

Is God Exclusive?

Exodus

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If you'll take your Bibles, if you would please, and let's turn together to the book of Exodus 8. Exodus 8:20 through 24.

20 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. 21 Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. 22 But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23 Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.'" 24 And the LORD did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

This is God's word.

Before we pray, I just wanted to mention something that I hope will prove to be helpful. Last Sunday evening, Catherine and I were at Kohl's in Fern Creek. It was already busy because it's starting to build up, you know, for Christmas shopping and that sort of thing. It was extra busy because the other Kohl's over in Hillview had some electrical problems and they had to close down, and so everybody was coming to this one Kohl's and so we were there and it was crowded and, you know, the lines were long. It can be frustrating for everybody. It turned out that a few days prior, Catherine and Candy our daughter, had met a lady there, she was about 70 years old and she worked there and she was just extremely helpful the first time, then when we were there Sunday evening, she saw Catherine and she came over and took us to a private register away from the crowds and everything and we thought, "Wow, this is going to be great." Well, it turned out to be a really lengthy process, about an hour long. Our Kohl's card wouldn't work. She had to call the main office. It was a mess but through it all this lady did not give up. She was

super. She went above and beyond what could ever be required of a service person and she helped us, answered our questions, got us through to where everything, you know, everything worked out. It took a while but she stayed with it.

As this was going on, I was really impressed with the fact that she was just so helpful and stuck with it, you know? I couldn't help but think about church, okay? I couldn't help but think about church. I was standing there and I thought, "You know, every Sunday no doubt there are people sitting in churches across the world but I'm thinking about here today, are sitting here and hear the word of the Lord and they have questions, or maybe they are trying to sort things out." I remember when I first began attending church and hear the preaching of the word and to be like, "Well, if that's so, what about this? What about this? What do I need to do about this?" I was trying to sort things out and fortunately I had some people around me who were willing to answer my questions, and so I just wanted to say to you today if you're here whether it's today or any Sunday, if you're here and you're sitting there and you're thinking, "I wish I had somebody to ask about this. I wish I could ask this question or I'm having some struggles here. I'm facing some doubt about this or that." I just want you to know that we are here to help. If we can help at all, we want to help. I know I speak for myself and my wife, I know I speak for Nick and all the elders, their wives, all of them are capable, well capable of talking with you, helping you, because we want people to come to know the Lord and to walk ever pleasing before him. That's our goal for all of us and so I just want you to know if you're here with us today or anytime. That's one of the reasons I stand at the back door primarily is in case someone comes by and says, "You know, I'm really struggling with this. Could we talk?" So we'll set up a time and we'll make that happen. Okay, so I just wanted you to know that.

Let's pray.

Our Father, on this week of Thanksgiving, we particularly want to thank you for your word, for your word reveals to us who you are. We're not left to ourselves to conjure up a god, but we have done that before. No, you've spoken to us. You reveal through your word who you are. Your word teaches us about the glorious Triune God, how we can know you and how we can walk ever pleasing before you. So as we sit under the proclamation, the preaching of your words, that you will speak, you will speak through your word by your Spirit, you will be speaking to us today. May we hear, may we obey and may we be willing to help each other along the journey that we might be obedient followers of the God who leads us. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Now we have been working our way through the book of Exodus. As I was reading this text, you know, just as I read this, I think about young people, I think about teenagers, I think about millennials, and I think about how they hear this, how they hear this because this is an incredible story. I mean, it begins really back in the book of Genesis where God calls one man, Abraham, and says, "I'm going to give you a son." He and his wife are well beyond childbearing years but God is able to do what he promises and he gave them a son, and he said, "I'm going to cause your seed to outnumber all the stars in the skies." In other words, you're not going to be able to count all of your seed. And surely this must

have been mind-boggling to Abraham who has no children at this time, but what we find in the book of Exodus when you fast-forward, you find this, God has fulfilled his promise. In the early pages of the book of Exodus, you find the people have multiplied so much that the Pharaoh of Egypt has become frightened of them. So we find in this wonderful story God fulfilling his promise to multiply the people but at the same time he made the promise of multiplication, he made the promise that he would give them a land. "I'm going to give you a land to dwell in, a land that flows with milk and honey, a land of your own."

