

Encounter(ing) God

Keeping Mercy Part 8

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Review... Truly encountering God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

- 1) Contrast “Knowing About” and “Encountering” God
 - a. Knowing – *aware and informed*
 - b. Encountering – *revealing (seeing) and transforming – MEETING!*
 - c. The image of God you carry around in your heart and mind affects the way you live your daily life.

We want to make sure the image of God we carry is correct!

Listen – when we talk about Encountering God, we’re talking about Encountering Who He is – His character, IN US, THROUGH US, we become image bearers, no clearer summary of His character than in Exodus 34.

Background – Moses says, “Show me Your glory” – God shows Moses His character!

If we want to know what’s glorious about God – it is Who He is!

Exodus 34:6-8

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. (*Moses obviously encountered God*).

Some Background: Sin in Scripture (Having a Good Theology of Sin)

- 1) Our daily familiarity with cultural sin can subtly color it in our eyes as not as bad, rebellious, evil, depraved and breaking the heart of God.
 - a. Seeing the news everyday... Watching TV and movies that are loaded with representations of sin...*another murder, more adultery, stealing...LYING!*
 - b. Not dealing with our own issues of the heart...
- 2) What do the Scriptures say about sin?
 - a. Sin is personal against God Himself. Genesis 6:5-8
 - b. Ezekiel 18:20 – “The soul who sins shall die.”
 - c. Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
 - d. Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death”
 - e. Numbers 32:23 – “you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out.”

- 3) Sin's Progression – Genesis 3:1-6
 - a. Unbelief – *Sin takes root by NOT believing God and what He has said*
 - In the garden, the serpent lays the seeds of unbelief by asking, “Did God really say?” Genesis 3:1
 - It all starts with not believing God...Who He is, what He has said...trusting in Him.
 - b. Pride – *A move of the heart towards functioning independently from God*
 - In the garden the serpent said, “You will be like God.” Genesis 3:5
 - The sin of Lucifer was one of pride and self-exaltation – to be like God (Isaiah 14:12-15).
 - Choosing to live independently from God; self-sufficient.
 - c. Disobedience – *A choice to disregard God's will and way and go our own way*
 - In the garden, they ate of the fruit in direct disobedience to God. Genesis 3:6
 - Sin is not in opposition to a rule, but in opposition to a person—God.
At the core of every sin is a turning away from the love of God.
 - Disobedience is the fruition of sin, rising from the fertile soil of unbelief and pride.
 - d. Sin's progression: *unbelief* takes root in our thinking, moves to *pride* in our hearts, and bears the fruit of *disobedience* in our wills.
- 4) Sin's Consequences – Romans 1:18-25
 - a. Suppressing of the Truth – v.18
 - b. Guilty Conscience – v.20 (without excuse)
 - c. Ungratefulness – v.21
 - d. Futility of Thinking – v.21
 - e. Darkened Heart – v.21
 - f. Idolatry – v.23
 - g. Deception – v.25
 - h. Worship and Serving Themselves – v.25

Iniquity, Transgression and Sin – Exodus 34:7

We see these three words in other places in the Scriptures. Although this Exodus portion gives a sense of “the piling up of all things sinful,” each of these words here have specific meaning.

Leviticus 16:21 “Then Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the *iniquities* of the children of Israel, and all their *transgressions*, even all their *sins*...”

Psalms 32:5 “I acknowledged my *sin* to you and did not cover up my *iniquity*. I said, ‘I will confess my *transgressions* to the Lord.’”

Psalms 51:1-2 “According to the greatness of your compassion blot out my *transgressions*, wash me thoroughly from my *iniquity*, and cleanse me from my *sin*.”

May be seen as “layers of sin”

- 1) Sin – *chatta'ath*
 - a. Meaning: miss the mark (archery), a general term for *falling short of God's standard*

- b. Sin signifies in its root idea to miss the mark; that is, to aim at the right mark, to do our best to hit the mark, and yet miss it by coming short: this is the root idea in the original word defining sin.
 - It can mean doing something against God or a person – Exodus 10:16
 - It can mean for unintentional sins – Numbers 15:27
 - Failing to do what you know is right – James 4:17
- c. If a line is absolutely straight, and we are running another parallel to it, the smallest deviation will have us run into an ever-widening distance from that straight line!
- d. Our sin nature causes us to gravitate naturally toward pride, selfishness, and envy even when we are trying to do good. Paul's struggle in Romans 7:18-20.
 - Bent, leaning towards sin.

