sitting on your laurels and doing nothing. Rest means being reminded of and reflecting on all the goodness

that God has done in your life. That's rest. So he says, "From Friday night at dusk until Saturday night at dusk, that's a day set aside to me." What you're going to do on that day, you're going to worship me. You're going to remember all I've done for you during the week. You're going to give me honor and worship and praise. You're going to pause."

And he says this, "Even during the busy seasons, even when it's plowing in harvest season." And you say, "Well, thank goodness I'm a New Testament Christian. I don't have to keep the Sabbath. Man, praise the Lord. The principles still applies. Is there a day you set aside a week to give God your best, even during the busy times? Even when your kids are at summer camp? Even during the sports seasons? Even when you're on holiday? Even when it's the summer? Oh, it's ski season now. I'm gone for three months of summer. I'm out for two months. It's kids' fall basketball season. I'm out for another..."

No matter what, if you're going to walk in God's ways, you have to do what God wants you to do. You can't experience his presence just automatically. I mean, there's times God touches us uniquely because he's gracious and he does that. But if you're going to experience his ongoing presence in your life, you have to walk in God's ways. You have to preference him. I think a New Testament equivalent would be coming to church.

But not coming to church, not driving to church, not sitting at church, not being skeptical of church. Not saying, "Well, I'm here. I hope it's a good message. I'm here. I

hope they sing the songs I like." No coming to contribute, coming to serve, coming to build, coming to be poured into, coming saying, "Lord, change me." Coming to say, "Who can I bless today and who can I pour into today? Lord, I'm making this central. I'm making this what my family does because we're going to be all about you as a family."

Then he talks about the two other festivals. You should celebrate the feast of weeks. That is the first fruits of the wheat harvest and the feast of the end gathering at the turn of the year. So you had the feast of the unleavened bread. Then you had the feast of weeks, which was called the feast of harvest or the feast of Pentecost. You'll be at the beginning of the season where you'd bring your first fruits to God when your crops blossomed. You would bring God your first and your best, and then the feast of the in gathering, which was an early autumn where you would also bring more of your crops.

So three times a year you're going to worship in this way and notice what he says. Verse 23, "Three times a year, all your males," we already studied all this, "all your males are to appear before the Lord, the God of Israel." So three times a year, guys, during these weeks, you go to Jerusalem and you worship me. You do that. Why? Because you're modeling for your family that the Lord is the most important worship in your life.

Guys, today, model it for your family. If you're married, you lead your family to church because they need to see daddy saying, "I believe Jesus is Lord, and as a family, that's what we're going to prioritize." If you're a single guy, you're going to

model it because you're going to be here saying, "I love Jesus and I'm a single guy and I preference the Lord." Gals, if you're looking to get married, look for the guy that's already coming to church. Don't date the guy who never did until they dated you. And then you're like, "Well, he goes to church now."

You don't want that dude. You don't want that brother. You want the brother that's been sitting under anointed preaching for a while that can already tell you, and when you start dating him, he's leading you to church. He's telling you where to go because he knows the ways of the Lord.

Now, I know what the guys would say. The guys would've said 2,000 years ago, what they're going to say right now. Watching all these girls out there, oh yeah. That's good. Because guys are going to say, "Man, I got to work. I can't leave. I can't turn the company over. I mean, I'm not going to make any money during those three weeks. I can't take it. I mean, what if somebody breaks in? I got to take care of my family. I got to be around."

God knows that. So what does God say? God says this, you appear before the Lord. He says in verse 24, "For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before the Lord. What does God say? Not only will I protect your family, and not only will I protect your crops, I'll expand your borders. What's that mean?"

If you do what God wants you to do, he will enlarge your influence. If you do things in the way that God wants you to do them, he will expand things for you.

Business guy, listen up. Businesswoman listen up. If you prioritize the worship of the Lord, that is the secret sauce for your business expanding.

