

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: Knowing the Ways of God

SERMON REFERENCE: Exodus 33:12-14

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2381

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) There is something more important than knowing the will of God, and it is knowing the ways of God.
- b) Exodus 33:12-14
 - i) Moses was facing a great task.
 - (1) He was to take the chosen people (the children of Israel) and lead them through the wilderness into the land of Canaan (the Promised Land).
 - ii) Faced with this tremendous task, he said a prayer.
 - (1) This prayer should be our prayer.
 - (2) Exodus 33:13
- c) There are two ways that we can be acquainted with God:
 - i) We can know God's works, what He does.
 - ii) We can know God's ways, who He is.
- d) Moses did not ask the Lord to show him His works.
 - i) Moses had already seen God's works.
 - ii) He asked to know God's ways.
 - (1) God answered that prayer.
- e) Psalm 103:7
 - i) Moses knew God's ways; Israel knew God's works.
 - (1) Israel saw what God did, but Moses knew something that the rest of Israel did not know.
- f) There are two levels of knowledge about God:
 - i) Some know God's works.
 - (1) They see what God does.
 - ii) Others see God's ways.
 - (1) They see insight into God's character.
- g) To know the ways of God will bring peace in a troubled world.
 - i) Our prayer should be that we might learn the ways of God.
- h) In today's message, we will look at the difference between knowing God's works and knowing God's ways.
 - i) We will also learn how to know the ways of God.

2) THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KNOWING GOD'S WORKS AND KNOWING GOD'S WAYS

- a) It is the difference between rest and relapse.
 - i) God promised Moses rest.
 - (1) Exodus 33:14
 - ii) Israel found no rest.
 - (1) Hebrews 3:7-11
 - (2) For forty years, Israel wandered in the wilderness.
 - (3) They saw God's works but never knew His ways.
 - iii) Moses wanted to know God's ways, and God gave Moses rest.
 - iv) Israel knew God's works, but they never found rest.

- (1) We can see God's works without knowing God's ways.
- v) The land of Canaan represents the believer's rest.
 - (1) The Israelites were to have rest, but they never found rest.
 - (2) Those who know God's ways are going to find that they are living in a perpetual Sabbath.
 - (a) Not a seventh day Sabbath, but a 365-day-a-year Sabbath.
 - (b) Every day can be a day of rest if we know the ways of God.
- vi) Why don't we have this blessing?
 - (1) There is no blessing without obedience.
 - (2) There is no obedience because there is no trust.
 - (3) There is no trust because there is no love.
 - (4) There is no love because there is no knowledge.
 - (5) We cannot trust someone that we do not know.
 - (6) We cannot know someone if all we see is their works and don't know their ways.
 - (a) We have to know their ways in order to love them.
 - (b) We have to love them in order to trust them.
 - (c) We have to trust them in order to obey them.
- vii) The reason that the children of Israel never found rest is because they only saw the works of God.
 - (1) They saw the miracles of God (the plagues on Egypt and the Red Sea opened), but they never understood the ways of God.
- b) It is the difference between intimacy and infatuation.
 - i) It is easy to be infatuated with God.
 - (1) People are infatuated with miracles, but they are not always interested in the ways of God.
 - ii) People can get infatuated with a church when the bloom is on that church.
 - (1) But when the church has difficulties or problems, they then leave the church.
 - (a) They do not have genuine faith.
 - (b) They do not know the ways of God.
 - iii) Moses knew the ways of God, and he had an intimate relationship with God.
 - (1) Exodus 33:11
 - (a) This passage says that the Lord spoke face-to-face with Moses.
 - iv) In today's world, there are a lot of people who are looking for a miracle.
 - (1) We see a lot of this on religious television.
 - (a) The big difference is that Jesus did miracles and didn't advertise them.
 - (b) Many people on religious programming advertise them and don't do them.
 - (2) They are looking for the works of God, so they come thinking they are going to be convinced.

- (3) There were people like this in the Bible:
- (a) John 2:1-11
 - (i) This passage tells of when Jesus turned water into wine.
 - 1. This was a genuine miracle.
 - (ii) Many believed on Him when they saw the miracles that He did.
 - 1. John 2:23
 - (iii) But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them.
 - 1. John 2:24-25
 - a. The same word is used in the Greek, which means that Jesus did not believe in them.
 - i. They believed in Him, but He did not believe in them.
 - 2. Jesus knew that people could be infatuated by miracles, but they did not know Him intimately.
 - (b) John 6 tells of when Jesus fed the five thousand, and the people flocked to Him.
 - (i) He fed them with bread and fish, and they followed Him.
 - (ii) When Jesus began to talk to them about knowing His ways, knowing Him intimately, eating His flesh, and drinking His blood, they left Him.
 - 1. They were miracle mongers.
 - a. They were infatuated, but they never really knew the Lord.
 - (c) Israel was infatuated with God at the Exodus.
 - (i) They passed through the Red Sea, dancing and praising God.
 - (ii) It was not long until they were moaning and complaining.
 - v) People who get divorced for trivial reasons are the people who got married for trivial reasons.
 - (1) It is infatuation; it is not genuine love.
 - vi) You cannot love a person if you don't know their ways.
 - vii) God made known His works unto Israel and His ways unto Moses because Moses asked the Lord to show him His ways.
 - viii) We will have a relapse when trouble comes if we don't know the ways of God.
 - (1) We will want a divorce from God if we are merely infatuated with Him because of His works.
 - c) It is the difference between being a teacher or a testifier.
 - i) The person who sees the works of God is a testifier.
 - ii) The person who knows the ways of God is a teacher.
 - iii) Moses could teach in ways that Israel could not teach.
 - iv) It is pretty easy to give a testimony.
 - (1) If someone sees God do something, then he can stand up and give a testimony.
 - (a) If that is all that happens, then he is not going to be much of a teacher.

