

Title: God being with us

Scripture Reading: Exodus 33:14-23

And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

21 And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:

23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

A sermon titled "God Being with Us" focuses on the concept of God's presence in the lives of believers, emphasizing that God is always present, offering comfort, strength, and guidance, especially during challenging times. It often explores the meaning of the name "Immanuel," which signifies "God with us," and how this promise is fulfilled through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

I like another translation for **Exodus 33:14**, 'I will personally go with you, Moses, and everything will be fine.' If God personally goes with us in everything we do, everything will be fine. Moses understood this truth. I find this to be especially true in my life. I noticed that when I am especially close to God and I am in a right relationship with God and I felt God being with me, everything I do will be fine, everything I encounter will be fine. Here Moses responded, 'If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.' Moses insists that without God's presence, there is no point in moving forward. How true is this! Without God going with us, there is no point going forward in life. This shows how much Moses depends on God – not just for miracles or guidance, but for the relationship itself. The people's identity and

survival hinge entirely on God being with them. What can we learn from this portion of scripture?

1. God with us – His presence

Without God being with us, there is no point moving advancing in life. We depend on God not just for wonders or direction but for connection itself. Our identity and survival hinges on God being with us. **Exodus 33:14** says, 'And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

The word 'presence' literally means 'face.' When I see the face of Pastor Lily, I know she is present with me. She is around the house. She is with me. Here it means God's personal presence will go with him. Within the church I will call it the manifest presence. It means in the church, we felt God's tangible, experiential presence – when He reveals Himself in a noticeable way that can be felt, seen or clearly perceived. With God being on our side, we are guaranteed success. God is not a failure. When we know that He is with us, we can be utterly fearless, no matter how dark the situation or how difficult the problem, we can be sure of this: God has the ability, the power and the answer to pull us through and put us over.

This is significant because earlier in verse 3, God says He would not go with them due to their sin. Sometimes people miss it and sin. But even when we miss it, John says, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God wants to help us and restore us when we miss it. He wants to lift us up even when we stumble and fall. By coming to him.

That is what Moses did. Moses pleads, and God relents – promising His nearness and the gift of rest. **Exodus 33:14** says, 'And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." There are two truths we can learn from here. One, when we plead, God relents. You must understand that the sin of the people was not minor but major. Some of us has major sin right now. Moses was in the mountain top. Israel was below sinning. They were worshipping idols, indulging in revelry and there was sexual promiscuity and even some committing sexual immorality. So, Moses pleads for mercy. People ask, 'What is the difference between Mercy and Grace.' Great question. While grace and mercy are closely related, especially in the Bible, they are not the same.

Concept	Definition	Example
Mercy	Not getting what you do deserve	God withholds punishment we've earned
Grace	Getting what you don't deserve	God gives blessing we haven't earned

Mercy:

- The root idea: compassion shown to someone who is guilty or suffering
- It is God withholding judgment that we rightfully deserve
- It reflects His pity and love in the face of our weakness

Grace:

- The root idea: favor or kindness that is unearned
- It is God giving us salvation, power, and blessing we could never earn
- It reflects His generosity and kindness

Imagine a criminal standing before a judge. Mercy is when the judge pardons the sentence. Grace is when the judge adopts the criminal as his child and gives him an inheritance. Isn't that what God did to us, adopting us as His child and gives us an inheritance. At Mount Sinai, God not only shows mercy when they were definitely guilty, but most

important of, grace, by giving them an inheritance as God's children.

Yet when we plead, God relents. He not only relents but promises His nearness. The second truth is He promises His gift of rest. Rest is a lost commodity in our society today. There is so much anxiety, pressure and toil and snare in our lives today. We desperately need rest. This rest is inner peace, security (rest from anxiety, fear and striving) and fulfillment of the journey of life.

So when God is with us, He sets us apart. **Exodus 33:16** 'For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct. I am your people from every other people on the face of the earth?'

Moses emphasizes that God's going with us is what set us apart from all other nations. Moses is saying that what makes Israel unique is not their land, their laws, or their strength. It is that God Himself is with them. The same goes with us. Our uniqueness isn't in laws, strength, or numbers. Our uniqueness is not Etab's land, the size of our church or the numbers of our church but it is God's Himself with us. It is being God's chosen people with whom He dwells.

