

## The Ministry of Intercession and Mediation

### Exodus 32 (ESV)

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At the very beginning, God made us in His image. And He made us in His image so that we would connect to Him, we would know Him personally, that we would worship Him, that we would enjoy Him. In fact our very chief purpose in life is to worship and serve the living God. God's promise is that if we worship Him truly, we will live completely satisfied lives. Yet we find ourselves often unsatisfied with life, yearning for something more. Why is that? The whole human race disconnected from true worship when Adam and Eve listened to Satan's lies about God and ate of the forbidden fruit. From that day forward, our hearts, the human heart, is bent on the worship of idols. We've turned away from the worship of the true and living God to that which is false, to that which is not real. The Apostle Paul speaks to this in Romans 1. He says that we as mankind have

**Romans 1:25** exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Our main problem in our life can be boiled down to our giving ourselves over to the worship of false gods. Every problem that we face can be boiled down to that one issue. Idolatry is the root of every pain, every sorrow, every broken thing. Some may protest, "Not me! I don't worship idols!" It's true that we may not have statues and images that we bow down before and offer sacrifices to, but an idol is anything that takes priority over the true God in our lives. An idol could be our family, it could be our job, it could be our hobbies, our money, our social status, our successes, our education, our pleasures, our hopes. This morning, I talked to my wife Kimberly and told her that I'm tempted by the idol of my natural good looks and athleticism. (Laughter!) She woke up to great hilarity. I don't know why that was so funny.

Here's the definition of an idol. An idol is anything that we love more than we love God ...anything other than God that we rely upon for our happiness...anything other than God that we depend upon for protection against our fears...anything that receives the first fruits of our time, the first fruits of our resources, the first fruits of our commitments. It's anything that we would say of, "I need that in order to be happy." It's anything that we would say of, "This is what is holding me safe." If we give ourselves first to something else in hopes that perhaps we will have some time, some resources, some commitment left over for God, that is an idol.

So let's ask the question: Do I have anything I love more than I love God? Do I have anything other than God that I think I could not do without? Do I make the first commitments of my time, money and energy to anything other than God? Beloved, we must not think that idolatry is something that is a distant, past temptation, and that it doesn't pull strongly against our 21<sup>st</sup> century American soul. Idolatry is a very clear and present danger for us, even as it was for the Israelites in the day of Moses.

By nature, we are idolaters at heart. John Calvin, the Reformer, observed “Every one of us is, even from his mother's womb, a master craftsman of idols.” Every one of us! That’s who we are. That’s how we’re born. We are masters at crafting idols, images, false gods to bow down and worship. This spiritual disease is gravely serious. It will destroy us if we do not put it to death. Idolatry is not some harmless sin. In fact, every evil action, every wicked thought, every nasty attitude flows from a heart that resists the worship of the true God. When we worship the true God, we will walk in holiness. When we worship false gods, we’ll be led away into all kinds of unrighteousness. The Apostle Paul again explains this in Romans 1.

**Romans 1:28-32** And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Since we saw fit to create idols, worshiping the creature rather than the Creator, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. And notice this list. As a result of idolatry, they were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, all manner of evil, all manner of covetousness and malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. All that flows from idolatry!

Just this last week, a gunman who hated Jews, opened fire in the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburg, killing 11 and injuring seven others. That same week, a man who hated liberals sent 15 packages containing mail bombs to various politicians. That same week, in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, a man who hated blacks gunned down a 69 year old man inside a Kroger’s grocery store and killed a 67 year old woman in the parking lot. Why is there such evil in this world? What is the fountainhead of such wickedness? The Bible’s answer is idolatry. When man exchanges the worship of God for the worship of idols, he sets himself in a sea of sin and death. This is not to say that every person who worships idols commits the sin of violent murder. It is simply to state that the source of all sin is idolatry.

