

Exod 04-01-25a

Let's continue our worship this morning by taking a moment to clear our minds and prepare our hearts. Seek the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. We take that opportunity at the beginning of each Bible class because it is so important.

It isn't really our effort. It's not our ability. It is simply our choice to receive God's grace, to be empowered by God's Spirit and God's Word.

It is all of grace. It is all of God. It is God's ability that works in and through us to accomplish His purpose.

And we have to be prepared. We have to be receptive. And we have to make a conscious decision to do that.

So we take a moment to ensure that we don't have any unconfessed sin that might be clogging the pathways in our soul and muffling the voice of the Spirit so that we can concentrate, so that we can remember. And Lord willing, and us willing, it will come back to our minds at the point of application and influence our decisions so that we live in a way that pleases God. Shall we pray? Father, thank You for the many expressions of Your faithfulness and Your grace that have sustained us and brought us to this point in time, brought us to this fellowship where we receive the blessing of the gifts that You have distributed amongst us.

We thank You most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ who opened the way to life and to You in spite of our sin and our hopelessness and our complete lack of anything desirable or anything of merit. And yet through Your love and through His love, we now stand positioned to receive and to inherit and to accomplish Your plan and purpose. We pray that our study this morning will contribute to that end.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. For our scripture reading this morning, turn with me to Psalm 119.

Psalm 119. This 25th day of January 2004, as we continue our study in Exodus chapter 21, our scripture reading comes from Psalm 119 because this is the great full expression of the attributes, the benefits, the commitment that a faithful believer makes to God's Word. I think all but two verses in Psalm 119 mention God's Word in some form or fashion and it talks quite often of the various categories of command or the synonyms we might say for God's Word and in particular for the Law of Moses which is largely what constituted God's Word in the day in which the Psalm before us was written.

We have several synonyms used for the Law, for God's Word. We have mitzvah, command or commands, mitzvot. We have edah which is witness.

We have mishpatim which is before us in Exodus chapter 21. One of the first words in that

chapter is mishpatim which comes from shafat. Remember in Hebrew, so you all are going to learn Hebrew whether you want to or not.

Remember in Hebrew you have a trilateral root, a three-letter verbal form and the word for judge or judging, to judge, is shafat. S-H is the first letter, P-H is the second letter and T is the third. I'm doing this for your benefit because in Hebrew you read right to left.

So it's S-H-P-H-T, shafat. The normal vowel is going to be a long A, a sound, shafat. Shofet would be judging.

That's like adding I-N-G to a word in English. To make that into a noun, normally we put a main in front of that verbal form. So you have m-shafat or mishpat, mishpat.

And this is the word that's used in Exodus chapter 21 to label the section we're studying on the treatment of slaves. We also have chukim, C-H-U-Q-Q-I-M, which is translated statutes. And we find often that the law of Moses is summed up by mishpatim and chukim, the judgments and statutes.

We find this, for example, in Leviticus 18.4 and Deuteronomy 4.1, the judgments and the statutes. You also find, primarily in the Psalms, the word precepts. And this is picudim, P-I-Q-Q-U-D-I-M, picudim.

This is the idea of rules or councils that suit particular circumstances, precepts. So let's begin our scripture reading this morning in Psalm 119. Psalm 119 is an acrostic psalm, meaning that groups of verses begin with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

So verses 1 through 8 all begin with Aleph. Verses 9 through 16 begin with Beit. And you go through the Hebrew alphabet.

If you want to learn the Hebrew alphabet, just go through Psalm 119 for a couple of weeks, and you'll find Aleph, Beit, Gimel, Dalet, Hay, Rav, Zayin, Khe, Peit. And you'll go through the whole Hebrew alphabet. In the Aleph section that begins this psalm, it says, Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity, they walk in his ways. You have commanded us to keep your precepts.

There's that word, diligently. Oh, that my ways were directed to keep your statutes. Then I would not be ashamed when I look into all your commandments.

I will praise you with uprightness of heart when I learn your righteous judgments. I will keep your statutes. Oh, do not forsake me utterly.

Unless you're worried that we were going to read the entire, was it 145 verses of the 119th psalm? We're going to stop there. Actually, there's more than that. I think there's 176 verses in Psalm 119.