2. God for us – His protection and purpose

Exodus 33:17 says, *'And the Lord said to Moses, 'This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.'"*

When we say, 'God is for us' we mean that God is on our side. He is actively working for our good, protection, salvation and purposes. It is a deep expression of God's love, favor and loyalty toward those who belong to him.

God answers favorably, again highlighting His deep relationship with us. He says, 'I know you by name.' It means an intimate, personal knowledge. For Moses, he is not just a servant but a friend of God. I pray we will enter into that category. When you are in an intimate relationship with God, with personal knowledge of God and personal relationship with God, you can make bold request as Moses makes. Moses said, 'Show me your glorious presence.' And God immediately answers, 'I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, YHWH, before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.'

This is a powerful and intimate moment between Moses and God. Moses asks to see God's glory. God's glory is not just in His power, but also in His moral perfection and sovereign grace. There is a deep desire to know God on the part of Moses. Moses models what it means to hunger for God's presence, not just His blessings. Moses had seen miracles – plagues in Egypt, the Red Sea split in two, manna from heaven. But still he asked for more. Not more power, but more presence. 'Show me your glory,' is not to gain status or favor, but to know God more intimately.

When Moses asks to see God's glory, God agrees. God's response is stunning. He doesn't overwhelm Moses with divine power. Instead, He says, 'I will let my goodness pass before you.. I will proclaim my name.' God's glory, it turns out, is found not just in His might, but in His character – his mercy, His Grace, His faithfulness. I believe if you sincerely ask to see the manifest presence of God, He will agree. Instead of just raw, dazzling light, YHWH says Moses will witness His goodness, mercy, and grace – His character. God's name (YHWH) is also proclaimed, representing His eternal, self-existing nature. I believe if you really hunger for God and ask to see His glory He will show:

- **His goodness**
- **His mercy**
- **His Grace**
- **His name: YHWH – eternal, self-existing nature**

Applying this in our lives, **Romans 8:31** says, 'If God is for us, who can be against us.' This powerful verse means no opposition, trial, or enemy can ultimately succeed against us if God Himself is for us. It is not just that God supports us. He initiates, defends, and completes His purpose in our lives. This week I was with the National University of Singapore nursing team in Libertad, Antique. There are 24 students. I was trying to do some survey with the leader of the YMCA from Singapore in Antique to see opportunities for medical missions in the whole province of Antique. I met with a number of pastors that were no more with the previous organization. They were excited to see me and it really reminds of the good old days. But what struck me was they are doing fine. So, the YMCA leader gave them a treat with me and there was joy in the fellowship and they kept reminiscing the past. But Arnoldo made a statement that enlighten me. He said, 'Pastor, one of the pastors of our previous organization ask, 'Why are those churches that are no more with us (those that left or are kicked out of our previous origination) doing much better than them.' Then Pastor Rosemarie replied, 'Oh, because we are no more financially

supported and we had to depend on faith and God pull us through.' Well, that is true. But the real reason is because of **Romans 8:31**, 'If God is for us, who can be against us.' Arnaldo said the leader of the ex-organization said to him, 'If you leave this organization, you will fail.' I said, it is preposterous to say only with the organization we will succeed. No. It is only with God that we succeed.

I just want to speak to people in this congregation:

- God is not against you. God is not your enemy, accuser, or condemner. You said you have sinned. Well, The children of Israel sinned. But Moses pleads for mercy and God relents. God wants you to do likewise.
- In Christ, His justice is satisfied, so His posture toward you is grace
- He acts on your behalf. He is working all things together for our good. Even your pain, failure and delays are part of a larger plan for your benefits.
- He fights for you. God defends, protects and upholds His people
- He gave His Best for you. If God gave Jesus, He will not withhold anything you truly need. If the creator of the universe is for you, you are never outnumbered. Rest in His love. Trust His plan, Walk confidently – because the One who

hold all power has claimed you as His own. I remember clearly that God spoke to me in 2012 when we were forced to be on our own. God says, 'the tribes of David will get stronger and stronger and the tribes of Saul will grow weaker and weaker. As I fellowship with the Antique pastors, I find this word that God spoke to me in 2012 being fulfilled before my eyes.

