

**Sonoraville Baptist Church**  
**Sunday, October 2, 2011 – 11:00 AM**  
**Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor**

**The Joy of a Restored Relationship – Exodus 34:1-35**

**Introduction:** Not long after breaking up with his fiancée, a young man realized the error of his ways. So he wrote her a letter which read: *"Dearest Marie, No words could ever express how miserable I've felt since I broke our engagement. I realize now that no one could ever take your place in my heart, so please forgive me. Please say you'll take me back. I love you! Yours forever, Jimmy...P.S. And congratulations on winning the lottery."* The truth is, the underlying motive is the key to the success or failure of a restored relationship

One of the most familiar stories in the Bible is a story about a restored relationship - The story of the prodigal son. It is found in **Luke 15:11-32**. We won't read it, but let me tell you what it is about.

The Prodigal son was a boy who was full of ambition but who became extremely frustrated at home. He wanted to get out on his own, so he asked his father for his part of the inheritance so he could move out and live it up. The father reluctantly granted his request, and the son ventured out into the world. However, before long, the boy's money ran out, and so did his friends and his self-esteem. In fact, he had gotten so low, he wound up scrounging for food in the pigpen. He was miserable, and he longed to just go back home where at least he had food. But, because of the way he left home, he knew his relationship with his father had been broken. He wanted it back, but he didn't know if his father would take him back. So, he decided he'd be better off at home as a servant instead of a son, and that is what he set out to do.

As the young man approached his home, he saw his father watching for him. Not only that, he was surprised to see him running toward him. And before the son could even speak a word, his father had forgiven him, accepted him back into the family, and restored their relationship. There was great joy in that home that day, for one who was lost had come home. Now, there are many applications that can be made from this story, but basically, it's a story of a restored relationship.

In Exodus 32-34, we find a similar story of a restored relationship. In Chapter 32 we find that after God had given Moses the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, Moses came down from the mountain to find that his people, led by his own brother, had turned their backs on God by making a golden calf to worship. However, by chapter 34, we find that after Moses had pleaded with the Lord on behalf of the people, God led him back up the mountain to once again receive the commandments. And in his dramatic encounter with God, Moses discovered the joy of knowing that God was willing to restore His relationship with Israel.

Probably none of us have ever had an encounter quite like Moses had at Mt. Sinai, but in some way, we've all experienced the joy of a restored relationship. It may have come as you and sibling made up after a fight. It may have come when you got back together with your boyfriend or girlfriend. It may have come when a pet that had strayed from home finally came back. Or it may have come as a broken home had been put back together. The truth is, a restored relationship always bring great joy.

That kind of joy is what I want us to focus on this morning. It's the kind of joy that a sorrowful King David was looking for when he pleaded with the Lord to *"Restore to me the joy of your salvation...."* **Psalms 51:12 (NIV)**.

You may be here this morning and you're miserable because your fellowship with God is broken to the point where you feel devastated, depressed, and desperately alone. You may feel like all hope is lost that you'll ever find peace in your heart again. If that is you, don't give up because I've got some good news. You can find that joy and peace you're looking for in the Lord. He's like that father who was watching and waiting for his boy to come home, because He will run to meet you. He's still the same as He was in Moses' day when He was willing to restore the relationship He had with His people. The God we serve is a God of second chances, and He will restore you if you are truly repentant.

So this morning, let's look to God's Word and see some of the joys that a restored relationship with God will bring. First, the joy of a restored relationship will bring:

**1. A New Appreciation for God (5-9)**

The rebellion of the Israelites had alienated them from God. Now this alienation was not in the sense that God had turned His back on them, or lost His feeling for them, but rather in the fact that the people had turned

their backs on God in their sin of idolatry. They had put God aside, and had tried to follow another god and as a result, they felt alienated, separated and isolated from God.

However, it was to these self-alienated people that God showed Himself. Verses 6-7, says, *“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.’”*

Because God was willing to forgive and show undeserved mercy, grace, and love toward these people, they came to have a greater appreciation for Him.

Restored relationships will bring a renewed appreciation for the person who forgives. For Israel, God was to be praised because He had seen their rebellion and separation, yet He continued to love them. Next, a restored relationship will bring:

## **2. A Renewed Obligation to God (10-28)**

God used this occasion to remind the people of their prior obligations. One was an obligation to keep this restored relationship pure. The Lord had previously forbidden them from entering into any covenant relationship with other religions in the land (Ex. 23:31-33). And here, He reminded them again *“Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” Exodus 34:14 (NIV).*

Like in any relationship, if it is going to work, there cannot be anyone else in the picture. Wives and husbands demand it and so does the Lord. He demands exclusive worship toward Him.

Another obligation God reminded them of was that of obedience. After all, it was their disobedience that had caused the problem in the first place. So God made the case that Israel would be better served by obeying His will rather than their own. And in vs. 11-21, He tells them again what He expected of them. We won't read it all, but it was basically an elaboration of the first, second, and fourth commandments which dealt with having no other gods but Him, not making false idols, and keeping the Sabbath day holy.

When relationships are restored, it should bring a renewed sense of obligation which causes us to see the reason it was broken. It's an opportunity for us to assess the situation, make amends for causing the problem, and learn from the experience. Finally, the joy of a restored relationship will also bring about:

## **3. A Personal Transformation (29-35)**

Have you ever seen a bride on her wedding day? There is a certain glow about her that radiates from her eyes all the way through her very being. Well, in vs. 29-35, we have something similar. These verses describe Moses' appearance in glowing terms. His experience of the presence and glory of God had caused his face to glow so radiantly, he had to wear a veil. He had such a close communion with God, he literally reflected God's glory.

Now, I understand that this sounds quite unusual and maybe even a little eerie, but it goes to show that restored relationships will bring about a transformation that is hard to explain. The best way I know how it to compare it is with a couple who lives so long together and so close to each other, that they begin to resemble each other. They begin to act like each other, talk like each other, think like each other, and even look like each other. Have you ever experienced that? How do you explain it? You can't, and neither can you explain the transformation that came over Moses as he had this glorious encounter with God on the mountain.

**Conclusion:** If you've ever experienced the heartache of a broken relationship, you know the alienation, the loneliness, and the lack of hope that comes over a person.

But, if you have had a relationship restored, then you know the renewed appreciation you have for the one who forgave you. You understand the sense of renewed obligation you have toward the one who forgave you. And you've also experienced that wonderful transformation within your heart that shows on the outside.

How is your relationship with God? Is it broken, crumbling, on shaky ground? If so, then God wants you to know that He can restore that relationship if you are willing to come back to Him. Like the Prodigal's father, God stands with His arms outstretched, longing to see you coming back to him. He wants to restore the joy of your salvation. He wants to give you His peace that goes beyond understanding. He wants to transform you from the inside out. And He wants that relationship to be even stronger.

Israel discovered the joy of a restored relationship with God, and you can have that same *“Joy, joy, joy, joy down in your heart. Down in your heart to stay.”*