It's praying and saying, "Lord, this is your business and I'm bringing you the first fruits of my business, and I want you to bless it and do all this, and I'm giving it to you because you own it all and you give and you can take away and it's all yours. I just want you to be honored." That's when God begins to expand your influence because then God knows that you know that he's the one that's giving you the blessing, and it's not just you looking for more stuff to hold into your hands. Amen?

That's the principle that he's teaching them. He's like, "Hey, you got to walk in my ways and this is the way I want you to walk. I want you three times a year men, you come and do this." Then he says this, "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread nor is the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover to be left over until morning." He's reminding them of what it was like when they did the Passover. They finished the meal, they did all this. He's prescribing the ways to worship.

It means we need to do worship the way God prescribes for us to do. Then in verse 26, he says this, "You should bring the very first of the first fruits of your soil into the house of the Lord, your God." What was he telling them? Most of them were in agricultural society. Most of them were shepherds. They were farmers. They were herders. He was saying this, "When you prosper, you bring me the first of your prosperity." That's what it looks like.

Again, most of us say, "Thank goodness I'm a new covenant Christian. I'm not



responsible for any of that." Well, here's the reality. Here's the reality. You don't have to tithe. "You mean I'm not thinning, if I don't tithe?" No. You're just not worshiping. Because for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And if you can't worship the Lord with the first fruits of your money, you're not worshiping.

If the Lord doesn't have your pocketbook, and some of you're saying, "Well, good thing I don't have a job yet." If you have any income at all, you babysit and make 10 bucks a dollar should go to the Lord. I mean, get in the habits because if you're faithful with little, you'll be faithful with much. And tithing has nothing to do with God needing your money, tithing has to do with your heart, giving worship to God and walking in his ways.

That's what it looks like. So those of you that are angry with me for saying that to you, you're probably angry because you're not worshiping and you just got called out. And for those that love the Lord, there's something in you that says, "I don't know if we can trust God with this money or what, but we're going to try because I love the Lord and I want him to get the first fruits of what we have."

I mean, that's what it looks like. So he's telling them, "I want your heart, and if I have your heart, you're going to walk in my ways. If you walk in my ways, it means everything that you benefit from comes back to me first so that I know that you're recognizing that I'm the one that's done it for you."

And then the second part of verse 26, I find most people at Brave don't struggle with it says, "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk." Anybody struggling

with that these days? I mean, here was the deal. I mean, predominantly it was a pagan ritual that if you could boil a goat in its mother's milk and your womb wasn't open, this would help open your womb. It was a superstition that would help in the fertility process.

"Well, that's silly. I would never do that." How many superstitions do we have in our culture? I mean, I know people that are trying to sell their house. There's all sorts of superstitions they do. I know people have different trinkets in their homes, superstition that they have. I mean, horoscopes, superstition. I mean, don't read horoscopes. I mean if you're at a Chinese restaurant, I mean, you can read it. It's okay. I mean, we read it and we add the prepositional phrase at the end in the bathroom because it makes it funny.

You're going to meet a very interesting person tomorrow in the bathroom. You know what I mean? Prosperity is coming your way in the bathroom. I mean, that's about how good fortunes are, right? I mean, it's okay to read them for, but don't focus. Nobody knows the future except God. All your little superstitions and all your little habits, and you have to do everything the same way all the time. That's a superstition that you're saying, "If I do this, then God will bless this." And then if you are blessed, you'll think it's because of the superstition and not because of God.

If you have any superstitions, just crush them. Get them out of the way. You don't need them. If you have the Lord Jesus Christ walking with you, you don't need to be superstitious. You have the God that says, "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans for hope and a good future. That's

who I am. You want that?" That's the God I want.

So I don't need to be superstitious about all these other things. And I'm preaching to you because I know when I played sports, I was superstitious. I wore the same shirt every Friday before a football game. I mean, everything was routine for me thinking that that's going to bring the blessing. It doesn't bring the blessing. God brings the blessing. We need to repent of those things.

