

to act or interpose in behalf of someone in difficulty or trouble, as by pleading or petition
to attempt to reconcile differences between two people or groups; mediate
Zwischen – gehen (schreiten)

The intercessor Moses

Exodus 32-34 (Key verses 32:31.32)

So Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin - but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

Today's lecture is about the sin of idolatry and Moses' intercession for the people of Israel. God had told them numerous times: You shall not have other God's before me! You shall not bow down to them and worship them. But they made a golden calf and broke the covenant that God had established with them in his initiative love, faithfulness and patience. But because of one good shepherd and intercessor Moses, who was not afraid to take responsibility for his people, God did not give up Israel und reinstated Israel again as HIS people. God may give us spiritual insight for the sin of idolatry. Let us also learn Moses' shepherd life and his responsibility for his people. Let us grow as shepherds and leaders, who are able to help young people of our generation to repent over the sin of idolatry and to truly worship God with their lives. It is the only way that they will be God's holy and chosen people and a kingdom pf priests.

I. The golden calf and Moses intercession (32:1-25)

Moses had been up on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights, where he saw the vision of the tabernacle and received the 10 commandments written by the fingers of God. Verse 1: When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him." The Israelites had seen and experienced the power of God first hand numerous times, through the 10 plagues with the Exodus, at the Red sea etc. He had carried them on eagles' wings. But now in Moses absence, when they had a lot of time and without a leader who constantly reminded and challenged them with the word of God, their slave mentality broke out again. They saw their chance to live out their sinful thoughts and demanded Aaron to make a visible God for them. They forgot God's grace and pretended even never to have had a relationship with Moses.

Aaron was intimidated and not unable to maintain spiritual order. He made the fatal mistake in giving in and asked the Israelites to bring all their gold to him, then made it into an idol cast, in the shape of a calf. He did even more than he had to and announced a festival for the Lord. He initiated a vicious circle that neither he nor the people of Israel would be able to come out of. The Israelites did not have any problems to give their expensive gold for a God who would accept and justify all their sinful behavior. The next day they rose early and after making an offering to the calf they sat down to eat, drink and indulge in revelry. This mirrors the situation of many young people in this generation, do not want to make time for or give their time to God, but are very invested, when it is about their momentary pleasure.

Here, we can learn the importance to hold on to the words of God through daily bible study. When the Israelites did not hold on to the words of God, they ignored the relationship to God and sinned against him. They acted not according to God's promises but how they had observed and learnt in Egypt. Here we realize that men without God cannot escape their slave mentality. Humanism

teaches that men can develop his best behavior when he is free and not forced to do anything. But the only way to grow a godly, noble character is discipline in the word of God that starts with obedience to the word of God. Those, who receive spiritual discipline from an early age and keep their hearts pure are inwardly strong and can stand against the idols of this time. They are not dependent on others people's validation, but carry out the work of God with a sense of responsibility. When I see all of you that are trained in spiritual discipline with the word of God from an early age on, I see the spiritual leaders of the next generation. Let us guard our heart from idolatry, through daily bread, daily repentance and bible study, keeping our hearts pure for the Lord and to grow into spiritual strong and stable people.

Let us read verse 7: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go down, because **your** people, whom **you** brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. God's fellowship with Moses came to an abrupt end. When God saw the people of Israel being out of control, he was hurting so much that he did not want to call them his people anymore. Everything that Moses and God had talked about in the last 40 days was basically in question now. Verse 10 says: Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation." God was so angry about the stiff-necked people of Israel that he wanted to make Moses into a great nation, but he wanted to destroy Israel. That was a critical moment and what Moses would do next would decide Israel's fate. Moses also must have had a hard time. He had to experience difficulties because of the people of Israel so often. Maybe now the point had come, where God should really reset everything with Moses? But what did Moses do? He decided to give up his self-righteousness and to take responsibility for his people, even when it was not his mistake. He pleaded for his forgiveness. He had a clear strategy doing so. Especially his prayer was not based on emotions, but on the word of God and the promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Let us read verse 14: Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened. In the life of shepherd there are often critical moments because of bible students. But it is of great significance that a shepherd remembers God's promise and can move God's heart on the basis of his promise. Then they can be saved and grow as God's holy people.

