

SERIES: Exodus

BIBLE: Exodus 32

TITLE: #8 - The God Who is Jealous

OVERVIEW: The book of Exodus is a story. A story about the rescue of God's people from the hands of the oppressors. It is a story of humans and spiritual forces coming in contact with the real God and finding out who is REALLY in charge.

In our text today the people get impatient and give in to their expectations they had put on God. They go so far as to create a golden calf and believe that is what really had brought them out of Egypt. Whenever we give in to our unmet expectations, we either fall into idolatry or - worse yet - walk away from faith altogether. Yet God's love is jealous in the purest sense - he is protective of his people because life under his authority is truly best.

SCRIPTURE BREAKDOWN:

Exodus 32:1-6 - **The people look elsewhere for their wellbeing.**

It seems the Israelites had believed God before. They had even seen his power when coming out of Egypt. But now when he seems to be silent...when he is taking longer than expected...they get impatient. Just like Adam and Eve doubted God and faced consequences...just like Abraham slept with Hagar out of impatience and faced consequences...they do the same. They look somewhere other than God for their wellbeing. Not only do the Israelites create a golden calf, they make sacrifices and eat and drink and play before it. Oftentimes we do the same thing: we will look anywhere other than God to "get on with our lives" when he does not work on our time table or according to our expectations.

Exodus 32:7-14 - **God's anger burns...but he is slow to anger and patient.**

God's anger is righteous. It burns against sin. And his jealousy is the only jealousy that is pure. That is, it wants to protect people; he wants to protect his covenant love with his people.

ILLUSTRATION: A husband and a wife enter into a covenant. Either one is right to be "jealous" - that is, *protective* - of the covenant they have. If the wife flirts with other men or the man flirts with other women, that is a threat to their covenant love. In the same way, God's love is a jealous love. And he is right to burn with jealousy when his people "flirt" with other gods. That's a threat to the covenant love between he and his people, and it blocks his blessing and abundant life.

SUPPORTING TEXT: Exodus 34:14 - (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God)...

QUOTE: "Jealousy is a divine trait. But it can also be a legitimate human emotion. The Bible does not leave us in the dark here. Scripture clearly indicates that in some instances jealousy is more than appropriate: It is the only virtuous reaction to real threats to marriage.

Why is jealous appropriate in these two relationships [the divine-human relationship and the marriage relationship], but not in other relationships? The answer is that the divine-

human and the husband-wife relationships are the only two absolutely exclusive relationships. In no other relationships is there an element of exclusion of others." - *The Cry of the Soul*, Dr. Dan B. Allender & Dr. Tremper Longman III

There is also an interesting interaction between Moses and God. Why would that be in the text? Perhaps it is there to show us the *intensity* and *object* of God's righteous anger - sin - paired with his patience toward the sinner.

Exodus 32:15-29 - **Man's anger burns, too...but is destructive and impatient.**

Moses got angry, too. But he destroyed what God had given to him. He throws down the tablets with the Ten Commandments and they break. Then he destroys people. There is an element of righteousness in his anger; it is directed toward the sin of the people. However, the way he expresses his anger is not righteous.

SUPPORTING TEXT: James 1:19-20 - ¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Exodus 32:30-35 - **God is compassionate and forgiving...but still jealous.**

There is sin and then atonement. God forgives his people. He still leads them. He still sends his angel before them. But there are still consequences for sin: "I will visit their sin upon them." And then he sent a plague...the LORD in his sovereignty, not Moses in his temper.

GOSPEL: God takes sin seriously. So seriously that *someone* had to die for it. Yet God is so good that he chose to die in our place and for our sin. And when he went to the grave and rose again, he proved he is more powerful than that sin. Jesus brings forgiveness and newness.

NEXT STEPS: Repent. Believe. Be baptized. Fix your hope on God's faithfulness, even when he seems to work on a different time table and in different ways than you expect. He will not give up on you, so in the meantime, don't give up on him.