Here’s the truth that God gives us about idolatry. When we worship idols, we give ourselves over to all manner of unrighteousness. Our only protection against evil is the One true God who is righteous, holy and good. We are safe from giving ourselves over to evil, only in Him. Every other god will lead us into behaviors and attitudes that are not good, that indeed are wicked and wrong. So God gives us Exodus 32 to warn us away from idolatry, to see its evil, and to show us our need for a Mediator because we are born in the state of being idol worshipers.

**A Great Sin: Idolatry**

*I When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”*

Moses has been on the mountain around 40 days now. That phrase “gathered themselves together” is a violent word. The people come with hostility, with malice, with threats, to Aaron. So they’re not just coming with, “Hey, Aaron. What do you think?” No, they’re coming with “You better do this, Aaron, or we will strike against you!” They talk about Moses as “this” Moses. Notice that in the text. “He’s probably disappeared up there. He’s never coming back. He’s probably died.”

Remember what had happened to this people over the past several months. They’re some 2 to 3 million in number. Remember over the past several months, just months, 4 ½ months or so, they had seen God use Moses to send 10 supernatural plagues upon Egypt, revealing His sovereign power over the Egyptian gods. That was just 4 ½ months ago! Remember how they saw God’s love demonstrated to them by delivering them out of cruelty and bondage in Egypt. Remember how they felt dry ground underneath their feet as they walked through the parted Red Sea. This wasn’t years and years ago. This was months ago! Remember how they had been led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. It moved in order to guide them. It represented God’s localized presence with them.

Remember how they tasted manna. This very morning, they ate the manna that supernaturally appeared on the ground. It’s manna that God sent for their sustenance. Remember how they drank deeply from the water after Moses struck a rock in the scorching desert. Miracle after miracle after miracle! God showed this people His lovingkindness, His power, His Person. Just weeks earlier, they saw Moses ascend Mount Sinai and they listened as Moses first ascended Mount Sinai, then he came down to speak to them. This was just weeks ago! And if you turn over to Exodus 19, we see that part of the story. God is speaking through Moses.

**Exodus 19:4-6** You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Skip forward to verse 8. Moses comes down from the mountain after his first meeting with God. God gives him this message. And what do the people say when Moses comes down from that first initial meeting with God?

**Exodus 19:8** All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.”

“We will be absolutely obedient!” And the people saw Mount Sinai shake with the glory of God. It was smoking, and they trembled before Him at the foot of the mountain. God

then gives this people Ten Commandments communicated through Moses; the first two emphasizing that they are to have no other gods before them other than the one, true God. And they are to make no image, no graven image of this one true God to use in their worship.

**Exodus 20:18-20** Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.”

They’ve received these Ten Commandments. They see more thunder and flashes of lightning. They hear the sound of the trumpet, the mountain is smoking. The people are afraid and they tremble. Again, this is just weeks; less than 40 days prior. Jump forward now to Exodus 24. Moses then restates all the words of the LORD to the people and they answer with one voice,

**Exodus 24:3** “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.”

So that’s their second promise. They say, “We’re going to be obedient. Absolutely, Moses! Absolutely, God!” Moses then not only speaks the words of the LORD to the people, but he takes some time and he writes them down for the people. And then Moses reads the inscripturated Word of the LORD to the people, in the hearing of the people. After they heard this message, now it’s the third time they’re hearing it, the third time they’re saying,

**Exodus 24:7** “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.”

Moses then builds an altar at the foot of Mount Sinai. He throws blood against the altar. He throws blood upon the people. It is a ratification of this covenant, the Mosaic covenant, the covenant of the Law. “If you keep the Law, you’ll be blessed. If you disobey the Law, you’ll be cursed.” That’s the Mosaic covenant. The LORD then calls Moses back up to Mount Sinai. And that’s where this story is.