- v) In John 9, there is a story of a man who was born blind, and Jesus healed him.
 - (1) The Pharisees began to interrogate him and asked who had healed him.
 - (2) John 9:25
 - (a) The man who was healed did not give much of a testimony.
 - (i) Later, Jesus taught him and disciplined him so that he could be more than a testifier.
- vi) There are a lot of people who just want to stand up in a church and testify about how Jesus saved them.
 - (1) Everyone should have a testimony, but are you not going to go any further than that?
 - (a) Are you never going to learn the ways of God so that you can not only tell what God has done but also who God is?
- d) It is the difference between peace and panic.
 - i) At the Red Sea, Moses was the only one who did not panic.
 - (1) Everyone else panicked because all they could see was what was happening.
 - (a) They did not know the ways of God.
 - ii) If all we see are the works of God, then when the works of God do not work out just right, we panic.
 - iii) Many times, things are not going to work out the way we think.
 - (1) Just the time we think we have it all figured out how God is going to work, He does things strangely.
 - (a) James was put in prison, and he was beheaded.
 - (b) Peter was put in prison, an angel came, and Peter walked out of prison.
 - (i) God allowed both things to happen.
 - (c) Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost.
 - (i) 3,000 souls were saved.
 - (d) Stephen testified, and he was stoned.
 - (i) Did Peter love Jesus more than Stephen?
 - (ii) Was James of less value than Simon Peter?
 - (2) If we try to get our theology from the works of God, then we are going to be panicky most of the time.
 - (a) We need to know the ways of God.
 - iv) Moses said, "Lord, show me Your ways."
 - (1) Exodus 33:13
 - (2) Do you know the ways of God?
- v) We need to know God in such a way that, come good or bad, we will trust Him.
- e) It is the difference between intercession and indifference.
 - i) A man who knows the ways of God is a man who can intercede.
 - ii) Abraham was an intercessor.

- (1) Abraham knew the ways of God.
 - (2) God was going to destroy Sodom, and Abraham protested and said that it was not the Lord's way to destroy the righteous with the wicked.
 - (a) Genesis 18:23
 - (3) Abraham had such an intimate relationship with God that he was able to pray and intercede.
- iii) There is a lot of foolish praying that goes on because people do not know the ways of God.
- (1) They are asking God to do things that He will not do.
- 3) HOW NOT TO KNOW THE WAYS OF GOD
- a) We will not know the ways of God through human reason and human ingenuity.
 - b) Exodus 33:12
 - i) There were some things that Moses did not know, and God did not tell him.
 - c) Isaiah 55:8-9
 - i) Don't ever make the mistake of thinking that God's ways are like our ways and that God's thoughts are like our thoughts.
 - (1) We are not going to know God's ways through human ingenuity.
 - (2) Our thoughts are never going to reveal to us God's ways.
 - (a) God's ways are always mysterious.
 - d) Psalms 77:19
 - i) In this passage, the Psalmist was speaking to God.
 - ii) God walks on the water, but we will never see His footprints after He has walked on the water.
 - (1) God's ways are always mysterious.
 - (2) God leaves no footprints on the sea of life.
- 4) HOW TO KNOW THE WAYS OF GOD
- a) We won't know the ways of God by looking around or by human ingenuity or by reasoning.
 - i) Isaiah 55:8
 - b) We know the ways of God through intimate, face-to-face dealing with God.
 - i) Exodus 33:11
 - ii) Exodus 33:14
 - iii) Exodus 33:19
 - (1) All of these Scriptures talk about an intimate relationship with God.
 - (a) That does not come by observation of seeing God open the Red Sea.
 - (b) It does not come by interrogation or reasoning.
 - c) We cannot open a book and learn about the ways of God.

- d) There is no way we are going to see what God does and learn the ways of God.
- e) We can see the works of God, but how wonderful when God says to us in answer to prayer that His presence will go with us and that He will speak to us face-to-face.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) The purpose of all counseling and preaching is not to solve problems for people, but to bring them into the presence of God so that they can know Him face-to-face.
- b) When you learn to seek His face and not His hand, then you will know His ways and will find rest for your soul.
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16