Well, the problem is all of these people are in the land of Egypt and they are under oppression, under slavery, and so God is going to have to get them out of Egypt in order to fulfill his promise of the Promised Land, but there's something in the way. I mean, we read it in our text. God said, "Tell Pharaoh to let my people go." Pharaoh was resisting, he was not going to let the people go, and so we have come to the part in the Exodus story where God is striking Egypt with a series of signs and wonders and he's doing it for a couple of reasons. 1. He said, "That they may know that I am the Lord"; and secondly, in order to persuade Pharaoh to let his people go. There are going to be 10 strikes, 10 plagues, but we should call them 10 strikes or 10 blows, and we're not going to look at them individually. Last week we looked a little bit at the Nile being turned into blood, but the series goes like this: the Nile turned into blood; a swarm of frogs, just read about that; a swarm of gnats; flies; Egyptian livestock will die; outbreak of boils; downpour of hail; devouring locusts; darkness; and ultimately the death of the firstborn. What you should notice as you read these, and I hope you will, I hope you'll just kind of read along as we're working our way through the book of Exodus, you'll notice that each one of these strikes gains in severity as they go.

Now what I'd like to do today is I'd like for us to look at the God who is doing the striking. We could say it this way, maybe we could just dial in, I want us to dial into focus and look at God today, look at the God who is doing the striking because how you and I see and understand God will determine how we respond to God. In other words, if you just see God as some distant angry being, it's unlikely that you'll ever thank him, unlikely that you'll ever pray to him. Really, it's going to make a difference how you see and understand God and how you will respond to him. Or to put it another way, it depends upon your theology. It depends upon your theology. Theology is our understanding of God. So our understanding of God is important and so let's look today, first, at the God who is doing the striking because the same God who is doing the striking is the same God that we are thanking this Thanksgiving week. Thanksgiving week, it's not a church holiday, you know, it's a secular holiday. For Christians, we are thanking God regularly, consistently rather than just one time a year. George Washington proclaimed a declaration of Thanksgiving and it starts like this, "Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God to obey His will, to be grateful, be thankful for His benefits and humbly to implore His protection and favor."

So many people are going to be thanking God this week, some who don't normally do it. Okay, now is a good time to do it. Hopefully we as believers were doing it regularly. So here's the question: as we offer thanks, are we giving thanks to the authentic God? Are

we giving thanks to the authentic God? You see, that's the big thing today. In our culture, young people are being told, "Be authentic. Be authentic. Be your real self. Don't be what your mom and dad say. Don't be what the church says. Don't be what the Bible says. Don't let anybody tell you, you be who you want to be, who you really are." So I thought, "Hm, okay, would that be okay for God? Would it be okay for God to be his authentic self? If so, what would the authentic God look like?" You see, we've got to be careful here. God reveals who he is through his word. He doesn't leave it up to us to determine what he's like. That would be dangerous. So we want to dial in today on the authentic God and we're going to see some things that left to ourselves we would never want to see.

The first one is this: the authentic God is a God of judgment. The authentic God is a God of judgment. These 10 strikes are judgment from God. Maybe you heard in the news, I want to say it's been a few months ago there was a man who went to Planet Fitness, you know, the gym, and it's a true story by the way, you can look it up. He goes to Planet Fitness and he enters into the door and he begins taking his clothes off and to where he is completely nude, and they called the police, the police come and when they find him, he is sitting in a yoga position completely nude. I'm sorry, you have to visualize that. I'm sorry you have to imagine that. But anyway, they arrested him. He's absolutely shocked. He can't get over it. Why? Because Planet Fitness' slogan is, "This is a judgment free zone." Yeah. In other words, he was kind of like, "Hey, wait a minute, I thought this was a judgment free zone?" Hey, it turned out not to be. It turned out they've got quite a bit of judgment going on in the judgment free zone.

I tell you that story simply because of this, many in our culture see God as a judgment free God. That's the way they see God, that when they think about God, they're not finding it from Scripture, by the way, it's something that they have come up with in their own mind. They see God as being a judgment free God but is that true? Well, there are too many passages of Scripture to draw your attention to but I was looking at one the other day just in my devotion time, it said this in the book of Psalms, "The heavens declare his righteousness for God himself is a judge."