Moses has already been up to Mount Sinai. He’s already been down. He’s communicated to the people. He’s heard the people say, “We will obey! We will obey! We will obey!” Moses makes a sacrifice, throws blood on the altar, throws blood on the people. They know that they need a covering for their sin. He goes back up to Mount Sinai to meet with God. Why? God says a couple things. “First, I’m going to talk to you about the worship, how I am to be worshiped in a tabernacle with specific instruments and specific ceremonies. And there’s going to be a priesthood. I want to talk to you about that. And secondly, I’m going to give you those Ten Commandments. I’m going to write with My finger, those Ten Commandments on stone, so that you’ll have it; you’ll know it’s from Me.” This is the setting for Exodus 32.

*1 When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us.*

One principle we learn from the anger that they are holding against Aaron, who is representing the God that Moses is communicating, the God that is on this mountain... That's who Aaron is to them. He's the nearest person that represents this God. The principle is that the human heart becomes hostile when it is denied the ability to choose its own gods. There is no anger such as the anger of a person who is impeded from following after his or her own gods. That's when people get really angry. "How dare you keep me from worshiping this god!"

Our whole world and our country is igniting with hostility. Why is that? The hostility is not driven by a passion for righteousness. It's not driven by a passion for goodness. It's certainly not driven by a passion for the true and living God. It is driven by a passion to worship false gods. "And how dare anyone keep me from worshiping the god that I have fashioned out of my own image!" All sinful anger flows from hearts that feel repressed from chasing after false gods. If you have an anger problem, you explode at your kids, you explode at your wife, you get angry at work, you have an idolatry problem. It's that simple! You need to identify that idolatry. That's where the root lies. You have an idolatry problem. You are worshiping some thing other than the one true God.

Notice their disdain for the mediator, Moses, that God had given to them.

*As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." 2 So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." 3 So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron.*

It's going to cost them something now. All false gods cost. Ironically, this is the gold that God gave them through the Egyptians as He led them out. So they're using resources that God gave, to fashion false gods. Notice that idolaters often give more generously to the worship of false gods than true worshippers give to the worship of the one true God. This is a generous offering. They say, "Great! We'll give! We want this god!" Zeal in our worship must be joined to truth if our worship is to have value. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well,

**John 4:23-24** true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

The Father is seeking people. This is His heart. He's seeking people that would connect to His created purpose, people who are made in His image, who would worship Him in spirit with zeal and passion from the inside, but also in truth, conforming to the revelation that He has given regarding Himself. God is spirit and those who worship Him, if it's to be true worship, must worship Him in spirit and truth.

*4 And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"*

Hebrew scholars tell us that the word "calf" refers to a strong, young bull. In Egypt, there was a god by the name of Apis who was a strong, young bull. So here, God's people are saying, "We want to return to the idols that we worshipped in Egypt!" We know that this people worshiped idols with the Egyptians while they were in Egypt. And they're saying, "We want to give credit for our deliverance to those gods that we used to worship." What disdain for God and His goodness to them! That's what idolatry is. It's disdain for God and His goodness.

*5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD."*

Aaron uses the word "Yahweh," this covenant-keeping God, the God who revealed Himself. So Aaron is trying to gather this false worship in and still have focus on Yahweh, but he's breaking the second commandment to do it. He's creating a graven image that he says represents the true God. And he even offers offerings that are related to the true God, to this image.

*6 And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.*

That phrase "rose up to play" indicates drunken partying with open sexual immorality. That's what other false gods demanded in their worship; that there would be an open display of sexual immorality during the worship service. And now that's what this people is engaged in.

Three times in the chapter, Moses calls what is happening here, a "great sin." "I thought all sins are the same?" No, they're not! Moses called this a great sin three times. In verse 21, Moses says to Aaron, "This is a great sin." In verse 30, Moses says to all the people, "This is a great sin." In verse 31, Moses says to God, "This is a great sin." Idolatry is a great sin because it is the root of every other sin, because it robs God of the glory that is due Him, because it credits other gods for the good things that God Himself has provided. Once a heart is given over to idolatry, no sin is off limits.

