

Lesson 12 The Tent of Meeting *September 13-19

"Please, Show Me Your Glory"

NEXT WEEK- "THE TABERNACLE"

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Exod. 33:7-34:35; Deut. 18:15, 18; John 17:3; Rom. 2:4; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 3:18.*

Memory Text: "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' " (*Exod. 34:6, 7, NKJV*).

We all need to grow in our walk with God. Without

growth, we are dead. The apostle Peter declares: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen" (2 Pet. 3:18, NIV). We need to be willing to grow. We are daily in God's university, where there is no graduation but a constant learning process. In each stage of growth, you can be perfect if you allow God to mold you into the person that He calls you, in Christ, to be.

Think of a school. If first graders learn how to read and count to 100, they receive a passing grade because their knowledge is perfect at that stage and scale of growth. However, if this same level of knowledge, and no more, was detected in a high schooler, it would indicate a colossal failure in his or her education. It is similar with our growth in the grace and knowledge of God. In each stage of our development, we can be as perfect in our sphere as Christ was in His.

This week we study how Moses, through knowing and following God's instructions, was growing in his walk with the Lord.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 20.*

SUNDAY

September 14

The Tent of Meeting

Read Exodus 33:7-11. Why did God ask Moses to build the tent of meeting?

"AND MOSES TOOK THE TABERNACLE, AND PITCHED IT WITHOUT THE CAMP, AFAR OFF FROM THE CAMP, AND CALLED IT THE TABERNACLE OF THE CONGREGATION. AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT EVERY ONE WHICH SOUGHT THE LORD WENT OUT UNTO THE TABERNACLE OF THE CONGREGATION, WHICH WAS WITHOUT THE CAMP. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN MOSES WENT OUT UNTO THE TABERNACLE, THAT ALL THE PEOPLE ROSE UP, AND STOOD EVERY MAN AT HIS TENT DOOR, AND LOOKED AFTER MOSES, UNTIL HE WAS GONE INTO THE TABERNACLE. AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS MOSES ENTERED INTO THE TABERNACLE, THE CLOUDY PILLAR DESCENDED, AND STOOD AT THE DOOR OF THE TABERNACLE, AND THE LORD TALKED WITH MOSES. AND ALL THE PEOPLE SAW THE CLOUDY PILLAR STAND AT THE TABERNACLE DOOR: AND ALL THE PEOPLE ROSE UP AND WORSHIPPED, EVERY MAN IN HIS TENT DOOR. AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES FACE TO FACE, AS A MAN SPEAKETH UNTO HIS FRIEND. AND HE TURNED AGAIN INTO THE CAMP: BUT HIS SERVANT JOSHUA, THE SON OF NUN, A YOUNG MAN, DEPARTED NOT OUT OF THE TABERNACLE.

We must not confuse "the tent of meeting" (built outside of Israel's camp) with the tabernacle, which was later constructed

and located in the center of the camp. We do not know how often Moses consulted with God in the tent of meeting. However, one thing we know for sure: Moses' encounters with God resulted in a close friendship between them. "The LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Exod. 33:11, NKJV). A friend is a person we can consult and openly discuss most everything with and trust that he or she will never reveal it to others. A friend is one of the nicest things to have and one of the nicest persons to be.

FRIENDS AND SERVANTS

IN THE BIBLE GOD CALLS BELIEVERS BOTH "SERVANTS" AND "FRIENDS."¹ IN FACT, EVERY AUTHOR OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN, PAUL AND PETER, JAMES, AND EVEN JUDE DESCRIBES BELIEVERS AS "SERVANTS" OF GOD². AND JESUS, ON ONE SIGNIFICANT OCCASION JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH, CLEARLY CALLS US FRIENDS:

"HENCEFORTH I CALL YOU NOT SERVANTS; FOR THE SERVANT KNOWETH NOT WHAT HIS LORD DOETH: BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS; FOR ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE HEARD OF MY FATHER I HAVE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU" (JOHN 15:15).

FRIENDS ARE CLOSER THAN SERVANTS IN INTIMATE ASSOCIATION. FRIENDS ARE ALSO IN A POSITION TO INFLICT GREATER PAIN THAN A SERVANT IF THEY TURN FROM THEIR FRIENDSHIP AS SEEN IN THE EXPERIENCE OF PETER AND JUDAS (MATTHEW 26:34, 50).

SERVANTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE BOUND TO OBEDIENCE, BY THE VERY POSITION THEY OCCUPY AS SERVANTS. SERVANTS MUST BE BE LOYAL TO THEIR MASTERS. YET SERVANTS MAY NEVER ENTER

INTO A CLOSE LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR MASTERS DUE TO THE AUTHORITARIAN POSITION OF THE MASTER OVER THE SERVANT.

THE WORDS OF CHRIST IN JOHN 15:15 IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BIBLE DECLARE THAT WE ARE *BOTH* SERVANTS AND FRIENDS OF GOD IN A UNIQUE BLENDING OF THESE TWO EXPERIENCES.

THE CONTEXT OF JOHN 15:15 CLEARLY REVEALS THAT THIS SERVANTHOOD TO GOD IS SWALLOWED UP BY FRIENDSHIP, THE ONE BECOMING BLENDED WITH THE OTHER. TRUE FRIENDSHIP BEING QUALIFIED BY OUR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE AND DO WHATEVER GOD COMMANDS US TO DO. THIS IS SEEN IN THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT OF THE VERSE:

“YE ARE MY FRIENDS, *IF YE DO WHATSOEVER I COMMAND YOU*” (JOHN 15:14).

GOD CALLS US HIS FRIENDS NOT BECAUSE WE ARE NO LONGER SERVANTS, BUT RATHER BECAUSE OUR SERVANTHOOD TO CHRIST IS NO LONGER MOTIVATED BY CHRIST’S AUTHORITY OVER US. RATHER HIS UNDYING LOVE FOR US CONSTRAINS US TO SERVE HIM (2 CORINTHIANS 5:14).

THE CHANGELESS LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS OF JESUS HAS CAPTIVATED OUR ENTIRE BEINGS SO THAT WE NOW REALIZE THAT HE IS OUR TRUEST AND BEST FRIEND. OUR SERVANTHOOD TO CHRIST NOW MOVES TO ITS PROPER PLACE AS THE ENTIRE SURRENDER OF EVERYTHING WE HAVE TO THE UNFAILING FRIENDSHIP OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR. THE LOVE OF CHRIST MAKES US FRIENDS AND SERVANTS, LOYAL AND TRUE, OBEDIENT AND INTIMATE WITH THE ONE WHO HAS LOVED US LIKE NO OTHER. AMEN.

ONE MAY ASK, WHAT ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SHAKING OFF THE SERVANT IDEA ALTOGETHER AND JUST BEING A FRIEND OF GOD? THERE IS ALWAYS A DANGER IN SEEKING TO DISCARD SOME PART OF THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD. JUDAS WAS A WILLING FRIEND AND

CHRIST CALLED HIM ONE—EVEN WHEN JUDAS WAS BETRAYING HIS “MASTER” WITH A “KISS” (MATTHEW 26:49, 50). YET JUDAS WAS UNWILLING TO OBEY CHRIST. THIS FRIEND OF CHRIST WAS OFTEN EXASPERATED BY THE HUMILITY OF HIS MASTER’S EXAMPLE OF SERVANT-HOOD.

CHRIST'S ACT IN WASHING THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES OFFENDED JUDAS. IF JESUS COULD SO HUMBLE HIMSELF, HE THOUGHT, HE COULD NOT BE ISRAEL’S KING. ALL HOPE OF WORLDLY HONOR IN A TEMPORAL KINGDOM WAS DESTROYED.

IT WAS DURING THE LAST SUPPER THAT JUDAS WAS SATISFIED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY FOLLOWING CHRIST. AFTER SEEING HIM DEGRADE HIMSELF, AS HE THOUGHT, HE WAS CONFIRMED IN HIS PURPOSE TO DISOWN HIM, AND CONFESS HIMSELF DECEIVED. HE WAS POSSESSED BY A DEMON, AND HE RESOLVED TO COMPLETE THE WORK HE HAD AGREED TO DO IN BETRAYING HIS LORD.

IN JUDAS WE SEE THE RESULT OF ONE WHO CHOSE PART BUT NOT ALL OF CHRIST. THIS DISCIPLE WAS A WILLING FRIEND OF CHRIST BUT NOT A SERVANT OF CHRIST AND THEREFORE EVEN HIS FRIENDSHIP WAS FALSE. WITH JUDAS MONEY, REPUTATION, WORLDLY HONOR, TOOK CONTROL.