3. God in us – the power within

Exodus 33:20-23 says, 'But you may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live. The Lord continued, 'Look, stand near me on this rock. As my glorious presence passes by, I will hide you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have pass by. Then I will remove my hand and let you see me from behind. But my face will not be seen.'

God's holiness, purity and power are overwhelming: sinful humans cannot endure it directly. The 'cleft of the rock' is a small cave or narrow opening – symbolically a place of refuge and protection. Jesus is the narrow opening, 'the way, the truth the life,' to God. Because of the rock, 'God covers Moses with His hand.' Today, Jesus is that rock, to us, the place of refuge and

protection. Because of the rock, Jesus, God covers us with His hand, symbolically his divine intervention through Jesus. For Christians, Jesus is that Rock the place where we are hidden, protected, and where God reveals Himself. Through Him, we can see the glory of God in a way Moses never could. Actually in this third point, we realize that this is not about Moses reaching out to God but God reaching out to Moses through the Rock. The Christian life is not about reaching up to God. It is about realizing how God has reached down to us.

As a result of Jesus, God can be in us through the Holy Spirit. God goes one step further. I do not know whether Moses understood the significance of that moment, covered by the cleft of the rock. Because it was pointing to an event 1500 years after Moses. Through Jesus, God says in **Ephesians 2:22**, 'In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Holy Spirit.) God has made His home in our bodies. **1 Corinthians 6:19** says, 'What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?' When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we no long belong to ourselves. We become the temple of the Holy Spirit. God has made His home in our bodies. Unfortunately, many

Christians are not conscious of this, nor do they really believe it. If they believed that God dwelt in them, they would not talk about their lack of power or ability. There is no lack in God, since He dwells in us, we should not have any lack either.

2 Corinthians 6:16 says, 'Ye are the temple of the Living God, as God hath said, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' Why does God live in us? Think about this carefully. To put us over and help us. **1 John 4** talks about demons and evil spirits. Verse 4 says, 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them.' 'Them' refers to the devil and his cohorts. Through Christ, we have overcome all demonic forces. How? I shared last week that the Holy Spirit convicts us of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. The prince of this world is Satan. Because of the death of Christ, Satan is already defeated. Again, back to verse 4, 'ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them.' 'Them' refers to the devil and his cohorts. Through Christ, we have overcome all demonic forces? How? This verse goes on to say, 'Because greater is He that is IN us than he that is in the world. The greater One – the One who overcame the devil and his demonic forces lives in us. The devil has wrecked so much havoc in the world today. I believe that people like Putin are

demon possessed. He has given his mind and soul to the devil and through him, just in the last 3 years, 1 million Russian soldiers have either been killed or injured. Ukraine soldiers captured are tortured with methods that only demons can think of. There were Ukraine POWs that were released through exchange with Russian POWs only to die months later upon release. They were tortured so terribly that they succumb to death even upon release. Look at the sins of this world. They are all demon inspired. Look at the sicknesses and cancer of this world. They are not normal. Cancer is not a normal disease. Cancer is demon inflicted. Look at breakup of families, children abused, sexual obsession in this world, sexual promiscuity and sexual immorality. A Singaporean just shared with me about his personal lives. He said, 'He father came to know God in a powerful way and as a result his whole family came to God. But then his father started going from one church to another and finally he stopped attending church altogether. His elder brother also stopped attending church. Only he continued serving God because he had a call from God. He was telling me that his father in those years that he stopped attending church, had an extra marital affair with a Filipino lady and has a son from there. So, this Singaporean now has a step brother that is a Filipino. His elder brother who also stopped attending church, jump from one

divorce after another. Altogether his elder brother had four broken relationships. His said he himself complained to his mother why she only called him for help every time instead of his elder brother. He felt that even though he was the younger brother, his role has become that of an elder brother. His mother replied, 'Because you can be trusted.' I want to tell you something, if you leave God, not immediately but definitely, your life will go downward. This Singaporean friend of mine who has not left God is doing fine. And when he tells me of his story, I can see God protecting, guiding and planning a purpose for his life. I am sharing this story to show much the devil has messed up families and lives.