How might we recognize the sin of idolatry? The sin of idolatry is often cloaked. It's often hidden in our lives. We don't see it where it resides, even when it resides in powerful forms. I would suggest three issues.

1. Recognize idolatry for the evil that it is.

First, see that if it is there in your heart, understand how evil, how wicked, how wrong, how rebellious, how God-dishonoring idolatry is.

## 2. Resist impatience with God's timing.

Oftentimes, idols prop up because we're impatient with how God is working in our life and the way that God is working in our life. This people were impatient that Moses wasn't already back down from the mountain. They said, "We're through waiting on the one true God. Let's get these gods working for us the way we want them to." God uses His delays to mature us; Satan uses God's delays to tempt us.

## 3. Rejoice in the Mediator God has given to us!

For Israel, that mediator was Moses. For us, that Mediator is Jesus.

If we are to be free of this sin of idolatry, we have to recognize it for how evil it is. We have to resist being impatient with God's timing for His gifts and His goodness. And we have to set our hearts and our minds upon this Mediator that God Himself has provided. Our Mediator is far greater than Moses. God has given Him to us so that we would have a way, the truth, and life that would lead us toward the living God; never away from Him. You see, the problem was this people had rejected their mediator, saying, "We can find another way to God." They set their eyes off of Moses and said, "Okay, let's look for something new." Paul talks about this event in 1 Corinthians 10.

**1 Corinthians 10:6-7** Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were;...

He goes on to say:

**1 Corinthians 10:11-15** Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

We're living in the last times. They happened to them for God's purposes for them, but they also were written down for us right here in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America, at Bethany. Let anyone who would say, "I am so free of the sin of idolatry. That would never ever take place in my life." No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. So when you're in this kind of situation, in a hard place, waiting on God, waiting, waiting, waiting, and seemingly, God is still inactive and you're wondering, "Is He ever going to show up?" That's a common-to-man kind of temptation. God is faithful. He will provide for you. Wait longer! Wait for God to ultimately show Himself to be true to His promises. Run as far from idolatry as you possibly can. What applications might we make?

## 1. We don't need more miracles in order to worship the true God.

These people had miracles galore! If anybody was going to be spiritually sustained because of miracles, it was them. And today, in the evangelical church, there's this drive. "I need another miracle. That's what I need to boost my spiritual life." No, you don't! What you and I need is to pay attention to the revelation God has already given us in His Word. We need to place ourselves under it.

2. Embrace the Mediator God has given to us.

That Mediator is the Lord Jesus. Embrace Him! Hold onto Him! He'll hold you fast, but hold onto Him as though your life depended upon it, because it does.

3. Resist fashioning God into the Person you want Him to be.

Our imaginations always make God less glorious and less wonderful than He is; never more. Resist fashioning God into the Person you want Him to be.

4. Never trust in the Law of God to connect us to the blessing of God.

The Mosaic Law had already been given. It's going to be put on tablets of stone. That's what is happening right now. It's going to be developed. But what did the Law of God do? Did the Law of God keep this people from idolatry? They listened to the Law of God. Three times they said, "We will obey! We will obey! We will obey!" And what happened? They didn't obey! It's an indication of what the New Testament teaches us, that the Law of Moses is good. It's amazing! It reveals God's character. But it offers no help to a sinful heart. None! We need something greater. We need the gospel of Jesus.

Now, if you're taking notes, we're going to go along rather quickly here. We're going to consider

### **A Great Wrath: Total Destruction**

What did God do in response to the people's idolatry? Moses is completely unaware of what is happening down at the foot of the mountain; God is not.

*7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" 9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people.*

"But I'm going to love them anyway." No, that's not what God says. He says

*10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you."*

He knows Moses is the right mediator and Moses is going to intercede. But He says, “Moses, don’t talk to me. Don’t intercede. Don’t pray for this worthless people! If you don’t do what you’re going to do, I’ll consume them.” And He goes on to say, “I’m going to make from you a great nation. Remember, I promised that to Abraham and his offspring. I’m going to start it all over with you, Moses.”