Now let's say that you owed me some money, you owed me a lot of money, and I knew that you had some gold bars and I wanted to be repaid with gold bars. So you said, "Okay, all right, I'll bring them, and my gold bars are 12 inches, 12 inches long." To judges to measure, okay? And so you tell me that you have gold bars that are 12 inches long, as I look at them I think, "That doesn't look like 12 inches to me." So I pull out, what? My measuring tape. I pull out a measuring tape and I measure and I find out that they are eight inches, not 12 inches. So what do I do? Do I say, "Ah, close enough"? Probably not, right? I'm probably going to say, "You said these were 12 inches, they are eight inches." You see, what am I doing? I'm judging.

Judging is to measure and the interesting thing about this is God is a judge who always measures fairly. God is the standard. He is the ruler, you see, and God always judges fairly and, listen, we should actually be thankful for that. You say, "I don't know. I kind of like God being a God of love but God being a God of judgment, I should be thankful for that, why?" Well, let me give you a few reasons. My young friends, my millennial

friends and younger, you live in a culture right now where you're hearing these two words all the time: social justice. Social justice. "We need to be for social justice. As a politician, we need to be social justice. We're about social justice. This church, we are social justice." Now my millennial friends and those younger, I just want to give you a little warning: make sure, you see, I think social justice is a good thing as long as it is defined biblically. So you've got to be careful. Not everyone means the same thing when they are talking about social justice so make sure you get the definition right, but my point for today is this: there's a great cry in the culture, social justice, things need to be fair for these people, they need to be fair for these people, we need to get this right, you see? We're all for that hopefully. Hopefully we are for justice.

So that leads me to a series of things that I thought about this week. For example, this month in November, a 94-year-old man, a former Nazi SS guard, went on trial in a German court for alleged complicity in the mass murder of hundreds of people at Nazi concentration camps more than 70 years ago. There are organizations that have been looking for years and they're still looking, they are looking vigorously to find men like this who participated in the mass murder of millions of Jews during the Holocaust. They found this guy and he's on trial this month. I haven't heard anybody, I haven't heard anybody say, "Oh, come on. He's 94 years old. Besides, these crimes were over 70 years ago." No, justice will be done. Justice will be done. Why? Because we expect, we would never expect the judge to say, "Oh, good grief, he's 94 years old. Let's just let...." We never expect that.

Or El Chapo, he's Mexico's biggest drug trafficker. He's on trial this month. It's going to be in the news a lot. The evidence is overwhelming against this guy. There is no telling how many thousands of people have died because of his drug trafficking. He's on trial and he's also on film saying, "You take me down, put me in prison, that ain't gonna change a thing. Everything's gonna keep going like it is." Now he's probably right. He's probably right, there are many that are going to take his place, but here's the point, no one has said, no one, the judge would never say, "You know, this is probably not going to stop and so there's no need to convict him." He's not going to say that, right? I mean, that would be insane.

Or how about the Watkins family. They are from Provo, Utah, and they came to New York in order to watch a tennis match a few years ago. It's a husband and wife and two sons, almost adult age, and they are standing on the subway platform in New York and they get attacked by four thugs. The mother, they have the mother down on the ground and they're kicking her in the head, and one of the boys walks over and tries to rescue his mother and they kill him on the spot. All four of these lowlife thugs were caught and brought to trial and convicted. Here's what the judge said, "A band of marauders can surround, pounce upon and kill a boy in front of his parents and then stride up the block and dance until 4 AM as if they had stepped on an insect. These acts cannot go unpunished."

Thank God for a judge like that who would lay out the measure and say, "These things cannot go unpunished. They are so horrible," and we say, "Amen," right? Oh yes we do,

we say amen. Why? Because we care. It matters. We are not indifferent and that's why we should be thankful for God's judgment, it shows that he cares about his creation. For God to be a God of judgment shows that he cares, that he's not indifferent. It matters greatly to him.

You see, it may not be us but there are some people in this world who will never see justice in this lifetime. There really are. There are some people who will never see justice in this lifetime but what if you said to them, "You're never going to see it ever"? That would be horrible, wouldn't it? And that's why that we are thankful that God is a God of judgment because he says, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord." One day God's judgment will right the world's senseless measurements. All those people out there saying, "It's 12 inches." It's eight inches. You can be sure God will get it right.

God's a God of judgment and we should be thankful but there's something else that we see as we dial in on this amazing God whom we serve, and that is this, this God is exclusive and he makes distinctions. He is exclusive and he makes distinctions. Did you notice in our text, look at verse 22, "But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth." And notice verse 23, "I will put a division between my people and your people." God is a God of judgment and he is a God who is exclusive and makes distinctions.