Let us read verses 19-20. When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it. Moses dealt with the sin of idolatry very clearly. Firstly he took the idol and destroyed it restlessly. He did not think about the worth of the gold and he was not afraid to let the Israelites taste the consequences of their sin. Secondly he rebuked his brother because of his irresponsibility. He said to him: "What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?" Sadly Aaron did not want to take any responsibility: "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. When he did not want to take responsibility, the Levites were told to strap a sword to his side and go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor. About 3000 people died that day. It was like a painful but necessary operation of a malign tumor. The Levites overcame human thoughts and stood on God's side in this important situation. Moses was not humanistic or careless with sin. He treated it without exception and compromise. Especially the sin of idolatry has to be treated without compromise. When computer, cellphone, our laziness or even other other people become idols in our live then we should cut them off completely, instead of having to bear the serious consequences of sin.

In contrast to Moses we can see, that Aaron's willingness to compromise lead a whole nation into sin and its downfall. We don't know how much antagonism Aaron had to endure from Israel, but

instead of holding against them, he became the one leading Israel into idolatry. He followed the easy way. It is always easier to follow the way, where we do not lose peoples' or even our children's or family's recognition. But the willingness to compromise can have serious consequences. Mark 9:42 is very clear about people like that: If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. As leaders we have great task and responsibility and have to act with spiritual discernment and without compromising. Thank God who is teaching us biblical leadership through GLEF 2019. Let us be leaders like Moses with a strong spiritual backbone and insight, who do not compromise with humanism and the Zeitgeist but who can empower future spiritual global leaders based on God's truth.

Let us look at verses 30-35. Moses looked like a merciless retaliator, but how was his true heart? Moses did not give up his people. He wanted to go up to the Lord and seek atonement for Israel's sin. Let us read verses 30-32: The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." So Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written." When we read these verses, we can really learn Moses shepherd heart for his people. In his first intercession in verses 11-14 he merely ask for forgiveness, but here, he went even one step further. He said that if God would not forgive their sins, he basically wanted to be written out of the book of life. Moses was not like a hired hand, who stopped doing his work, once it got to difficult. Even in a very difficult and hopeless situation he cared for his very much flawed people to the point, where he wanted to give his own life for them. He reminds us of Jesus in many ways, who says in John 10:11: I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Because the Israelites had an intercessor like Moses, God's heart was moved and forgiveness and reinstation could be obtained.

God hates sin, especially idolatry. But he loves the sinners who are lost in sin, and it is his earnest wish that we understand his heart and seek for their atonement in humble intercession. This not to be seen as some kind of help, how we can receive it from friends, but intercession for others at the cost of our own lives. Where an intercessor like Moses exist, God does not give up hope and his promise. Jesus himself was an intercessor for us, because he gave his live for us, so that we could have freedom of sin and eternal life. We can be intercessors for our bible students, when we do not ignore them when they fall into little difficulties, but through praying for them until the end. We can intercessors for our children, when we pray for them, that they may go Jesus's way and live as spiritual leaders for this generation.

Being one of the first PhDs in UBF, M. Dr. Peter could have followed a career path in pharmacy. But it was his most earnest wish to invest his life fully for young people to be freed from idolatry and their broken relationship with God. Thus, one day after receiving his PhD title, he decided that this would be the last day he would invest into this and to serve the work of God full-time. Through this life-giving intercession, many German students, could find salvation in Jesus and be raised up as global leaders for Germany. He also serves the Next generation with life-giving intercession. A young girl was labeled as a problematic case and sent to Germany. But when M. Peter interceded for her as a matter of life and death, she could grow into a mother of faith and not only that, she could even graduate as voice performance major at the best university for music in Germany with high honors. Through GLE-Forum we can see that the servants of God did not condemn the Next Generation, but they became our intercessors through praying and helping them us a matter of life and death to repent over idolatry on basis of the bible and to give their live to Jesus. As a fruit last year Sara and

Peter Ryu could realize God's hope for their lives and under the blessing of many coworkers from the whole world built a blessed house church of faith.