BY DEFINITION SERVANT-HOOD TO CHRIST IS NOT SLAVERY BUT GIVING OURSELVES UP TO GOD’S WILL. OUR SERVANT-HOOD IS A CHANNEL TO EXTEND AND ADVANCE GOD’S CAUSE AMONG MEN. SERVANTS ARE DEVOTED TO ANOTHER TO THE DISREGARD OF THEIR OWN INTERESTS. JUDAS NEVER FULLY ENTERED INTO THIS EXPERIENCE, YET JESUS CALLED HIM “FRIEND.”

JESUS MADE JUDAS HIS FRIEND, TAKING HIM INTO CLOSE ASSOCIATION THAT THROUGH THE REVELATION OF HIS OWN LIFE OF SERVICE AND DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF MAN AND HEAVEN, JUDAS MIGHT ALSO GIVE HIMSELF UP TO THE WILL OF GOD. IT

NEVER HAPPENED. JUDAS WAS A FRIEND BUT NOT A SERVANT AND THEREFORE NOT EVEN A FRIEND IN THE FULLEST SENSE.

END?

THE BIBLE CLARIFIES THAT SERVANT-HOOD IS NOT AN OPTION. WE ARE EITHER SERVANTS OF ONE OR THE OTHER OF THE TWO POWERS CONTENDING FOR OUR ALLEGIANCE (ROMANS 6:16-22). WHEN WE SERVE THE DEVIL WE BECOME SLAVES OF THE DEVIL, BOUND BY THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH. BUT WHEN WE SERVE GOD WE BECOME FRIENDS OF GOD AND FREE IN THE TRUEST SENSE (JOHN 8:32). JAMES SAYS THAT WORKS OF SERVICE ARE WHAT DISTINGUISHES THE BELIEF OF DEVILS FROM THE BELIEF OF GOD'S FRIENDS (JAMES 2:17-24).

THIS IS WHY JESUS CAME TO THIS EARTH AS A SERVANT, TO RESTORE GOD'S NAME (CHARACTER) IN OUR FALLEN HUMAN NATURE (PHILIPPIANS 2:5-7; REVELATION 7:3; 22:3, 4). TRUE SERVANT-HOOD DESTROYS EVERY VESTIGE OF PRIDE FOR IT IS THE VERY ATMOSPHERE OF HEAVEN WHERE JESUS WILL SERVE US AS HE DID WHEN UPON THIS EARTH (REVELATION 7:15; JOHN 13:13-17; LUKE 12:37). IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB ALL THOSE WHO HAVE EMBRACED THE SERVANT-HOOD OF THEIR MASTER FIND IN JESUS THEIR TRUEST FRIEND (JOHN 15:14, 15). AMEN.

ILUSTR.

HUSBAND AND WIFE—SERVANTS AND FRIENDS—FRIENDSHIP IS HOLLOW WITHOUT SERVANT-HOOD AND SERVANT-HOOD IS MISERY WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP. IN OTHER WORDS WE NEED MEN WHO ARE

WILLING TO DO THE DISHES, COOK A MEAL OR CHANGE A DIAPER AND WOMEN WHO DON'T MIND TAKING OUT THE GARBAGE, WASHING THE CAR OR MOWING THE LAWN. WHY? BECAUSE THIS SERVANT-HOOD IS WHAT TRUE FRIENDSHIP CALLS US INTO.

IT BEGINS IN THE HOME AND MOVES OUT TO OUR COMMUNITY. AND IT IS OUR FAILURE TO BE TRUE SERVANT/FRIENDS IN OUR HOMES THAT IS HINDERING OUR WITNESS TO THE WORLD. THE MOTIVATION FOR THIS RELATIONSHIP IS LOVE, NOT MONEY. THE SYSTEM OF THE WORLD IS MONEY MOTIVATED, AND SOON IT WILL BE SEEN FOR THE EMPTY BANKRUPT SYSTEM THAT IT IS — BUT LOVE MOTIVATION WILL NEVER FAIL (1 CORINTHIANS 13:8).