Only God through the Holy Spirit in us is greater than the devil. He is greater than demons and the evil spirits. He's greater than sin, sicknesses, and disease. He's greater than any force or power that tries to come against us. We let the Greater One dominate our lives by allowing His Word dominates us. When we are full of the Word and incline our ears to what it says, 'then we'll know what to do in any situation. It's doing the Word, or acting as if it is true, that brings God's blessings in us.

If God is in us, then His nature, His love, His wisdom, and His strength are in us. I will never

forget when I got saved in 1979. The Holy Spirit starts to live in me when I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. I remember I was demon possessed. But I was delivered and then the devil wanted to come back and lived in me. In **Matthew 12:43-45**, Jesus describes a scenario of spiritual cleansing followed by a worse state of possession. When an evil spirit leaves a person, it wanders in search of rest but finds none. It then returns to the person it previously inhabited, now empty and clean, and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself. This results in the person's condition worse than before. I was in that situation. I can still remember that incident more than 40 years ago. It was past midnight. I woke up sensing demonic presence that in still fears in me. You know what I did. Because I had already the Holy Spirit in me because I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. That night, I took up the bible. I read the word of God that whole night. I think I finished at least 3 books of the bible starting from Genesis. You know what happened. The devil left me alone after that. I felt a peace in my soul which I knew it was the peace of the Holy Spirit. Then a few months later I had to go to the army. I was weak physically and I would faint if forced to stand stationary for a long time. That is what army do. They made you stand stationary for long period of time. But the word of God came to me, ringing 'I can do all things

through Christ that strengthened me. I am not afraid of darkness anymore. I wasn't afraid of demon possessed people. When my mum was demon possessed and she was crying out in terror in her unconscious state shouting, 'Don't take me, don't take me,' I would lay my hand on her and she will quiet down. When she woke up, she asked 'what happened to me.' She got saved later and today she prays daily for me and is a great soul winner.

If God is in us, then His nature, His love, His wisdom, and His strength are in us. All that God is, is in us! Whenever you face what looks like an impossible situation, confess it in faith, 'God is in me God's ability is mine, God strength is mine, God's health is mine, God's success is mine. I am more than a conqueror. **Romans 8:37** says, 'in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.' Our belief and confession of the Greater One in us will help us overcome any situation or circumstances that comes against us.

In conclusion, today billions of people lived a life where God is not with them. And everything is not fine in life. Instead of guaranteed success, there is continual failure in life. We are constantly overwhelmed by problem and afraid of what the future holds for us. Instead of God being for us, it

seems like God is against us. God seems to be our enemy and there is no protection in our life. Our families and personal lives easily succumb to circumstances leading to tremendous disappointment. Because we do not have God in us, we are ravaged by sicknesses, broken relationship, ruined by sins in life. God saw and heard your groaning. God sent Jesus, where God was truly with him. God was for him. When the crowd wanted to push him over the cliff, he just slipped away. He was protected constantly when the enemy wanted to kill him. God lived in him. He said, 'If you had seen me, you had seen the Father.' But then at the end of His life, God was not with him and he cried out, 'My God, my God why have you forsaken me.' God allowed his enemy to overwhelm him and even crucified him on the cross. Why? For you and me. To pay for your sins, that God relents when he sees Jesus. So that when Jesus was resurrected you can have God with you, for you and in you through the Holy Spirit. If you come to Jesus today, you need no fear anymore. The Holy Spirit which is God can live in you. And if God is in you, who can destroy your life. The devil is even afraid of you. He cannot touch you without God's permission. In Him we live and move and have our being. The answer is found in Jesus. Just come to Him today. As I said, this is not about Moses reaching out to God, but God

reaching out to Moses. Today I speak to you, this is not about you reaching out to God but God reaching out to you. Will you respond to His love for you, reaching out to you.