Now you might, especially you might be here and you're saying, "I don't like that. I don't know if I like that." Well, judgment always excludes something. Judgment always excludes something. For example, you might say, "I like God being love. I don't like so much judgment and him being exclusive." Real love – listen – real love includes some things and excludes others. For example, you get married and you make your vows, your pledges, and, "I'm going to love you as a spouse as opposed to all of these. I include you. I include you in my promise. I include you in my commitment, but by virtue of my love for you, I'm excluding all others," right? And why are you doing that? Because of love. So we want to say, "Well, I want God to be a God of love." He is but for him to be a God of love, it means that there's going to be those who are included and those who are excluded because that's just the nature of love.

We hear in our culture today, we're told that we're all children of God. We just need to all calm down. We are all children of God and that God loves everybody the same. Now I'm just going to ask you, we just read it, does it sound like that God is like, "I love everybody the same here. No distinctions." Does that sound like that? No, what does it say? He makes the distinction between, "my people and your people," and you see, listen, we live in a culture and we don't like that and you may be sitting here this morning and you don't like it. You may be like Aaron Rodgers, Aaron Rodgers the quarterback of the Green Bay Packers, he was raised in an evangelical household. Soon after winning the Super Bowl in 2011, he began to examine his faith and he walked away from his faith. Now, why? Was it because the Bible was full of errors? What was it? It was this, he said, "Organized religion can have a mind-debilitating effect because there is an exclusivity that can shut you out from being open to the world, to people, and energy and love and

acceptance." You see, as Aaron Rodgers began to look at the Christian faith and evaluate his place there, he began to say, "Nope, don't want anything to do with this because it's too exclusive."

I don't know what happened there but...

"I don't want anything to do with that because it's too exclusive." You see, that's what we hear in the world, you know, it's like, church and Christianity and Jesus and all this exclusive stuff. Now we expect to hear that from the world but we don't expect to hear it in the church.

Just a few months ago, there was a survey that was released by Ligonier ministries and I shouldn't have been shocked but I was, 51% of evangelicals agree with the following statement, now that's over half of evangelicals. Now we are an evangelical church, okay, 51% of evangelicals agreed with this, listen: God accepts the worship of all religions including Christianity, Judaism and Islam. You see, when I read something like that, that's when I never want to give up preaching the Gospel to the church because there are many in the church that are apparently not believing the Gospel, that we could agree and say God's just indifferent, I'll take this cultic worship, I'll take this false religion, and I'll take this one, and we just blend them all and I'm fine with that.

Many people think outside in the world they think that but there are people in the church that think that, yet for people who seem so opposed to exclusivity, you might be, "I don't want a God like that. I'm not going to worship a God like that." If you think that, I just want you to re-examine something. There seems to be a great deal of exclusivity in our lives for people who say we don't like to exclusivity. Let me give you a few examples. I know a man who runs a company. They specialize in moving military personnel all over the world and they have to go to Fort Knox on the base almost every day of the week. He was telling me he was having a really difficult time employing people who would be qualified to go on the base. What he meant was if you have messed up in life and it's on your record, they're not going to let you on the base. In other words, they don't sit at Fort Knox and go, "Oh, you want to come in? Well, come on in. Well, you too, come on in. We're just inclusive here at the base." No, and you need to be thankful that they're not. We need to be thankful that they're not letting every yahoo in at Fort Knox, you know? They're exclusive and we like that, don't we?

Then I was reading the other day to work for the federal government, a person has to fill out what's called a suitability determination. It could be, you could be excluded if you have "a history of bad conduct or carelessness during work; lawbreaking or lying; alcoholism or using illegal drugs." In other words, they have, the federal government, I know this is hard to believe, they have standards, they have standards as to who is going to work for them and they should. We should be, "Yes! Yes, praise God, they're going to be exclusive and not let everybody work for them."

But we don't stop there, let's say your daughter is getting married. You send out, what? Invitations, right? And you've asked people to RSVP and you pay the caterer and you've

gone all out because this is a special day. What have you done? Did you invite everybody in town? No, you excluded some people, didn't you? You included some, excluded others, and what you don't want, you don't want wedding crashers coming in, right? You don't want a couple of dudes come walking in there and they're eating all your shrimp and eating your steak and everybody looks around and goes, "Who are they? You know, I don't know them?" And nobody knows them, you see? You don't want that. You want people like that excluded, right? Oh yeah, we like exclusivity.