In my study time I began to worship my career, maybe because that was the one thing how I could get recognition from other people and I prioritized it over God. Even when I could not quench my thirst for love through it, I made my human circumstances responsible for my unhappiness. I made God sad through trying to be distant from him. But in spite of my ignorance and my pride, my parents came before God with intercession, by not just giving me up or letting me go without a fight and they prayed: Oh, what a great sin he has committed! He has had made himself gods of gold. But now, please forgive his sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” Their intercession moved God's heart and the Holy spirit worked in me, because through their prayer and bible study God opened my eyes for the meaning of the word Matthew 6,33, so that I could see God's will for my life and make a decision to give my life for Jesus. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you, as well.

Wherever there is an intercessor, even in regard of sin, who prays as a matter of life and death, there is revival and life change. When we intercede for our bible students, family, brothers and sisters as a matter of life and death, God's heart will be moved. When we pray for muslim nations, God will built 3 headquarters in Istanbul, Kairo and Dubai for the proclamation of this name!

In Verse 33-36 we see, that God did not want to blot Israel out of his book. He wanted to lead them into the Promised Land, but he wanted to punish their sins when the times comes. Moses could obtain forgiveness for his people, but Israel had to bear the consequences of their sin. God loves sinners, but we have to know that sin never stays without consequences.

II. The God of mercy and compassion (33:1-34:45)

Let us read chapter 33:1-3: Then the Lord said to Moses, “Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.” God basically said that he wanted to give Israel everything that he had promised to them, but he did not want to be their God anymore. It was like a dad gave his son a fully charged credit card and told him to use it, but he never wanted to see him again. These words were distressing for the Israelites. They realized that the greatest blessing meant nothing without a real relationship to the giver of the blessing, God.

Outside the camp some distance away Moses built a “tent of meeting”. Everybody who had questions to God could go there. When Moses was in the tent of meeting, the pillar of cloud would come down to the entrance of the tent. This tent of meeting was really a sign of the love of God. Israel had just made an idol and sinned against God, but God saw their distress and created a possibility to have a relationship with him. God is really a God of mercy and compassion

When we read verse 11, we realize that Moses had a special relationship with God: The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Moses was a friend of God, because he knew the will of God and understood his heart that God was really happy about this intercession for his people. Because of this relationship it was his most earnest wish to see the glory of God. He wanted to know God more and more and also needed encouragement to continue to serve Israel. Moses could not see God's face but he was allowed to look after his glory. While doing so he revealed that he was the God of mercy and compassion (19): And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to

pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

God's mercy and compassion was especially revealed in chapter 34. Let us read verse 10: Then the Lord said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you. How unbelievable and wonderful is that God had forgiven his people and that we wanted to even do his awesome work in them! He renewed his promise and his covenant and he raised them up as his people. He is a good God! But he gave them also again very clear commands for the covenant. They were to especially be very clear and cautious of idolatry and were to destroy and signs of it immediately. They were not to marry with inhabitants from the Promised Land. They were to give their first fruits to God and keep the Sunday holy. These were only some among many other things. These commands served the purpose that a slave nation Israel learnt to honor God as their God and to enter a sanctification process as the people of God and kingdom of priests. Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments. (28)

Through today's passage we have learnt, that idolatry is absolutely a serious sin, and that separation from God and God's wrath are the consequences. We also we learnt that when the servants of God take responsibility for other people and intercede for others as a matter of life and death, God's heart will be moved and he will give room for repentance and not give up hope and his promise. May God use us as shepherds and responsible leaders for this generation like Moses. May God use our prayers and sacrifice for young people in these times and Next generation through bible study, so that Germany maybe renewed as a kingdom of priests and a Holy nation.