Then the Lord said to Moses, verse 27, "Write down these words for an accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." So Moses is going to write down all the additional things, but notice what God's going to do with the 10 Commandments. So he was there with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights. He did not eat bread or drink water.

I don't encourage that as a fast, okay? That's a supernatural fast. You can go 40 days without food, you cannot go 40 days without water. So unless the Lord speaks directly to you and says, "Give up water for 40 days," please don't do that. You will die. The only two that we read about in the Bible are Moses because of this special time and Jesus, his 40 days in the wilderness, and he's the son of God so he can do anything.

Notice this, and he wrote, this is God talking on the tablets, the word of the covenant, the 10 Commandments. God had already done this for him before. He's going to do it again. Why? Because when we break his law, he's willing to take us back through his kindness and his grace and remind us, "These are my laws. Let me

teach you again. Let me be gentle with you. Let me tell you this sin is not going to go unpunished, but let me show you what I wanted you to do the first time. Since you want my presence now, let me show you what it looks like for you to worship and honor me now."

Which is great news for us because I know the only group of people I'm talking to this morning, the only one talking to you is a sinner. And so I know we've all broken God's law in some way. God is gracious enough to forgive our sin so that we can confess it and forsake it, and he can begin to teach us his ways so that we can walk in them because God wants us to walk in his ways. That's the whole purpose of his presence. God wants us to walk in his presence.

Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. So God sends his presence, again, not just so you get all giddy on the inside. God sends his presence so you'll have allegiance to his worship that you'll have alignment to the ways of God. And then third is this, God sends his presence to empower anointing on the will of God, anointing on the will of God. If you have allegiance to the worship of God and alignment to the ways of God, you'll have anointing on the will of God.

Anointing means that God's presence is going to go with you. It means God's presence is not something you're just going to experience in an assembly. God's presence is going to go with you. Notice what happens in verse 29. It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai and the two tablets of 10 testimony where Moses's hand as he was coming down from the mountain that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shown because of his speaking with him.

Moses coming down the mountain. He's done this before last time. He came down the mountain with the two stones. He sees them running wild and throws the commandments down and breaks them symbolically to show you've just broken everything that God just told us what we need to do. This time he comes down and his faith is glowing. It is just beaming. But Moses doesn't know it's beaming.

Moses does not know any changes happened to him. Keep that in mind. If you will give allegiance to the worship of God, and if you will align yourself with the ways of God, when God's anointing goes with you, you won't even realize that you're any different. It'll be everybody else will around you. It'll be the people around you. What happened to you? I've told you a story of going back to a high school reunion a number of years ago, and one of my friends coming up to me. I know it's you because you look somewhat similar and you talk somewhat similar, but what in the world happened to you?

To me, I didn't think about the change until I started thinking about all the things God had brought me out of. Then I realized I'm not the same as I used to be. Moses doesn't realize his face is glowing. Keep that in mind. Moses is just walking down holding the two stones like he did the last time, thinking everything is the same. Notice what happens when he sees his brother.

So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold the skin of his face shown and they were afraid to come near him. Even his own brother is terrified. Now, when we think about this glowing, we don't know exactly what it was. It doesn't seem

like it was a bright light that was being shined in people's eyes because it doesn't say that they hid their eyes from Moses or did one of these, but what were they? They were scared.

His own brother was scared. They weren't scared when he came down the last time when they were running wild and living in sin, this time they're scared. So whatever that light was, it was terrifying. Now, here's what we do know. The scripture says that our Lord is consuming fire. Moses spent 40 days with that consuming fire and some of the refracted or reflected glory off of God has gotten onto Moses, and Moses is just coming down and they're terrified of Moses.

Now, think about that for a minute. If the people of Israel were terrified of just a smidgen of God's reflected glory on Moses's face, how terrifying will it be when the Lord Jesus Christ comes in all of his glory?