But we're just going to look at these first eight. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Why does it say the undefiled in the way? Go back to Psalm 1. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

The way is a place of travel. This was a synonym in the New Testament. You find it in Acts, used as a synonym for Christianity.

Followers of the way. They had not heard of the way. And this is what we would call in our parlance the Christian life.

The life of a believer in Old Testament days, since Christian was not in their vocabulary. But to be undefiled in the way. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof, the outcome, are the ways of death.

The way is lifestyle. Way with a capital W is the Christian lifestyle. The undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord.

How many times, going back to our study in Ecclesiastes chapter 1, the verb halak, H-A-L-A-K, that has the idea of walking is a synonym for lifestyle. You go to Ephesians chapter 4, peripateo, to walk about. Pateo is an onomopoeitic word.

The idea is that your feet, pitter-pattering, we even have it in English, pit-pat, pit-pat. Pateo is the verb to walk. It has the idea of the patter, pitter-patter of little feet.

Perry is around, pateo is to walk, and the word translated that way is lifestyle. In the book of Ephesians, for example, who walk in the law of the Lord. Those who are undefiled in the way, walking in the law of the Lord, are blessed.

Well, this is a summation of the entire Bible in general, and our study in Exodus in particular. God has said, fear me, walk in my ways, and you will be blessed. You will enter the land.

Everybody wants to be blessed. Why do people pursue diet plans? Why do they follow the lady on TV that has her Managing Your Money, the Laws of Money. She gets on every time they have a telethon on PBS stations, and she's talking about how to order your life, how to have financial security.

Why do people work hard at their jobs? People want to be secure. They want to be happy. They want to have prosperity.

They want to be free from worry and free from care. Everybody wants that. Anybody that's normal wants that.

So, blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. To have that prosperity that everyone is looking for, to have that security and that blessing, there's a very simple formula. There's a very simple way that we can achieve that.

It seems sort of self-serving, doesn't it? Well, maybe I should be obedient to God because I want a good life. We actually operate out of mixed motives, don't we? If we love God, we want to please Him, but we also want a happy life. And we realize that those two ideas coalesce in obedience, in paying attention to God's commandments and statutes, right? If we say we love God, but we engage in a life of crime, we really don't love Him, and we're not going to be blessed.

But if we live an upright life and we don't really love God, we're still not going to be blessed. It's only when those two things combine, we fear God and we walk in His statutes, and we recognize that this is the way that we too can fulfill our personal desire to have a nice life. So, blessed are the undefiled.

So, now we're back to this idea of how can you be undefiled. How many people in Israel, do you think, got all the way from their bat mitzvah or their bar mitzvah at the age of 12 or 13, to the end of their days at the age of 60 or 70, never having been defiled? Never having touched something dead? It's zero. Somebody could spit on them.

A dead fish could be flung out a window and hit them, and they were defiled. Engaging in intercourse, defiled. Giving birth, defiled.

Contact with blood, human blood, defiled. You pick up an injured person, got their blood on you, you're defiled. You're unclean until evening.

We're going to see that as we go through the law of Moses. Well, so, what does this mean? Nobody can be blessed, because it's only the undefiled in the way. It doesn't say blessed are those who never are defiled, does it? It says blessed are those who are undefiled in the way.

If you get defiled, you get undefiled. You avail yourself of the means of cleansing. There was extensive ritual in Israel for cleansing.

You had a period of time, many times you're unclean until evening, or the ritual period of uncleanness for a woman in a given birth is specified in the law, and this kind of thing. But there is a remedy. You can be restored to a clean status, a ritually clean or undefiled status by availing.

That's what we just did at the beginning of our classes. Gave ourselves the opportunity to go before the Lord and ensure that we are undefiled in the way. Blessed are those who keep His testimony.

So the first criteria here, and this is Aleph, this is the letter A, these are the most important things that are going to be put first, because what's the point of reading the rest of the psalm if you don't have the basic things down? The first thing to check. Here's the thing. If your attention is tempted to wander, you know, I always think about this.

I have sat in the receiver's seat, in the listener's seat, longer than I have stood in the speaker

position, and I remember what it is like to sit there, and even if I'm interested and even if I'm gung-ho and I'm ready for the Word of God, just the monotonous drone of the voice, pretty soon my concentration can kind of wander. What is it that focuses our concentration? A sense of need. Is this important to me? Do I need to hear this? If I was giving you instructions on how to pick up \$100 cash that I had hidden in my yard, your attention would be immediately focused.

