

**Who is on the Lord's Side?**  
**Exodus 32:25-35**  
**July 8, 2007**  
**FBC Waynesboro**

The character and course of what we call Christianity in our country will continue to spiral downwards and out of control until we in the church are captured by the great grandeur of the holiness of our God. I spent part of the fourth of July in prayer for this land that I love and what God was showing me during that prayer time is just how much the church needs to come before Him in repentance. We have created in our country an American Christian subculture whose version of God borrows just enough from the Bible to sound godly while being so foreign to Scripture that it is in fact idolatry. We have created a God who saves our souls and secures us for heaven while serving our needs while we live as we desire during our days here upon the earth. Go to almost any prayer group and it is focused on our needs. Attend almost any Bible Study and the discussion time revolves around what it says to me to help me live a more fulfilled life. Check out our lifestyles and they appear far more driven by the world than determined by the Word. And if you have any thoughts right now about what is wrong with that then you are in a very dangerous place.

It is the extent to which we see the grand holiness of God that determines the clarity of our vision in seeing the depths of our depravity. And we do not see how sinful we are in our society because we have lost sight of His almost entirely. R. C. Sproul says that we live in a day of "the eclipse of God." We have reduced our sins to mistakes. We no longer are an affront to a holy God; we mess up. We no longer ourselves as vile in His sight; we see ourselves as victims of our circumstances who just need from the preacher at church a "pick-me-up." We talk about a Gospel that we do not know because what we want is something to help us succeed in our career, in our marriage, and with our children; we don't want the Gospel whose offer is to change our lives so that we live for the glory of God even when everything within us and around us may be collapsing. As long as we see sin as no more than a scraped knee that needs a kiss and bandaid, we will never see our God as He is nor ourselves as we truly are. The Church in America is in great need of a revival that will

give us glimpses of the great grandeur of our God that will drive us on our faces in repentance.

Look what happened here. We left Exodus 32 sometime back but the center of this chapter is the conflict between what God is doing for His people through Moses and what the people are doing against God through Aaron. They wanted a pick me up come when I beckon meet my needs kind of God. Aaron provided. God was provoked. Moses prayed that God not to do them what they deserved and God decided to show mercy. He wanted them to sense the seriousness of their sin. He shattered the rocks upon which were written the law to show them the horrible nature of their sin. He melted the molten calf and made them drink water mixed with the ashes. He wanted them to taste the bitterness of their sin. And He confronted Aaron because He wanted them to hear that he had led them away from God. They sense, they see, they hear, they taste the tragedy of their sin, and they stopped sinning.

32:25. The phrase “running wild” and “out of control” are the same word in the original text. The word is used only here in the entire Bible. We do not know exactly what it means and that is why the ESV has “broken loose,” the NASV has “out of control” and the KJV chose to symbolize what the word means by using the term “naked” which suggest their acting shamefully in the presence of God. Not knowing exactly what the word means and knowing that it is only used here in the Bible makes what is going on here even more serious. What is strongly suggested by the context is that they had become so caught up in and consumed by their sin that they could not stop. So it broke the law of God. So it was an affront to their holy God. It was feeling good to them and they could not stop. They were out from under the control of God but they were under the control of the world, the flesh and the devil. Have you ever been to this place? You know how you are living is not pleasing to God and surely a check of your calendar and checkbook would reveal that His Kingdom is not your ultimate concern, but you simply cannot stop. Satan has you right where he wants you and he will keep you there as long as you let him.