They're terrified. I mean, Moses was like a human glow stick. I mean, I'm picturing this fire coming out of his head or something like that. I mean, the people were afraid of him. I mean, we say statements like this. "Oh, you're glowing. You're glowing." That's not what they were saying. They're like, "Dude, you're glowing." That's what they were saying. They were terrified. And so they don't want to come anywhere near him. So verse 31, then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers in the congregation returned to him, reluctantly, I should add, and Moses spoke to them because Moses is worshiping the Lord and because Moses is acquainted with the ways of the Lord and he's walking in the ways of the Lord.

Now, he's going to communicate the things of God. That's his anointing. This is what Moses was called to do. So Moses comes near and he spoke to them. Afterward, the sons of Israel came near and he commanded them to do everything that the Lord had spoken to him on Mount Sinai. God told Moses, "Here's my calling in your life. Here's what I want you to do." Moses does what? He goes and does exactly what God wants him to do. We need to pause here for a second. Don't get religious on me. Most of us think, "Well, this is Moses and this is just for him. Or this is for Moses and for pastors in the New Testament."

No, this is for everybody. When God calls you to do something and you are worshiping him and you are walking in his ways and you go do it, people will see God in and through you. And sometimes it won't be comfort that you're bringing. Sometimes they'll be terrified of who you are because you're actually walking with the living God. That's what's going on here. So what does Moses end up doing? Verse 33. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, when he went to speak with God, he would take off the veil until he came out. And whenever he came out and spoke to the sons of Israel, he spoke to the sons of Israel, what he had been commanded, the sons of Israel would see the face of Moses, the skin of Moses face shown. So Moses would replace the veil over his face until he went in to speak with him. When Moses would go speak with God, he'd lift the veil. When Moses would come back out and talk to the people, he'd cover the veil.

Why? Because people couldn't handle the fullness of the glory of God coming through Moses. So he veiled it. I'm going to tell you what God said, "But you can't handle everything that God is saying and you can't hear everything God is saying and you don't want everything that God is saying. So I'm going to veil myself. Isn't it interesting when Jesus Christ died on the cross, what was torn, the veil in the curtain, signifying now you have full access to the glory of God.

Paul uses this analogy, picks up on this analogy in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, when he's talking about how the gospel to his beloved Jewish people, it's veiled to those who are perishing. They can't see because the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers. But notice what he says to the Corinthian church, a church that was growing in their maturity.

He says in 2 Corinthians 3:17, now the Lord is spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. There's freedom. Where the spirit of God's presence shows up, there's freedom to be everything that you are. When you're worshiping the Lord and you're walking in the ways of the Lord and where you've stumbled, you're repenting of those in the Lord, there's freedom in that. There's joy in that. There's no secrets in that. You can be honest. And notice what he says, "But we all," that's me and you and every single believer. Why? Because the moment you trust Jesus, you have Christ in you, the hope of glory.

This is every believer. He says because of that, but we all with unveiled face, all of us with an unveiled face beholding us in a mirror, the glory of the Lord are being



transformed into the same image from glory to glory just as from the Lord, the spirit. He's saying because we have access to the same God that Moses talked to, we're being transformed in the same way. What does he do today? He works in and through believers to do the very same things that you have the same access to God that Moses had to God because Jesus is the Christ who came and tabernacle among us who died on the cross and rose from the dead.

You have full access to God and he wants to live his life in and through you. Now, what's that mean? I know my Bible. I know my Bible. Do you know what Jesus says about you? I mean, just hear some of this. This is shocking stuff. If you don't think it's shocking, it's because you don't believe it. Jesus says in John 14:12, "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me..." You say, "I believe in him." I do too. He says, "The works that I do, he will do also."

I saw Jesus do a lot of works. The works I do, he will do also. And greater works than these he will do because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name that will I do so that the father may be glorified in the son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. Most Christians do not believe that. I believe that.

