

“GOD, WILL YOU GO WITH ME?”
Exodus 33:15

Read these words from a worship song we used to sing here:

If Your presence doesn't go with us
We don't want to leave this place
Lord we need You near as we go from here
To lead us by Your love and grace

May Your presence fill us every day
May Your Spirit lead the way
Lord to You we call, let Your glory fall
And may Your presence go with us

If we have found favor in Your sight
Show us Your ways, O Lord
'Cause we want to know You and live in Your light
For all of our days, show us Your ways

We have our hopes and we have our dreams
But we cannot go where You will not lead

*For so long, I thought of this song in terms of a good “send off” from a church service.
The context was limited to making sure that we as Christians go wherever He leads,
and conversely, that we avoid places that He leadeth not!*

*However, after coming across the verses with inspired this song,
I realized that there is much more to the story ...*

The Background

In the previous chapters, we find Israel encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai, while Moses is up on the mountain receiving the 10 Commandments and other important laws. In this exchange, we are seeing the establishment of the Sinai (or Mosaic) Covenant, and Israel, in receiving her law, is becoming a nation.

However, as Moses descends the mountain with the 10 Commandments in hand, he finds that the people have made a golden calf, an idol and are apparently guilty of syncretism: combining worship of Yahweh with elements of other religious systems.

What was the penalty for Israel's unfaithfulness?

- (1) 3,000 WERE KILLED by the Levites
- (2) The people were STRUCK BY A PLAGUE

→ If we didn't know the story, how might we expect Israel to react to their punishment?
* Discuss how different people react to correction / rebuking.
-- young children (hugs), older children (anger), adults (avoidance, time)

The Offer

God makes a generous offer, in spite of Israel's behavior. What did He offer? (33:1-3)

- To FULFILL His PROMISE without His PRESENCE.
- God proposed to send AN ANGEL to drive out the inhabitants of the Promised Land.
 - Q: What does this offer tell us about our relationship to God?
 - *We can live in His promises without walking in His presence!*

Q: Do you think this was an attractive offer to the Israelites? Why or Why not?

Q: Why did God make the offer? (v.3b, 5)

The Response

How did the people respond to God's offer? (33:4-6)

- GOING WITHOUT GOD was cause for MOURNING!
 - * stripping off ornaments (vv.4,6) – the news was so dreadful that they couldn't wear festive dress.
 - * courtroom scene: (v.5)
 - Ex: When a colorful celebrity goes to court – their dress usually demonstrates somberness.

How did Moses respond to God's offer? (33:12-16)

- v.15 "If your Presence does not go with us ..."

<<< It's at this point that we need to address a pivotal point >>>

WHAT WAS THE ISRAELITE'S GOAL?

- * If the goal is the PROMISED LAND, then God's offer would have been great!
 - Why? Israel would get what she wanted with NO DISCIPLINE
 - *no more plagues, no desert wandering, no rules*

It seems too good to be true ... but Israel didn't accept. Why?
The P.L. was NOT her goal. What was?

What is your goal? What's your prize?

Could it be that we focus too much on the goal that we miss the process of God working in us to reach the goal?

What if the JOURNEY with JESUS IS the goal!?!?

- The Benefits of "Going with God / Journeying with Jesus"
 - (1) REST – v.14
 - (2) BLESSING – v.16
 - (3) SEPARATION – v.16