

### Intro – We all have defining moments in life. The milestones which form and fashion us.

- The moment when you seized an opportunity. The moment when you ended a job you were suffering through to enter a vocation you were made for. The moment when you discovered what the vocation is! A huge failure. A huge success. A major conflict. A major victory. A graduation. A wedding. Maybe there was just something about that simple walk along the lake.
- But it felt like life was moving toward that moment and then life was completely different after it.
- Ch 19 is such a moment, a defining one in Exodus, but also in the history of God's people.

On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. <sup>2</sup> They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, <sup>3</sup> while Moses went up to God.

- They've finally made it to Sinai!
  - God told Moses in 3:12 - He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." Exodus 3:12
  - And now they're here! They'll be here at Mt Sinai for over a year; what happens in the rest of Ex, Lev and a good part of Numbers comes from their time here. But Ch 19 is the start of that season.
- This next short paragraph is a central, key word though – because it tells us what truth is being communicated in the time they're there, what foundation is being built, what God is doing. It reveals the next big theme we want to focus on about God: **God who covenants: God wants to be in relationship with us.**

<sup>3</sup> The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: <sup>4</sup> 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup> 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; <sup>6</sup> 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." Exodus 19:1–6

- Now – it's really important to note – the Israelites are already in a covenant relationship with God. It started back with Abraham in Genesis; check out chapters 12 & 15 for that.
- This is a special moment for that relationship; call it a covenant within a covenant, or that it's like a vow renewal, but who God is and what this relationship with the Israelites is takes center stage. He is **God who covenants: God wants to be in relationship with us.** What does this text teach us about Him? **First...**

**God is the one who makes the relationship possible:** 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 19:4

- If you didn't hear the last couple messages, we've seen how the Israelites are pretty forgetful. So, God starts off with reminders of what is true, but they are reminders for us also.
- God rescued you: **You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians**
  - First and foremost – they are to remember salvation.
  - He's telling them, "Remember the whole Red Sea thing and Pharaoh? The plagues?"
  - You were in a state of slavery, and I made you free! **We need that reminder:**
  - **For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:6-8**
- God protected you: **I bore you on eagles' wings**
  - If you've read or seen the Hobbit, the eagles swoop in and rescue the fellowship. The image here is like that, an eagle swooping down to protect and care for its young.
  - **For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the**

apple of his eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions. Deut 32:9-11

- God brought you near: brought you to myself
  - The point of the Exodus wasn't simply to get them out of Egypt, though that's a big part of it. The point of the story was God bringing them to Him, wanting them with Him.
  - He took them from isolation and drew them near into his caring embrace.
- What had happened and what would happen was because of God. It wasn't because the Israelites were impressive or mighty; it was because God wanted them! He will tell them this:
  - <sup>7</sup> It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup> but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Deuteronomy 7:7-8
  - It's the same for us: We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19
- We need to remember who He is, what He's about, what He's capable of, what He's doing.

**God invites us to trust our lives to Him:** <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, 19:5

- God rescued the people to be with the people; because of His covenant with them.
  - **A covenant is more than a promise, you don't pinky swear in a covenant.**
    - A covenant is a binding agreement between two people or entities.
    - It could be between equals but here we're talking between superior & vassal.
    - God told Abraham: Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Gen 15:13-14
    - He was covenanting, forming a relationship with them that would lead to restoring God's relationship with humanity, of Him being with them, of people living life of fulfillment, purpose, joy and hope.
  - We'll get to the "obedience" language in a moment, but I want you to look at the little work before it first – "IF" – if you live in this covenant, if you live in this relationship.
    - It alludes to the question – are you in this covenant? Are you in this relationship?
    - The word where we get the idea of serve or worship of God is used 97x's in Exodus. It is one of the key questions of the book: who will you serve? Worship?
    - God made a covenant with them, he tells them to show their commitment to Him!
- We need to answer that same question!
  - **Jesus makes it clear to us what He came to do:**
    - My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. John 10:10
    - "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16-17
  - **He makes that life possible, but we need to commit our lives to Him:**
    - If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. Rom 10:9-10
    - God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. Ephesians 2:8-9
- With God we find true life – will you receive his invitation? Know what He is offering you!

**A relationship with God gives us life to its fullness:** 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; <sup>6</sup> and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' 19:5-6

- When we follow the Lord, when we covenant with God, what do we get?
  - **We are his treasured people** –
    - A reiteration of his love & care. They are not just strangers in the crowd, they are people he cares for and loves immensely!
    - We can't emphasize this enough, and may it never become cliché to our hearts!
  - **We are a people with purpose** –
    - Kingdom of Priests: His influencers in the world around us. It's our job to represent Him to the culture.
    - Holy Nation: a set-apart people meant to represent God's character in the culture
  - **1 Peter uses this same language from Exodus:**
    - But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 P 2:9-10
    - We are treasured, included, empowered, commissioned and wanted... the ones who let others know about how amazing God is and all He has done!
- We need to clarify first – God isn't saying they have to work to earn this:
  - **In Gen 15, God committed to be faithful to the covenant, even when Israel wasn't.**
    - That is still true, but here in Exodus 19 what God is saying is, my faithfulness doesn't mean you just do whatever!
    - Think if we had a guy say, "My marriage is in shambles" but then you found out he's not coming home till crazy late if at all, mocks his wife when he's not ignoring her, and has been caught flirting with other girls. "Of course your marriage is in shambles! You idiot – you're not acting married!"
  - **God is telling Israel – you need to live like you're in a covenant with me!**
    - COMMITMENT is defined in vows – it's an all-encompassing act.
    - When I live out my vows, I experience the fullness of the intended relationship
    - When we are obedient to the covenant we experience the fullness of it!
- Augustine said, "Our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you."
  - We want to be a treasured people: loved, cared for, wanted.
  - We want to have purpose and meaning.
  - There are many things in this life that can give us those things, but only temporarily and never guaranteed. They are only samples and imitations of the life God offers us!
  - We need to find life in Him! And the life we find in Him is the best!

### God shows us how to live life with Him in this covenant relationship:

- God brings us into this life and also guiding us how to live it. be holy as He is holy.
- In 19:8-15 He tells them to prepare themselves: <sup>10</sup> the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments <sup>11</sup> and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.
  - It's a call to holiness, a prelude of things to come – be mindful of how you live, have the mindset that you are a different people than the culture, don't be flippant or apathetic.
  - You are about to be in the presence of God – act like! Coming as we are doesn't remove reverence for the God we worship! It's about creating a mindset here.
- In Exodus 20, He gives them the 10 commandments:
 

And God spoke all these words, saying, <sup>2</sup> "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. <sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself a carved image... <sup>7</sup> "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain... <sup>8</sup> "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy... <sup>12</sup> "Honor your father and your mother... <sup>13</sup> "You shall not murder. <sup>14</sup> "You shall not commit adultery. <sup>15</sup> "You shall not steal. <sup>16</sup> "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. <sup>17</sup> "You shall not covet...anything that is your neighbor's." Exodus 20:1–17

  - The 10 shape the community, form the people, guide their identity and lives.

- These aren't simply about us though, God is telling us about the God He is also here!

Close –

- Who will you serve?
  - Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." John 8:12
- Baptism as a sign of loyalty and commitment
  - August 20