But you and I must understand this truth: Satan has no greater weapon to win the battle for truth in this world than professing

Christians whose way of living does not honor God, 25. These people had become a laughingstock their enemies. And the enemies were not just laughing at them; they were laughing at their God. Tell me: does your daily life demonstrate such devotion to Jesus that others can see it because it shows so clearly; or is your life lived in such a way that nobody would know that you belong to Him unless you told them. And then they might be a bit surprised! Jesus said, "whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this generation of that person I will be ashamed before my Father in heaven." Philip Ryken says that we as believers must know that the world is watching us and when we behave badly, the world makes fun of the church. What if we could get in our souls this truth that when we proclaim publicly our commitment to Jesus as Lord, the general public begins to watch us. And we will either lead them to Jesus or we will lead them away from Jesus. People who are lost are not led to Jesus when we try to be like them, they are led to Jesus when they see how different we are because of Him. Every person in this place has to make that choice to make that commitment under the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

We have to answer this question, "Who is on the Lord's Side?" You must know that in the Hebrew language this is short, succinct, stoccatto, no words wasted. It reads literally, "To Yahweh, To Me," or "Who before the Lord, Stand before me." Do you know how many times in the Bible God calls out to His people to make this commitment? Over and over again it is there. Joshua stands before the people and demands that they choose: if God is God then follow Him but if it is for you the gods of the nations follow them, but as for me and my house. Elijah stands before the people and asks them, "how long will you limp between two opinions, if God is God then follow Him but if the Baals are for you then bow before them. Jesus would stand before His disciples and say, "no man can serve two masters . . . you cannot serve God and money." And in every situation the confrontation is toward those who profess to belong to God. And the confrontation comes to sort the true believers from those who only profess to believe and the evidence is the surrender and submission to the voice of God or to the Word of God.

Moses stood at the entrance to the camp. The word literally is, "the gate." It was the main entrance for those who came into the

camp of Israel and through which the men would go out for battle. It was the gate through which many who went out did not come back in because they were killed in battle. No man could see where Moses was standing and hear what he was saying and not get the point. He is recruiting soldiers for the army of the Lord. He has now seen the enemy and recognized the intensity of the battle. He knows that the stakes are high and the cost is great. He can waste no words here: To Yahweh, to Me. To stand with Moses is not only to make a commitment to the Lord but to communicate that life is to be lived *coram Deo* before the face of God. People are being called to stand up, to step forth, and to stand apart from the crowd. No person hearing this call is unaware of the cost. Are you hearing that call today? Is God calling you to stand up, to step forth, to stand apart? I believe one of the ways that the Spirit of God is working in our church right now is that He is calling out people who are Christians by the definitions of our culture but not by what is declared in the Word of God. And when you are here, God is talking to you. He is searching your soul. Will you stand up? Will you stand forth? Will you stand apart? Will you? Will you today? I can assure of this: at the end of the day and at the end of the way the current understanding of Christianity as defined by our culture will be seen to be absolutely bankrupt and you will stand before Jesus with your, "but Lord . . .

The Bible says that all the sons of Levi gathered to him. "rallied" is a bit strong. They stood up and stepped across the line. It is very interesting because Aaron would have been among them. Was he the first? The last? Did others encourage him or did he encourage them? We do know that this call for commitment comes right after Moses had confronted Aaron. We know that Aaron was seeking to defend himself, blame the people and absolve himself by lying about what had really happened. And we know that Moses did not give in at all. Could it be that through this confrontation Aaron had come under conviction; he knew that he had led them astray and was under the judgment of God but the God under whose judgment he had come is a God who does not want to keep us there. He wants to bring us His grace and mercy. He wants to forgive us and free us from sin. So, he heard the call and he heeded to call. He stood up, stepped forth, and separated himself from the sins of the people.

I want to end today by asking you to look at and listen to two truths. One, you have no idea who is watching you and thus learning how or how not to live for Jesus by watching your life. You have no idea today who it is that would come to Jesus because you came to Jesus. You should not ever give your life to Jesus to get somebody else to come. That is sinful. You should only come because you know the Holy Spirit is calling you to Jesus but if He is, you should come and come today. Two, if you are captured and controlled by a lifestyle in which like these people you profess a relationship with God but your life really doesn't show it, you don't have to stay there. You don't have to beat up on yourself about it either. You can stand up and step forward today. You don't have to wait. It could have been on that day that the first one who stood up and stepped across the line was the one who had put the people in that predicament in the first place. Don't think that because you are not living for Him today that you can't be changed. You can. He will. Praise God.