Or let's say you have a Facebook page. You're able to exclude people from certain things on your Facebook page, right? And I would imagine some of you use that, right? You're like, "I don't want them to see this. I want to send this message." Right? Right? You see, it turns out we're people who really kind of like exclusivity, don't we?

How many of you have babies in the nursery, let me see your hand? How many of you? Anybody got some little ones in the nursery? Okay. When you get finished today, I'm going to assume that you don't go to the nursery door and go, "Hm, ah, any of them will do." No. What are you going to do? You're going to exclude some, right? "That one's mine, right there. That one's mine. That's the one I gave birth to." You don't include all of them, you exclude some.

You see, I could go on and on and on with examples of we want to say, "Well, God you can't be exclusive now," but yet we like exclusivity. We like it and we practice it quite regularly. So here's my point, many are saying in our culture, some of my young friends, you're hearing this through music, media, so many different ways it's blowing right at you, many are saying that God is inclusive, period. He's just inclusive and inclusive only. But you did hear me read this, right? God is clearly saying, "I make a distinction between my people and your people."

So what do we do with that? Is God inclusive only, or is he exclusive only, or might he be both? Notice a passage of Scripture you'll see in Matthew 16. Jesus is saying these words, okay? Look, this is important, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself," notice, notice the inclusive language, "If anyone would come after me," then we have the conditions, "let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me, for whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Now I think we would all agree that's pretty inclusive language, right? Anyone. Whoever. "Whoever will come and follow me, I want them to come and follow me," Jesus said, but then we notice Revelation 5, notice this, "For you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people." Now notice it doesn't say he ransomed everybody from every tribe and every tongue and nation. No, from. Now you understand that's exclusive language, right?

So we have inclusive language and we have exclusive language. Is God inclusive only or is he exclusive only? Here's what we should see: whosoever, anyone, let them come to Jesus and submit to his Lordship. The invitation is open to anyone, whoever will come to Jesus, follow Jesus, listen, and submit to his Lordship. There is the inclusive language with the qualifier, with the conditions that we follow him, that we lose our life for his

sake. In other words, this idea that says, "Oh yeah, I'm a Christian and I'm a believer," yeah, yeah, but there is no submission to the Lordship of Christ suggesting that submission to Jesus isn't necessary, belittles the very cost of our sin. It belittles the crucifixion of Christ. So is God inclusive or is he exclusive or is he inclusively exclusive? Whosoever, let him come. Anyone, let him come and submit to the Lord Jesus.

One final thing. As we dial in, we're seeing some things about God that we might not readily embrace as a God of judgment. He's a God who is exclusive and makes distinctions but then, thirdly, we see this that God is about his own glory. Notice in Exodus 8:7. We didn't read this as part of our text but this is a good example. Moses said, "Be it as you say so that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God." All through these strikes, you will hear God again and again saying, "So that you may know that I am the Lord. So that you may know that I am the Lord of the earth. So that you may know that there is no God like me." I think about the little boy, he's five years old, he's invited to a birthday party and he and all the other invitees have little bags of party favors sitting in front of them and they're so happy and they're having so much fun, and the little boy looks over and he sees this big stack of gifts that the birthday girl has got and all of a sudden that bottom lip falls out there on the floor, he's seething with jealousy and envy and one of the mothers walks over and gets him by the chin and says, "Johnny, it's not your birthday." Oh, oh, that God would come today and just take us by the chin and pull us around and say, "It's not about you. It's not about you."

You see, I want you to notice here, this whole Exodus thing is not God sitting there going, "I'm doing this because you're so special. I'm going to send all these strikes so I'm just so giddy about you." No, he doesn't say, "It's because it's all about you. I'm doing this because everything is all about you." No, "that you may know that I am the Lord." And we should be thankful for this. We should be thankful that God is all about his glory but I'll promise you this, we're not. We're not.

