**THE LINE**

**Unapproachable to Approachable, Exodus 19:18-25, Matthew 1:18-25**

Sunday, December 19, 2021

**WE Slide 1 THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO PUT THE STAGE SET TOGETHER! Great job!!**

**LAST WEEK I made the statement that of all the people in your life who has impacted you no one has done more than Jesus Christ.** We measure events based on His birth- BC/AD; BCE/CE. **How western societies as a whole view children, women, the poor, and slaves- in that all people are of equal value and due equal respect because they are created in the image of God is all due to Jesus Christ and His teaching in the Bible.** People may not want to admit it but our desire to care for the less fortunate/the sick all stems from Jesus Christ. **Evolution’s foundation is survival of the fit, allow the weaker to die off for the sake of the stronger.** There’s no compassion at the core of evolution, only in creation/Jesus Christ.

**BUT THE MAIN POINT was how Jesus impacted our spiritual lives. Slide 2** BC- God considered us spiritually dead and destined to experience His judgment for our sin against Him. **But AD- after Jesus,** because of God’s infinite mercy, love, and grace, God will give us spiritual life and the gift of eternity in heaven, if we place our faith in Jesus for salvation. **What an AWESOME gift!**

**TODAY Slide 3 we’re going to see another way that Jesus impacted our world and relationship with God.** BC- God seemed UNAPPROACHABLE to mankind, but AD- God showed that He is APPROACHABLE.

**There was a massive change that came to earth when Jesus was born- God became human- like you and me only without sin.** Other man-made religions had their gods take on human form, but they acted like humans complete with sinful responses. **The ONE TRUE GOD didn’t just take on human form He BECAME human, but without sin- 100% God, 100% man.** Obviously God wants us to know that He is APPROACHABLE! **Why else would He become human?**

**So why was it that Israel in the OT and so many people today see God as UNAPPROACHABLE? It could be that every time God showed up in the OT He scared the people who saw the results of His presence.** No one has seen God, nor can they because He is spirit but when He showed up His presence was definitely seen, heard, and felt. **Here’s a great example of that from Exodus 19. Slide 4-11** This is just one of the many times He showed up where people were shaking in their sandals. **What’s going on here?**

**CONTEXT- BIG POINT- God is a God who chooses to reveal Himself- He does this over time, Progressive Revelation.** Moses knew more than Abraham, David/Moses, Apostles/David.

1. God rescued Israel from Egypt, led them to Mt. Sinai and asked them through Moses if they would like for Him to be their personal God- the God of Israel.
2. As a nation they tell Moses “Yes” so God entered into a relationship with the nation.
3. In that He reveals His personal name to them- YHWY, “I AM”- the LORD; not sure how to pronounce it.
4. Their God was the “self-existing One”- the one who exists in and of Himself, the one true God.
5. All other gods/religions are figments of man’s imagination.
6. God gave them some unconditional promises and conditional promises as well.
7. Unconditional (from His promise to Abraham)- no matter obedient Israel was God would make Israel a great nation through whom He would bless the world- namely Jesus Christ.
8. Conditional- if they obeyed God they would receive blessings through that obedience, if they disobeyed God He would discipline them to cause them to repent and return to doing life His way and receiving His blessings.
9. God is a good God who wants to bless people so they can continue to do life His way, not bless them so they end up destroying their lives by doing life their way.

**UP TO THIS POINT Israel had seen God do some incredible stuff to rescue them, but when He shows up personally it’s on a whole other level!!** For most of Israel and many today it is this picture of God that they have in their minds- SCARY. **Slide 12 God shows up with thunder, lightning, and an earthquake.**

**GOD**

1. **BC- GOD SEEMED UNAPPROACHABLE, Exodus 19:18-25; 20:18**
2. **God Shows Up with Thunder, Lightning, and an Earthquake.**
3. Throughout the OT this is how He reveals Himself- His voice sounds like thunder that rattles the earth; the power of His presence shoots out lightning.
4. But He’s also described this way in the NT, **Slide 13** The Revelation 4:5-6 **In other words…**
5. There isn’t one God of the OT- a God of judgment and another God of the NT- a God of Love.
6. God is the same yesterday, today and forever- it’s just that He works in different ways in different periods of time, **Slide 14-15** Hebrews 1:1-2