So what is our sense of need here? Why is this scripture reading, why is this section in Exodus chapter 21 important? This is everything that enables us to stand at the judgment seat of Christ. It is pictured in what was given to Israel, but it is for you and me. All these things were written for us.

So what is God saying to us? He's saying, look, if you want to succeed, you can kill two birds with one stone here. Actually, you can enable two birds to live. You know, that's kind of a strange thing.

Why do we want to kill birds anyway? I mean, how old is this saying that you want to kill birds with a rock? Who do you know that has the goal of killing birds with rocks and they can throw one rock and kill two birds at the same? What is the point of that? You have two dead birds. But we can accomplish two objectives. Well, I'm just saying.

We use these without thinking sometimes. We can accomplish two objectives. One is we can please God and we can have a happy, satisfied, fulfilled life.

This is the key. This is the critical information. This is in eight verses here.

You have everything you need not only to understand Exodus 21 and following, but also to live a successful life, successful from a personal standpoint, successful from a spiritual standpoint. What is step number one? What's the most important thing? If you have a sudden light bulb moment sometime this coming week and you say, Whoa, I'm a Christian. Where am I? How do I stand? Here are the things you can check.

The first thing is, am I undefiled? I am walking in the way. You're on the way whether you want to be or not. So you're in the way.

Are you undefiled in the way? We take a check and say, Well, let me review my thoughts and actions over the past period of time here. Have I committed mental attitude sins? Have I committed sins of the tongue? Have I committed any overt sins? If we see them, we acknowledge them to God. Lord, I had a terrible attitude and I said some things I shouldn't have in that conversation I just finished.

That's all it takes. We have availed ourselves of the cleansing grace of God, confessed our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us. Why does it say forgive and cleanse? Why do we need both? Forgiveness is restoration to fellowship with God.

Cleansing is being undefiled. Purge me with hyssop, I shall be clean. Wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

That's step one. So, to be blessed, be undefiled in the way. Number two, walk in the law of the Lord.

Now that I have come to a moment of self-evaluation and I have acknowledged my sins and am cleansed, very same pattern in 1 John 1, verses 7 and 9. Acknowledge transgression and start taking steps in the light. Walk in the law of the Lord. So I say, well, I fouled that up.

I've acknowledged it. Now what can I do that is right? What attitude should I have? What priorities and goals and values should I be pursuing from this moment forward in my day? What can I do that will comport with the law of the Lord? What would be pleasing in God's sight? We have to ask ourselves this question. If we go on autopilot, our autopilot was built in a corrupt factory.

And our autopilot will lead us to selfishness, self-centeredness, subjectivity, eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on circumstances. That's our autopilot. You can't trust it.

We have to switch off our autopilot and switch on the law of the Lord. We have to access the information. Everybody listening to the sound of my voice has had hundreds of hours of Bible study, haven't you? If you've been attending here for even one year, you have hundreds, in some cases thousands, of hours of Bible study.

Now, I ask you this question. What good is all of that? Well, it's a lot of good if you access it, if you go back and remember it, if you pull it up into the forefront and say, I live in a different way because I'm going to walk in that light. The law of the Lord is light.

Thy word, Psalm 119.11, Psalm 119.105, Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee. So, step one, make sure you're undefiled.

Step two, walk in the law of the Lord. It is a conscious act of volition. It is a conscious decision.

Check priorities, check values, check goals. Why am I doing what I am doing right at this moment? Would my heart and my thoughts and intents stand up in the light of God's word, in the light of God's searching judgment gaze? Step three, blessed are those who keep His testimonies. Now, what's the difference in a testimony and a law? Well, just look at it in English.

The law, these are going to be the rules, the ordinances, the things that guide us. This is right, this is wrong. Defining what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.

Testimonies are manifestations of God's character. Remember the examples in Scripture, the lives that were lived, the good and bad sections of those lives. You think about the life of David, we're studying in 1 Samuel, the life of Joseph we studied in Genesis, the life of Abraham, Isaac,

Jacob, the judges, Eli.

