

*Exodus 32:7-33:6*  
*A Stuffed Necked People*

- I. *Our struggle with sin is so deep that it was not enough for God to forgive us, so he also unzipped us and got inside of us by his Spirit. Why doesn't God just save me in the beginning, welcome me into his presence in the end, and leave me to myself in between? Why is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit presented as an absolute gift of necessity for every believer? The answer is because of the utter gravity of my condition as a sinner. You see, justification deals with the guilt of sin and final glorification with the ultimate defeat of sin, but the presence and power of the sin that remains in between must be addressed or the work of grace will not be complete.*

*Sin does not leave us merely guilty; it renders us unable. It robs us of the ability to live in a way that pleases God. Sin kidnaps our desires and distorts our thoughts. It controls our tongues and rules our behavior. It saps our resolve and weakens our knees. It leaves us lame, weak, and unable. We don't just need forgiveness and ultimate deliverance; we also desperately need present help—help so that we will have the will to desire and the power to do what is good in the sight of God. Our struggle with sin is so deep that only God living inside us can give us the power to please him with our living. So God doesn't just forgive us, call us to do what is right, and promise us a final home with him; he comes to us in between. He gets inside us, working within us, because there is no possibility that we will desire and do what is right without the inner working of his power.*

*Where's the comfort in this? Here it is: if you're God's child, you already have the Holy Spirit inside you. You don't have to hope and pray that he will be there for you. He has come, and his convicting and enabling grace is his moment-by-moment gift to you. Paul Tripp*

Exodus 32:1-6

1 Cor. 6:19-20

**John 16:7-11** *7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

- II. God called the Israelites a stiff-necked people to indicate to Moses that they were like an ox, the very image they bowed down to and worshipped, who refused to be controlled by its master. They didn't want to be yoked to him, worship him or have anything to do with his commands, especially the first and second ones, which implies that obedience to the other ones were of no consequence to them. They were saying to God, you can't tell us what to do let alone tell us how to live our lives, so mind your own business. It's the epitome of arrogance before the one and only true God who was going to great lengths to fulfill his covenant promises to them. They would soon learn that rebellion against God carries a heavy price. As believers, Jesus paid the price for our rebellion against God through his death, burial and resurrection. We are now eternally yoked to him, which means that we must humbly and willingly respond to whatever command he gives us. If we expect to find rest for our souls, then we must take his yoke upon us and learn from him, for he is gentle and humble in heart. Otherwise, we are no better than the Israelites of old.

Ex. 32:7-10

Matt. 11:29

1 Peter 5:5b-9

1 Jn. 5:2-4

*The term was originally used to describe an ox that refused to be directed by the farmer's ox goad. When a farmer harnessed a team of oxen to a plow, he directed them by poking them lightly with a sharp spike on the heels or the neck to make them pick up speed or turn. An ox that refused to be directed in such a way by the farmer was referred to as "stiff-necked." A stiff-necked animal (or person) refuses to turn the head in order to take a different path. gotquestons.org*

- III. Rebellion against God always carries a heavy price. For the Israelites, it was immediate. For others, believers included, the price of rebellion seems to carry no immediate cost. Yet, there is always a cost that carries an eternal ongoing payment. For unbelievers, the price they pay will be exacted at the great white throne judgment where they will be judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. There will be no one to intercede for them or speak in their defense, for they alone will be held accountable for their sinful rebellion against a holy and righteous God. We are told that, *If anyone's name is not found written in the book of life, he was thrown in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15)*. For believers, the cost for how we live our lives before God will be realized at the Bema Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). There we will be judged not for our sin but for how we lived our faith. Fortunately for us, we have an intercessor, Christ himself, who speaks in our defense.

Exodus 32:10-35

Numbers 12:3

Malachi 3:6

2 Timothy 2:13

Numbers 32:23

Deut. 9:20

Ps. 51:17

Matt. 20:30

Lk. 14:26

Deut. 9:18-19

Rev. 21:27

Deut. 24:16

1 Cor. 10:1-7

**1 John 2:1** *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*

**1 Cor. 5:10** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*