God always sees our idolatry. It’s never hidden from Him. God says, “I will destroy this people. The wages of sin is death.” We should never consider the patience of God as a sign of weakness or apathy on His part, to pursue righteousness in our lives. Never, ever, ever! 2 to 3 million people, and God was ready to say, “I’ll blow on them and they’ll be consumed in one great fire. 2 to 3 million people! That’s God’s righteousness. That’s His holiness. And God would have been just to do it.

### **A Great Intercession: Remember Your covenant!**

I love this, what Moses cries out to the Lord. Moses rejects the offer that God makes to create a great nation out of him and he intercedes. He is God’s chosen mediator for this people, and he acts like it. He is faithful to this charge to be the mediator for this people, the mediator between God and this people. Notice that this people had treated Moses roughly. They treated him with contempt. They treated him with disdain. Moses doesn’t let those personal offenses keep him from, in love, being a mediator for this people. And he presents to God two arguments for showing mercy to Israel.

First, he says, “God, don’t you realize that the Egyptians are going to mock you? And they’re going to say that their gods proved themselves to be greater after all? They’re gods are better because they’re going to say, ‘All this God did was lead a people out in the wilderness to kill them.’ You don’t want that. Your name is at stake, here, Lord.”

And secondly, “God, you have already made an unconditional, eternal covenant with Abraham, to make a nation from him. You’ve made a covenant to Abraham’s offspring of a promised land and an inheritance that would be forever. It’s unconditional and everlasting.”

So Moses pleads with God on the basis of God’s revealed character; who God professed Himself to be. He is the jealous God who is concerned for His glory. And on the basis of God’s character to be faithful to every promise He makes, Moses says, “God, remember your glory. Remember your promises.”

Deuteronomy 9 offers more detail into Moses’ intercession. You can just jot it down: Deuteronomy 9:15-20. We kind of get the idea from Exodus 32 that Moses offered up this quick prayer. “Please do this!” Deuteronomy 9 says that Moses spent 40 days of fasting before the Lord in prayer, just in anguish before the Lord. “God, be merciful! God, be merciful! Remember your glory! Remember your covenant! Remember your faithfulness!” It was 40 days of just focused intercession for a people who had thrown him out like yesterday’s garbage. “God, remember your people!” What’s the application?

1. Rejoice in our Mediator's intercession for us.

Make much of the truth that the Father hears the Son's pleadings and He ever lives to make intercession for us. Hebrews 4 tells us that we have a high priest who is

**Hebrews 7:25** Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Beloved, make much of that truth. Think about it. Chew on it. Praise God for it. Rejoice in it. Count on it! It's the only thing that keeps us from total dissolution. It's the ministry of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Our hearts don't keep us there.

Do you remember Peter on the night in which Jesus was betrayed? "I would die for you, Jesus." And Jesus says, "No, you won't, Peter. You're going to deny me three times. But Peter, I have prayed for you."

**Luke 22:31-32** Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

"I have prayed Peter that once this disobedience has taken place, that God would turn you again so that you would strengthen your brothers." It is Jesus' ministry of intercession that brought Peter back. It's the only thing that holds us. It's the only thing that brings us back.

2. Pray for one another.

Persevere in prayer for your brothers and sisters. The fact that God hears our prayers is a marvel and a mystery. But what we know, that God reveals to us, is that the prayers of righteous people are fruitful and effective. Don't grow weary.

### **A Great Consequence: Painful cleansing**

It's a painful cleansing that takes place among this people. It's recorded in Exodus 32:15-24. What we see here in these verses, all the way through verse 29, is that 3,000 men are going to die by the hands of the Levites underneath God's instructions to put them to death. We see also in verse 35 that the Lord sends a plague on the people, a plague that takes the lives of many. There is a terrible, terrifying consequence, there always is, to sin! We must not think that God trifles with sin the way we do.

**Galatians 6:7-8** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Let's be on the right side of that sowing and reaping truth. God is not mocked!