We have a plethora. Look at the New Testament. We've gone through two of the Gospels and we're in the book of Acts.

We've seen many people. The interaction of God with people in the Bible constitutes testimonies, reflections of God's character. I say, well, I'm in a pinch here.

I think I'm going to come up with more months than I have money here. It's pretty tight financially. I can go one of two or three different ways.

I can start flailing my arms and legs and trying to bail myself out. I can go to the Lord and rely on Him. If I'm going to think about the testimonies, if I'm going to keep His testimonies, I'm going to try to be consistent with God's character as it is reflected in the Bible and say, My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches and glory.

Man shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. If a man does not work, he does not eat.

I need to be willing to work. I need to avail myself of my work opportunities and once I have done that, I need to find that seventh day, that seventh part where I rest. I have done my best.

I can't do more than my best. I have taken every reasonable step. I have not compromised my integrity.

I have done what I should do. It is now up to God. And I move into that Sabbath rest that we studied in connection with Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep it Holy.

We went over to Hebrews. There remains a rest for the people of God. Do what you are required to do and then sit down and let God do His part.

God's work kicks in and we reflect on it and that is the testimonies. Blessed are those who keep His testimonies who seek Him with the whole heart. How many different times have we seen Proverbs Chapter 2 My son, if thou wilt receive my words and lay up my commandments with thee so that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding.

Yes, if you cry out for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding. If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures then you will understand the fear of the Lord then you will find the knowledge of God. The Lord gives wisdom.

From His mouth comes knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright. Do you ever think about that? Talking about those hundreds and perhaps thousands of hours of Bible study.

You think well, I can just barely remember being there much less what was said. God is the one that supplies the power. God is the one that supplies the memory.

And I am sure you have had the experience that I have had that long forgotten things will suddenly pop into your mind when you need them. If you are receptive, if you are undefiled in the way, if you have a heart that is wholly seeking God that is the environment in which God the Holy Spirit can bring to mind what we have learned. No, I can't give you even the points that I have developed my own self to teach I can't call them all to mind one after another and give you the chapter and verse for each one of them.

But the principle, the promise, the doctrine, the precept, the testimony, the command, whatever it may be God the Holy Spirit brings it. That is why it says here in Proverbs 2 verse 6 The Lord gives wisdom. Out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

Verse 7 says, He stores up sound wisdom for the upright. He is a shield to those who walk uprightly. Sometimes we need a little time.

We need some stabilization until we can process. You get a shock. You get a piece of bad news.

Something unexpected happens. You get blindsided. We need some time to stabilize for the gyro to kick in and get us back upright again when we get knocked down by something.

God is a shield to the upright. He will deflect enough of the pressure that we can stand up and begin to concentrate. And we can rest in that.

Don't think when something happens and you feel like you are blown away that you are just on your own and you have to try to claw your way back onto the ship when you have been washed overboard. God is a shield to those who walk uprightly. If we have a pattern of walking in the light God will shield us.

God will give us the stability. He will give us the time. He will give us the strength to concentrate.

But you have to be seeking Him with a whole heart. You have to be looking. If you think of that ship and you think of the mast on a sailing ship and a great wave going around the horn there.

A great wave comes and washes you overboard. You have to have only one goal and that is to get back on the ship. To get back and last yourself to that mast.

You have to want that with your whole heart. God gives us the ability to do it. If we begin to focus on ourselves and get into subjectivity and we want to get back at a person and we want to justify ourselves to a person and we want to appear a certain way we are not seeking God with a whole heart.

We are seeking other things. We have got a personal agenda we are also seeking. Then we wonder why we get blown away by pressure.

Seek God with a whole heart and say Lord I know this pressure is for a reason. All I want to do is please you in this circumstance. I just want to do what is pleasing in your sight.

God will be a shield. God will give us that lee side of the ship. When a storm, when there was rough seas and the sailing days a boat would be coming out or from another ship the sailing ship would turn up into the wind and offer its lee.

It would block the wind and provide a calmer area for people to embark or disembark from a boat. They did it on the lee side of the ship where there was some protection and some mitigation of the conditions. This is what God does when he is a shield to the upright.

He will give us a little bubble of calm in which to concentrate in which to fall back and regroup. He is a shield to those who walk uprightly. He guards the paths of justice and preserves the way of his saints.

