

GCFSM SUNDAY

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THE GLORY AND PRESENCE OF GOD

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"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle...³⁸For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys." - Exodus 40:34, 38

A year has passed since our nation was put on lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Just as we thought life would get better in 2021, sadly, it did not. Last month, we experienced the surge of coronavirus infections. The number of cases rose exponentially that caused another round of enhanced community quarantine.

The virus is hitting closer and closer to home. Last year we prayed mostly for people without direct connections to us. But this year is much different. As days go by, the ones getting infected are people we know—church members, family members, relatives, and friends. The closer to us, the more fear, worry, and anxiety it brings to our hearts.

This year is much worse than when the pandemic started. As vaccines slowly trickle into the country, the risk of getting infected remains the same. The ones who got their jabs are not completely protected from the virus. We know of people who got infected despite getting their vaccine shots.

Life has drastically changed. It has been permanently altered. We have to adapt to a new normal, a new normal which may even take years to establish. Our future remains uncertain. This is the harsh reality we face.

But the good news is we have a sovereign God who is actively at work in this world ever since the beginning. He is an all-knowing God who wasn't surprised at all by this coronavirus. Though this COVID-19 continues to go out of control, He is our all-powerful God who remains in full control. God's abiding presence guarantees the deliverance of His people, whom He called to be His treasured possession, for His glory.

Today, we begin with a sermon introduction of our 30-part sermon series on the Book of Exodus, "The Glory and Abiding presence of God."

The Book of Exodus is part of the Pentateuch—the first five books of the bible. It builds upon God's revelation in Genesis and continues from Leviticus to Numbers and to Deuteronomy. Moses probably wrote it around 1444 B.C. for the generation of Israel who experienced God's deliverance from Egypt. Although it was written for a specific group of people at a specific time, we can learn timeless principles about who God is, how He works, and what should be our proper response to His divine revelations.

We can divide Exodus into three major sections according to location: in Egypt (1:1-15:21), in the wilderness (15:22-18:27), and in Mount Sinai (19:1-40:38).

In Egypt, God revealed Himself as the God who rescued Israel from oppression. God saw and knew their afflictions (2:23-25). God called them to be His own people (6:7). God fought the battles for them (14:13-14).

In the wilderness, God revealed Himself as the God who showed patience to the grumbings of Israel. When people grumbled because they could not drink the bitter water, God made the water sweet (15:23-25). When they grumbled because they got hungry, God provided them bread from heaven in the morning and quail meat in the evening (16:2-4, 12-13). Again, when they got thirsty, they grumbled against Moses and God gave them water from the rock (17:2-3, 6).

In Mount Sinai, God revealed Himself as the God who established Israel as a nation. God called Israel to be His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (19:5-6). God dwelt in their midst through the tabernacle (25:8-9). God never left them all throughout their journey (33:14; 40:36-38).

All throughout this biblical narrative, God was so concerned about His glory.

And rightly so, for He is the Great I AM, the One and Only True Living God, our Sovereign Creator, and there is no other God like Him (3:14; 8:10; 9:29; 40:34-35).

Egypt was then a powerful nation. Many nations looked up to Egypt for protection, provision and peace. The Pharaoh was considered a powerful person almost next to pagan gods. And naturally, he received the glory from his people. Thus, God showed forth His power to get glory over Pharaoh so that the Egyptians would know that He is the LORD (14:4, 17, 18).

Ultimately, God did all the work He had done in the Book of Exodus so people would know that He is the LORD (6:7; 7:5, 17; 10:2; 14:4, 18; 16:12; 29:46; 31:13).

The Book of Exodus has no one singular theological theme. It is replete with many theological truths about who God is and how He works. We will discover them as we journey together in this 30-part sermon series until the end of this year.

I encourage you to read through the entire Book of Exodus. Read it daily and follow the unfolding of the narrative until you finish the story. As you read, take time to reflect on each segment and write down in your journal messages God will deposit in your heart. Reread the passages that will be taken up during our Sunday worship services. Again, take down personal notes and your take home messages. Discuss, share and process these things in your Growth Group.

A Growth Group Study Guide will be made available for your reference as you study Exodus in your small groups. We are also preparing a teaching material on how to read and interpret Old Testament narratives, specifically the Book of Exodus.

It is my prayer that this sermon series will convict us to know Jesus Christ more deeply and more intimate as we grow deep in His Word. May it move us to make Him known to people who still need to believe in Him as Savior and Lord for the building up of His Church and the glory of His Name! ✠