I want to close us with this great hope, because this is such a sober chapter, but there's such great hope in it. And that's the hope of

### **A Great Savior: Jesus!!!**

The Levites carry out this judgment. 3,000 people die at their hands because they chose other gods over the true God. The night then passes and Moses has still been thinking because he knows that God is still up on that mountain and He's angry. He's still consumed by wrath against this people's sin. He knows God's holiness. He knows His righteousness. He trembles in the face of it. And I think that Moses remembers the blood that was painted on the doorposts when the Destroyer came and He passed over every house that had that blood painted. There was mercy. There was some way that this blood made atonement, made a covering, a protection for people. The lamb, an innocent victim, could die in the place of guilty people.

I think he also meditated upon the instructions that God had given to him already up on that mountain about this Day of Atonement, when a high priest would kill an animal and sprinkle its blood upon the mercy seat to make a covering for the sins of the people. And I think he's thinking, "If atonement could be made, if some satisfaction could be made for God's righteousness, God perhaps would be merciful." I want to read this here in verses 30-32. Read it with me. This is the next morning after all this took place.

So they had to drink the calf. I skipped over that part. That was another part of the painful consequences of their sin. They drank up their own idols and God made refuse out of that idol. That's what God does with false gods. There is no future with a false god.

*30 The next day Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."*

Again, I think he's looking at the possibility of atonement. He says, "Perhaps! I don't know if it can be done. I don't know if I can do it. But I've seen God be merciful in the past. I've seen this principle of a covering.

*31 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, if you will forgive their sin—*

Hebrew scholars tell us that right there, there is a break. It's like all of a sudden, Moses gets choked up as he is writing this. He's the one that records this. He's recording this prayer and he writes

*32 But now, if you will forgive their sin—*

And there's just this big break. There's this big pause. Moses doesn't know how God would maintain His holiness and forgive the guilty people. "Perhaps, if you would forgive this people..." But then he said

*but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.”*

He's acting as the mediator. I believe this is the Book of Life. It's the book not just of physical life, but it's the Book of Life, the book of connection with God. And remember God said to Moses earlier, "I'm going to destroy this people and I'm going to save you." Moses, in his intercession, says, "Save this people and destroy me. They're a people who don't love me, a people who don't care for me, a people who disdain me. Save this people! And if it's necessary for me to be blotted out of your book and removed from you forever and ever, may it be so."

Now here's the problem. Moses could not die in the place of his people. Moses could not make atonement because Moses was a sinner, too. But God's revelation continues and how blessed we are to be part of the new covenant; to be on this side of the cross when God sent that one mediator, Jesus Christ, the God man, into this world to die upon the cross. He bore our sins, suffering the judgment and punishment we deserve so that we can be cleansed, so that we can be forgiven. And this Mediator never comes to God the Father and says, "If perhaps you could forgive their sins..." This sacrificial lamb, this act of atonement, is absolutely certain, guaranteeing everyone's forgiveness, everyone's cleansing, who drives themselves by faith into Him, this one Mediator.

**1 Peter 2:24-25** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus is the sufficient Mediator and Substitute for us. Moses couldn't die for his people. Paul also said something similar. He couldn't die for his people. Jesus could, and He did. God is faithful and just to forgive all those who come to Jesus in faith. Outside of Jesus, there is only a certain expectation of God's judgment for idolatry, for our sinful hearts. But with Christ, there is a certain hope of obtaining God's mercy and an inheritance with all the saints.

Beloved, the greatest commitment anyone could ever possibly make in this life is a commitment to embrace Jesus as Savior and Lord. I would ask you: Have you done so? Is Jesus your Savior? Is He your Mediator? Have you come to Jesus and said, "I need You or I will be lost in the condemnation of my sin. I need One who can provide an atonement, a covering so that I can be forgiven, and You are that one." I urge you this morning, won't you look up and call upon Him? He is faithful to hear you.