So now back to Psalm 119. We cleanse ourselves or allow God to cleanse us. We are undefiled in the way.

Walk in the law of the Lord. Keep his testimonies. Live in the light of those examples of scripture that reflect his character.

Seek him with the whole heart. When we do those things it says they also do no iniquity. They walk in his ways.

We say, well, I've got to be setting sin. I have an area where I'm constantly failing. If we pursue these priorities we will do no iniquity.

And the iniquity that we do will be quickly washed away and forgotten. They do no iniquity. They walk in his ways.

You have commanded us to keep your precepts diligently. What is a precept? How does that differ from law or testimony? Precepts are the principles. A precept is a principle.

You can take doctrines. You can take promises. But what is a principle? A principle is something that applies in life.

It's a specific application of the truth of the word of God. So, for example, you have a charity that calls you up on the phone and says, please help the disabled, one-eyed children of police officers or whatever. Well, I don't want to pick on any particular charity and I know that one does not exist.

But they call you up and you say, well, I wonder if I should support this charity or not. There is going to be a precept that guides in general the function of stewardship over resources, financial resources. What are the precepts that guide us in the distribution of our financial resources? We have to justify it from the word of God.

Is this something in which God will be glorified? Is there any act of God in this or is this just a secular charity? However great it may sound, and I'm all in favor of, for example, the children of fallen police officers and that sort of thing, that's wonderful. If in my heart I say, I believe in the

laws of divine establishment, I believe that police officers and those who wear a uniform and preserve the structure of our society need to be supported, and if one of them gets killed on the line of duty and they've got a family that needs support, I want to contribute to that. That is a precept by which I live my life.

It's an application. There's nothing in the word of God that says support the fallen police officers' children, is there? But we develop a precept out of that. Now I could also go and say, I don't know who's running this.

I don't know if this is even legitimately the police department. This may be a scam artist. And when I contribute my money, I don't know where it's going.

Not only that, but I don't know, but however noble its goals, it is a secular charity. Is God glorified? Does the name of God become lifted up through my donation to this? Has Jesus Christ made an issue for anyone? In the great plan of God, is the plan and purpose of God advanced by this donation? And I might decide to not contribute. That would be a precept.

I'm not telling you what to do in that situation. Every man gives as he purposes in his own heart. And it can be right to not give, and it can be right to give.

That's where precepts come in. Precepts are applications in specific situations. And what you do may be different than what I do, and we can both be right.

Because it is not a law, and it is not a testimony. It is a precept. Precept is the application that I make in my circumstances, in my heart, before the Lord.

One man may eat meat offered to idols. Another man may refrain from eating the meat offered to idols. There is no law in Scripture that says you can or you can't.

You develop a precept. You develop an application. And once you establish those, you keep those precepts diligently.

You seek to live by precepts, by applications of the Word of God. Verse 5, O that my ways were directed to keep your statutes. Now what is a statute? Statutes gets back to the legal side.

This gets back to the Mishpatim, the judgments. Ordinances, statutes, judgments, have the idea of the rules, the law. These are the immovable objects.

No murder, no adultery, and so on. Back to the skeleton of that structure, the very backbone of it. O that my ways were directed to keep your statutes.

Then I would not be ashamed when I look into all your commandments. These are the imperatives. We have commandments not only to behaviors, but also to attitudes, don't we? Thou shalt love.

Thou shalt remember. Thou shalt reverence. These are not statutes, and they're not

ordinances, they're not judgments, they're not testimonies, and they're not precepts.

They are imperatives. They are commandments. Things that God has instructed us to do.

You can't legislate attitude, but you can command attitude if you're God, and you're talking to your people. You can say, you will love your neighbor as yourself. You will love me above all else.

You will have no other gods before me. That's an attitude. Commandments.

I don't want to be ashamed when I look into your commandments. How can we figure out, how can we evaluate how we're doing with regard to testimonies and ordinances and all the rest of these things? Look at the commandments. Where are the imperatives? By the way, if Christian people today would observe these verses and would measure their operation by whether or not they are coming up approved when looking at God's commandments, what do we find? There's a huge emphasis, for example, on evangelism.

There's a huge emphasis on outreach. There's a huge example on ministry to the sick and afflicted round about us and those who have social problems, those who have teen problems or marriage problems. And we've got ministries aimed at singles.