2) Transgression – *pasha'*

- a. A trespasser is someone who crosses a line or climbs a fence that he should not climb or cross. Think of a sign on a fence – DO NOT TRESPASS – yet you still go over or around it.
- b. Meaning: *revolt, rebellion, trespass*.
- c. Our choices are not merely referencing a law, but the Person (GOD) who set them. So it becomes plain that the very center of all sin is the shaking off of obedience to God.
- d. To transgress is to choose to intentionally or willfully disobey God's way.
- e. When we knowingly run a stop sign, tell a lie, or blatantly disregard authority, this is transgressing.
- f. Joseph's brothers – Genesis 50:15-17
- g. Judas – Acts 1:24-26

3) Iniquity – *'avon*

- a. Means: "twisted, perversion, bend"
- b. Iniquity is a bending or perversion of the truth, and a twisted attitude that premeditates and makes plans to commit sin.
- c. Iniquity left unchecked leads to a state of willful sin with no fear of God; a continuing on without repentance.
- d. Iniquity grows into the character of an individual, which has a twist, perversion, or bend towards sin. Though iniquity does include the idea of sin, it involves much more than this, and refers to an individual's very nature. Because iniquity is the character behind the sin, it becomes the source of the sin acts. In a nutshell, iniquity is like a "sin addiction".
 - A man can receive an email tempting him to look at pornography. He clicks on the link and views the site. Having been tempted a few times, something changes. Suddenly, these urges start rising inside him to see these websites on his own. He no longer needs an external temptation. Iniquity has worked its way within him.
- e. David's Sin – with Bathsheba that led to the killing of her husband, Uriah, was iniquity.
 - 2 Samuel 11:2-27
 - David's repentance – Psalm 51:2 – wash away iniquity
 - *Our iniquity can be our greatest secret!*
- f. A People/Nation - In God's dealings with Abraham, we find a good example of God dealing with a people/nation. Genesis 15:12-16 There is a build-up of unrepentant sin that is "not yet complete" ("filled to the brim"). Amorites – descendants of Ham.
 - Abraham is told by God that his descendants will inherit the land of Canaan. They will be given the land as a permanent possession. However, they must first go to Egypt where they will be slaves for 400 years! Why not immediate occupation?

- Amazing! Here we see ungodly pagans – child sacrificers, idol worshipers, indulgers of sexual perversion and immorality of all kinds – and God says their sin hasn’t filled it appointed measure yet!
- This reveals to us:
 - God is amazingly patient – 2 Peter 3:9
 - God seems to store up a nation’s unconfessed sin
 - There will be a day of reckoning
 - When Joshua brought Israel into the land as invaders some 400 years later, God’s command was to wipe out these people entirely, leaving nothing left breathing. Judgment had been slow in coming, but when it arrived it was devastating. Deuteronomy 2:32-34

The ultimate end of iniquity as expressed in a life is seen in Romans 1:26-32.

God’s Forgiveness

- 1) God Forgives Our Sin
 - a. John 1:29
 - b. 1 John 1:9
 - c. 2 Chronicles 7:14
- 2) God Forgives Our Trespasses
 - a. Psalm 51:1 – “blot out my transgressions”
 - Obliterate or wipe out letters or words with ink as to render them invisible or indistinguishable. The idea is to erase the transgression in God’s book of debts.
 - b. Psalm 103:12
 - c. Colossians 2:13-14
- 3) God Forgives Our Iniquity
 - a. Isaiah 53:5-6
 - b. Jeremiah 31:34
 - c. Psalm 103:2-5
- 4) This forgiveness is of all sin, all sorts and sizes of sin, original or actual, greater or lesser, public or private, open or secret, of omission or commission, of heart, lip, and life.
 - God’s forgiveness is only unavailable to those who choose to not ask for it!
- 5) Psalm 32:5, Psalm 51:1-2

***Life Application* – why leave here today with where the Holy Spirit has revealed iniquity, transgression and sin? Come to the front – as an altar – right now and allow the forgiveness of Jesus to have its way in your life!**

Discussion Questions

1. Why is sin personal against God?
2. Describe sin’s progression.
3. What is the difference between iniquity, transgression, and sin?
4. What is your favorite verse about God’s forgiveness?
5. Is there any area in your life today where you need to ask for forgiveness?