The reason most Christians not believe it is because they haven't experienced it. And the reason most Christians haven't experienced it is because they're not giving full allegiance to the worship of God and they're not walking in the ways of God. And that way when they ask for God to do something on their behalf, God is not responding to them. Jesus said, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, then ask whatever you wish."

How do you abide in Jesus? You give him all the worship you can. You get rid of all the other gods in your life. You become acquainted with his ways and walk. And then the very things that Jesus did, "You'll do too." Why? Because now he can use your life as a conduit for his grace to his church and to the world. That's what he's saying. Who gets access to that? I mean, if we had like five passes today that we were giving out to Brave, so you can have... I mean, there'd be a rush to the altar. I got great news. It's open to anybody that wants to worship the Lord and walk in his ways.

What it means is this. Jesus said, "You're his workmanship creating Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so you'd walk in them." He says he is able to do far more than you ask or think, which means this, I don't care whether you find yourself a plumber or you work at home, or you're a salesman, or you're an attorney, or you're a coach, you're a janitor. It doesn't matter what you do.

If you're a worshiper of the Lord and if you walk in his ways, the Lord will show up in and through your life to give you favor for what you do and bless other people through what you do. Have you ever seen that in somebody? You see it in an auto mechanic. You see it at a waiter. You see it with a airplane plane pilot. I mean, you spend about 15 to 30 seconds with them and you watch what they do, and you say, "This person is a worshiper. The same God I'm a worshiper of."

I can tell they're anointed for this service. It doesn't mean quit your job and go into ministry. It means you're already in ministry. Just worship the Lord become

comfortable with his ways and walk in them, and then God will use you in whatever he's built you for his glory so that his life comes in and through you. And his presence is felt by people. And to some you'll become the aroma of life and to others, you'll become the aroma of death, and that's the very presence of the Lord that goes before you.

So what's the purpose? Well, why take all this time? Well, number one, it benefits me because I never have more enjoyment in my life than when I'm experiencing the presence of God. But why does God go to great lengths? Because he wants to align your worship with him. He wants to have full allegiance of your worship.

He wants to align your ways with his, and he wants his anointing on his will for your life. He's willing to bless anybody. I mean, that's the great news of the Bible. The great news of the New Testament is Jesus Christ came for anybody who would repent of their sin and trust him. So here's my question for you. How's your worship? It's rhetorical, by the way. I'm just asking how your worship is. I mean, you think about your weak. It's good that you're here. It's good that you're in Westminster. It's good that you're watching online. It's good that you're hearing this sermon.

It's good, but it's only so good as what you put into practice. How's your worship? How familiar are you with the ways of God? How are you growing in those things? How are you allowing God to be the centrality of your focus, your time, your money, your energy, your thought life? Because no matter how far you are along on your journey, there's a little further to go. There's a little more enjoyment to have. There's a little more of the presence of God to be experienced, and God wants you to

experience it now. God wants you to experience it today.

Jesus said, "I'll be with you always to the end of the age." He said, "I'll never leave you I'll. I'll never forsake you. I'm not going anywhere." If anyone's drifted, it's you. It's not God. And he loves you enough to call you back to himself. Amen? Amen. Would you stand with me today?

Father, as we sing praises to your name, as we tell you that you alone are worthy of our praise, as we tell you that you are our God, as we realign our worship and recalibrate it with you, Lord, may you have your will in our lives today. If you're here today and have never trusted Jesus, you can repent of your sins and trust him right now and say, "I know I'm a sinner, but I believe you're my God. I want to turn for my sin, and I want to trust you as my Lord. Come into my life."

If you're here today and say, "I know I know the Lord, but I'm not worshiping him. I know I know the Lord, but I'm not walking in his ways." You can repent too, because God's kindness is available for you where you can say, "Lord, I forsake this. I confess this. I want to walk in a new way with you. Lord, do this work in our life and in our church so the world will know that Jesus Christ is Lord. We give you all the glory, honor and praise in Jesus name." Amen and amen. Let's give him some praise today.