THE MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE, THEREFORE SHOWS THE CLEAREST EVIDENCE FOR THE BLENDING OF OUR SERVANT-HOOD/FRIENDSHIP WITH CHRIST IN PERFECT RELATIONSHIP. THIS GIVES US ANOTHER REASON TO CONSIDER THE REMARKABLE STATEMENT OF PAUL IN EPHESIANS 5 WHERE WE ARE REMINDED THAT THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP IS A TYPE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH. IN THIS CONTEXT THE WORD “SUBMIT” IS APPLIED TO BOTH THE WIFE AND HUSBAND.

A SECOND

THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE BLENDING OF SERVANT-HOOD AND FRIENDSHIP IS SEEN IN THE VERY WORD “OBEY.” FIRST WE SHOULD NOTE THAT THE WORD “OBEY” IS USED THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT TO DESIGNATE THE BELIEVERS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD (ACTS 17:4), EACH OTHER (ACTS 27:11), CHURCH GOVERNMENT (HEBREWS 13:17), AND THE TRUTH (ACTS 28:23). BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY IS OUR NEED TO RECOGNIZE WHAT THE WORD ITSELF MEANS. HERE IS A MORE DETAILED DEFINITION:

OBEY — #3982 **PEIYW** PEITHO {PI'-THO}

1) PERSUADE

1A) TO PERSUADE, I.E. TO INDUCE ONE BY WORDS TO BELIEVE

1B) TO MAKE FRIENDS OF, TO WIN ONE'S FAVOUR, GAIN ONE'S GOOD WILL, OR TO SEEK TO WIN ONE, STRIVE TO PLEASE ONE

2A1) TO BELIEVE

3) TO TRUST, HAVE CONFIDENCE, BE CONFIDENT

BY DEFINITION, THEN, OBEDIENCE IS NOT TO BE BASED ON AN ARBITRARY SUBMISSION—“DO WHAT I SAY BECAUSE I SAY IT,” BUT RATHER A CONFIDENT, PERSUADED, FAVORABLE, TRUSTING FRIENDSHIP. THEREFORE, THE OBEDIENCE OF GOD’S SERVANT-HOOD BY ITS VERY NATURE AND DEFINITION INCLUDES FRIENDSHIP.

IN THIS CONTEXT

CHRIST’S WORDS IN JOHN 15:15 CAN BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN, I AM NOT CALLING YOU SERVANTS FROM THE WORLD’S PERSPECTIVE, FOR THE WAY THE WORLD DEFINES SERVANT-HOOD IS ALL MESSED UP (CANTI-WHOMPUS). I CALL YOU FRIENDS, BECAUSE THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SERVANTS OF GOD FROM A TRUE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE UNDERSTAND THAT THE CALL TO SERVANT-HOOD IS THE CALL TO FRIENDSHIP. THE TWO BECOME ONE IN CHRIST.

MOSES UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT MEANT TO BE GOD FRIEND BECAUSE MOSES SERVED GOD WITH ALL HIS HEART. HIS WAS A TRUE AND TRIED FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD. AMEN.

As recorded in Exodus 19–34, the story of Moses is very instructive of how God transforms our lives. How did God build a relationship with this outstanding leader? A study of the life of Moses shows how he grew in his knowledge, not only of God’s

power but of His love and character. This is a crucial component of having a relationship with God.

Prior to arriving at Mount Sinai, Moses was mightily used by God even while being prepared for a special leadership role. In the land of Midian, while taking care of sheep, God inspired him to write two books: Job and Genesis. Then, in the dramatic event of the burning bush, he was called by God to lead Israel out of Egypt. He saw the defeat of the Egyptian gods and the mighty Egyptian army in the Red Sea. He observed for many weeks how God led Israel from Egypt to Sinai. After the experience resulted in his shining face, he led Israel for another 39 years, to the brink of the Promised Land. The biblical message states that Moses was a faithful servant of God (*Deut. 34:5, Josh. 1:1*), an unimpaired light in the darkness, a model prophet by whom others would be measured (*Deut. 18:15, 18*). He was an agent of change, even though the people did not always follow his directions and words. When they did, they prospered.

We may learn from Moses, because his exceptional life story tells us what God can do when we let Him change us. What were some turning points in your walk with God, where you recognized how He worked powerfully in your life?