I've warned you, mom and dad, about this with your teenagers and your kids, this is one of the areas where Satan has proven to be quite effective is this issue about God seeking his own glory. Let me give you an example. Brad Pitt was raised in an evangelical home. He was part of the youth group but he walked away from it all because of this, he said, "I cannot deal with this idea that God says you have to acknowledge me and me only, or that somehow, God, you are the best God of all." He said, "That sounds like ego to me." In other words, Brad was saying, "Look, it's not right for me to be egotistical and everything be all about me, why should it be okay for God to do it?" You see, Brad is making the mistake of, the error of what's called moral equivalence. He's basically saying if my life should not be about ego, neither should God's. But you know what he's forgotten, don't you? God is God. He is the Creator. We are the creature. He's perfect. We're imperfect. What God can do right, we often cannot do at all. So mom, dad, and even you children, even for you, be aware that Satan loves to bring this idea up of, "The God you serve, oh, he thinks he's all that. It's got to be all about him."

I love this quote, I believe it's by John Piper. You'll see it on the overhead. I think this is very helpful. It helps me put this in perspective. "God is the one being in the universe for

whom self-exaltation is the most loving thing. Anyone else who exalts himself, distracts us from what we need, namely God." Now if you'll ponder that, if you'll take that home with you and think it through, when the enemy says, "God is all that. God, why can't it be about you? You're a needy person. It should be about you. It should be your party." God is the only being in the universe where self-exaltation is the most loving thing.

You see, God doesn't go, God doesn't walk in the room kind of, you know, just kind of slithering in and going, "I'm just one among many gods. If you choose me, that'll be cool, you know, because all the rest of them, they're okay too." No, they're not. No, they're not. They are false gods. You see, what we are seeing here in these strikes is God striking the gods of Egypt because they've been distracting people from what they really need, "that you may know that I am the Lord, not these false gods." It's the same today. It's the same today. Some of you listening to me today and it's the false gods and idols of this world that are distracting you from what you really need the most, and you ought to be so thankful that God doesn't just kind of slither in the room. No. Oh no, he said, "I'm going to do this so that you'll know that I am the Lord." It's about him and that's the most loving thing that he can do for us is to be the God who he is.

Now let me close this way, you might be here and I understand, that's why I said I was reading earlier when I was reading this text and I thought about teenagers and think about, you know, they hear this and God striking them, flies, and he protects this bunch but he doesn't this bunch. Look, I could see where you hear that and go, "Ew, I don't want nothing to do with that. A God of judgment and being exclusive and all about him." I just want to remind you of something, God sent his Son to this broken world, he suffered and he died on the cross and on the cross he faced the judgment of God. I was talking to someone earlier, we were out in the lobby and he remembered when we mentioned this before, the worst thing that could happen to you has already happened to Jesus. For those of us in Christ, we don't have to worry about the worst thing ever happening to us, it has already happened, it happened to Jesus. He took our place. He faced the judgment, the wrath of God on the cross.

So on the cross Jesus was experiencing judgment. Remember he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Which is to say, "Why have you excluded me? Why have you excluded me?" What's the answer to that? Jesus said, "Why have you excluded me? Why have you forsaken me? Why have you turned your back on me?" The answer, friends, is for you, for me, for us, Jesus faced exclusion, Jesus faced forsakenness by God so that you might not have to. Jesus faced judgment, it fell on him so that it would not have to fall on you. The worst thing that could ever happen to you has already fallen on Jesus for your sake, and all who come to him, all who believe in him, all who submit to his Lordship, they are included exclusively in the family of God.

I'm going to close. I want you to think about this. We are included in the family of God exclusively. Because of his great love, we are included in the family of God by grace through faith in Jesus, and remember we said earlier, real love includes and excludes. The real amazing love of God has included us in the family of God by grace through faith in Christ so that we are excluded from the wrath of God. Because we are now children of

the most high God, we are not subject to the wrath of God. We are no longer children of wrath. We are excluded from that. We don't have to worry about that because we've been included and adopted into the family of God and we are destined to forever enjoy the wellspring of God's glory. All these false gods and all these idols that tempt us, they are nothing but buckets with holes in them. God is the only everlasting wellspring of glory that will last today, next week, and on into eternity forever and ever.

So I ask you this morning, is this true of you? Have you come to Jesus? Have you submitted to his Lordship? Have you been included in his family by grace through faith in Jesus? If you have, friend, that is something to be thankful for. That is something to rejoice about this week with your family, with your friends. The opportunities that you will have this week to tell what God has done for you by his grace are going to be enormous. Go do it if this is real for you. But if this is not true, why not? Why not? Why not, for the invitation is there? Anyone whosoever will come.