We've got ministries aimed at the divorced. We've got ministries aimed at the recovering substance abuser. We've got ministries aimed at the financially incompetent.

We've got ministries for just about everything. Well, if you do not want to be ashamed when you look at God's commandments, you have to know what the commandments are. Do we have a command for these kinds of ministries? I'm not labeling them all as wrong.

I'm saying when you measure by the commandments, what do the commandments say? The commandments focus, Old Testament and New, on personal holiness. Preach the word. Take in the word.

Be enabled and empowered by the word and the Spirit of God and be ye holy. It doesn't say make the other guy holy. And what you find in a lot of these ministries is that people are so busy trying to get the moat out of someone else's eye and they've never addressed the beam.

And many people get disappointed. They go to one of these mega churches we have here in town, get into one or another of these ministries and then they get jaded and disappointed and put off because the people in the church don't have personal holiness. They don't live what they preach.

They look into the law of liberty and then walk away and forget what they saw and try to go... Remember the lady in the kindergarten class where she held up the mirror and she said, I see Tommy and Billy and all of that when we were children? Yeah, the romper room lady. She had that mirror and it used to really bother me because a mirror is supposed to have a piece of

glass and when you look in it, you see your reflection. Well, she had a mirror and when she held it up there was no glass and she was looking right through it and you saw her face.

Well, that's no kind of a mirror. But that's the kind of mirror that people use when they are not looking at the law, looking at the commandments and seeing if they need to be ashamed or not. They knock the glass out and when they look in the mirror, they're seeing you.

They're saying, boy, you know, you really need to get that fixed. You're irresponsible there. But let me help you.

Let me disciple you. How can you decide it's the blind leading the blind? And Jesus said, they both fall into the ditch. Well, I don't know about you.

I do know about you. Because you're here. We don't want to fall into the ditch.

We don't want to use a mirror that's got no glass. So what does it say here? When I look into all your commandments, I will not be ashamed if my ways are directed to keep your statutes. If I am keeping these testimonies and commandments and ordinances and statutes in mind.

Each of them has a different emphasis on the truth of the word of God. What are the rules? What are my applications? What are the examples? What are the promises that attach to obedience and faithfulness? And where is my heart? Am I seeking to please God with my whole heart? If I am, I will understand the fear of the Lord. I will find the knowledge of God.

I will see my path directed in the way of God's statutes. I will be walking in the light. I will be cleansed.

I will have fellowship. I will have a great life. God will be pleased.

I will not be ashamed when I look at the commandments. I will not be ashamed at the judgment. It's a wonderful promise of God.

And it's so critical. This is what our life is about. It isn't about our job.

It isn't about our family. It isn't about our future. It isn't about our circumstances.

It isn't about our health. It is all hinging on am I to be ashamed or not ashamed? Be diligent, says in Timothy. Study.

Be diligent to show yourself approved unto God a workman that does not need to be ashamed. Rightly dividing. Rightly evaluating.

The word there is a difficult one in Greek. It means it was used in bricklayers. Laying bricks in a straight line.

Stack it up correctly. Line upon line. Precept upon precept.

Rightly dividing. Rightly laying the bricks. Straight and level.

The word of truth. I will praise you with uprightness of heart when I learn your righteous judgments. I will keep your statutes.

Oh, do not forsake me utterly. God says I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. But in the Old Testament day you see that those that went in an aberrant way were forsaken.

We see this with Saul in 1 Samuel. David says do not forsake me utterly. In another place he says take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

What's he talking about? Do you walk in the way of death? It may seem right but it's the way of death. You will find yourself out of fellowship. Those are loaded words for some of us that have spent a lot of years studying what it means to be in fellowship and out of fellowship.

But to lose the presence of God, the fellowship with God, is to be out of God's will, out of God's plan. Loss of blessing. Loss of reward.

Everything that makes our life futile. This, by the way, leads us to another little discussion that we'll address after the break because I'm getting all worked up now over people talking about the Protestant purgatory. I did some research on that yesterday and so we'll talk about that when we come back from the break.

Is there such a thing? Is there a form of punishment for believers after death and resurrection? Well, that ties into our study in Exodus 21 and so we'll address it when we come back.