

*After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain. Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what are to tell the people of Israel: You selves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites. So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said.*

### GOD HAS A GOAL FOR YOU

1. To remember His grace
2. To remain in His grace
3. To respond to His grace

Dear covenant people of God,

At this time of the year it is quite common to hear the question asked of the graduates, "What is your goal in life? It is not a bad question. People are simply interested in what graduates plan to do with their education. But it is not just at graduation time that this question is raised. A person may be in mid-life and stop to ask the same question. "Where am I going career wise? My life is half over. Have I accomplished anything? Do I need to do some readjusting? Have enough things changed around me that I need to reset the direction of my life? It is also a good idea for a Christian congregation to evaluate its direction periodically.

Before we talk any more about evaluation and goals, however, we should consider the goals our Lord Christ may have for us to pursue. There is one goal that the dear Lord has set for each one of us and to which we should pay attention. He wants us to be wrapped up in His grace.

In the text before us Israel had been led to Mt. Sinai. God had delivered His people from the oppression in Egypt. He had been with His people through the crossing of sea. He had drowned the army of Egypt before their very eyes. He had given them the visible evidence of the pillar of a cloud and fire to assure them that He was right there. The text puts it graphically – God had carried them on eagles' wings. As the great bird can swiftly swoop down and catch a faltering eaglet on its wings and carry it up to safety, so the Lord had swiftly swooped down and caught His people and brought them safely to the Mountain.

The first thing God told the people they should do is remember that it was God who had delivered them and that He did so because He loved them. He loved them already when He made the covenant with their forefathers and God always makes good on His Word.

Today we recognize that it was not just a matter of God graciously delivering Israel, but we know that we fit in the same shoes. We are recognizing God's gracious deliverance when we confess, "I a poor miserable sinner confess unto you all my sins and inequities with which I have ever offended you and justly deserve your temporal and eternal punishment."

That confession tells God that we recognize each day is a gift from God. We can get so wrapped up in activities that we can go for days without acknowledging God's presence and His love. We have our agendas laid out for us and we strive not to get behind. We can get caught up in a relationship and lose sight of the bigger picture. Our life suddenly becomes all about us. God says here that we are to remember His grace and in doing so we will remember that our life is all about Him and His love for us;

There is another element here which we should not miss. God told Moses, *You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt ...* If you could have been standing on the far shore of the Red Sea when Pharaoh's army entered the path between the walls of water and the when they were all in, how the Lord let the waters return and overwhelm the Egyptians, I think that you might well have felt sick at the sight. Pharaoh learned that it is idolatry to live to and for yourself alone and God's judgment rests on idolatry.

The second point here is that we should not just remember, but remain in God's grace. Listen to what He says here. *Out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.* Look at the three expressions. First a treasured possession – a treasure is something that we want to hang on to. It is more valuable than other things we have. We guard it and keep it safe because we don't want to lose it.

The second expression used here is "a kingdom of priests." It was God's design that Israel would function as priests to the world. A priest always acts on behalf of someone else for the other person's benefit. Israel was to have that privileged position to the world, but in rejecting the Christ, when He came, they lost that favor.

The third expression is a holy nation. A holy nation is a nation set apart. They were set apart for service to the world on behalf of God. All of these expressions are here encouraging us to remain in God's grace. We as the people of God have a favored relationship with Him. We are redeemed, restored, forgiven. We are under the Great Commission to tell the world what great things God has done.

Moses came down from the mountain with this message for the people telling them what God has said. *So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. The people responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said."* Remembering God's grace and remaining in God's grace also leads us to respond to God's grace. *All the Lord has spoken we will do.* In the words of the Psalm they were *to serve the Lord with Gladness.* When we support the training and the sending out of the Lord's harvesters, we are responding to His grace. When we personally get involved in reaching out we are responding to His grace. When we regularly gather for worship and raise our

voices in praise, we are responding to His grace. When you live your life according to the will of God, you are responding to His grace.

Let's pray this morning that God would use us to bring this same saving grace to the rest of the world, that God would help us see that we are His treasured possession and as such we can gladly use our resources to for the work of His kingdom. Amen