**Why does He do this? God has chosen to reveal Himself to us.** It’s why He created and gave us the Bible.

1. **OT- God’s focused on revealing His holiness/sinlessness.**
2. The thunder/lightening/earthquake reinforces the point that no one meets His standard of perfection and can stay alive in His presence.
3. God is holy- infinitely pure, without sin and completely separate from humans who are infinitely impure, full of sin, so much so as we learned last week we are as good as spiritually dead to God.
4. God is just- He’s a good Judge who deals with those who break the law, His law. I say this all the time we like good judges who find lawbreakers guilty and sentence them accordingly.
5. God showed His grace and mercy toward mankind in the OT most people focus on His judgment of their sin and see Him as UNAPPROACHABLE. **They would die if they touched the mountain!!**
6. By Jesus’ time the Jews had developed a belief that YHWH had such a spiritual force about it that they would not say it for fear of pronouncing it wrong/in vain and being judged by God.
7. Jesus called God “Father” and told His followers they could do the same.
8. “Father” was used in OT, but Jesus used it in the sense of having the same authority as God.
9. Jesus tells His followers to call God their Father and uses a term of intimacy.
10. This angered the Jewish religious leaders so much that they tried to kill Jesus several times.

**Slide 16 So Israel, like many people today, saw God as scary and UNAPPROACHABLE.** Then comes Jesus Christ- God continuing to reveal who He is steps back into time/space but this time not with thunder, lightning, or earthquakes. **This time He comes as a human child- what is more APPROACHABLE than a child?!** Through the life and eventual death of this child we not only see God’s holiness and justice but we see His love, mercy, and grace with greater clarity. **Look how Matthew describes God’s entrance into the world. Slide 17-23** IMMANUEL- GOD with US.

1. **AD- GOD SHOWS HE IS APPROACHABLE, Matthew 1:18-25**
2. **“Immanuel”- God with Us, God the Son, became man.**
3. After 400 years of silence, no interaction with Israel or anyone else, God shows up “in person”.
4. Jesus Christ- 100% God/100% man only unlike us He’s sinless.
5. God became flesh- here’s how the Apostle John summarizes it, **Slide 24** John 1:14
6. The author of Hebrews tells us that it was God revealing His glory- **who He is**, **Slide 25-26** Hebrews 1:3a
7. “radiance of His glory”- Like the light shining out of the sun so Jesus was shining out who God is.
8. “exact representation of His nature”- Jesus is, in human flesh, who God is at the core of His being- because He IS God.
9. **Do you want to know who God is, what God is like?** Just look at Jesus.

**“Jesus” there’s something special about that name. Why? What’s so important about the name Jesus? Slide 27**

1. **“Immanuel”- given the name Jesus.**
2. The angel said, “because He would save His people from their sins”.
3. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua- the one who after Moses died led Israel into the Promised Land.
4. God is connecting Jesus back to Israel’s other great rescue- their slavery in Egypt.
5. Like Joshua helped free Israel from slavery in Egypt and bring them into the Promised Land so Jesus will free Israel, and all mankind, from their greater slavery to sin and bring them into the heavenly Promised Land.

**Saving us from slavery to our sin was something only God could do and did do through Jesus.** Look what the author goes on to say about Jesus in Hebrews 1. **Slide 28**

1. God had to become human to save us from our sin, Hebrews 1:3

**Purification of sins? I thought Jesus was God/sinless? He is!** He was making purification for our sins, taking God’s judgment for our sin on Himself. **Here’s how it’s described later in Hebrews. Slide 29-31**

1. Since Jesus is God- infinitely powerful, and a human, He’s the only One who is able to take our judgment, Hebrews 7:25-27

**Let me ask you, how do you view God?** **Slide 32**

**YOU TAKEAWAYS**

1. **Do you see Him as UNAPPROACHABLE because you know your sin and fear His holiness/justice?** **If so that’s healthy because it’s a true perspective on who you are and who God is.** But there’s more truth you need to grab hold of and that is God has made it so He is APPROACHABLE by becoming human and removing the sin that separates you from Him.

**A- Admit your sin has separated you from God.**

**B- Believe that Jesus took God’s judgment for you once for all.**

**C- Confess to God that you believe that and ask Him to forgive you of your sin.**

**As the band comes up to close us out this morning let me talk to you who have received God’s forgiveness through faith in Jesus. Slide 33** Those who see God as APPROACHABLE.

1. **Do you seen Him as APPROACHABLE because your sins are forgiven? Then live in that truth make it known to those in your life who need to hear it.** START WITH INVITING PEOPLE TO THE CHRISTMAS SERVICES!

**PODCAST: Do you see God as unapproachable? Listen and see what difference Jesus can make in your view of God.** Exodus 19:18-25; 20:18, Matthew 1:18-25, Revelation 4:5-6, John 1:14, Hebrews 1:1-3, Hebrews 7:25-27