

HERE I STAND Holy GROUND

“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” **Exo 3:5**

In the ancient Near East, everyone referred to their own deity as “god.” But the LORD God is utterly different from any other so-called gods.

Idols made by human hands are nothing more than projections of human desires, shaped according to one's own will. They cannot love, nor demand love, nor receive love. But the Holy LORD God, in His very essence, is love. Because He is love, His way of being is love. The love Jesus revealed was a love that empties and yields. Though He was omnipotent, He did not use His power for Himself but poured it out for others. In this way, the unique relationship within the Trinity perichoresis (mutual indwelling) is unlike anything found in any other idols.

The cross is the very place where that love, that self-forgetfulness, and that glory of self-denial are revealed. This love of the cross has the power to make humans truly human again. To be truly human is to have the image of God restored, as it was in the beginning. Humanity was created to worship God. But when the relationship with God was broken, people began to seek other objects of worship. Not knowing God, they placed themselves at the centre, shaping idols out of their desires and bowing down to them. And people inevitably become like what they worship: those who worship idols become like them; those who worship money become like money. In the same way, those who worship God become more like God. God shapes us into people of love who resemble Him.

It is astounding that the God of love called Moses, a man living in the ancient Near East. The turning point in Israel's history, the beginning of God's salvation story, did not take place in a temple or at an altar, but in the middle of a wilderness. Moses was simply walking while tending his flock, perhaps thinking it was just another ordinary day. On that very ordinary path, God called him. Moses noticed a bush that was on fire yet not consumed, and as he drew near, he heard the voice of God: “The place where you are standing is holy ground. Take off your sandals.”

God did not declare the place holy because of the location itself. Whether it was wilderness, rocky soil, or barren land did not matter. The moment God's presence came, that place became holy ground. Holy ground is wherever God's presence dwells. It is where God is with us, where His word is proclaimed, and where His call comes to us. That is holy ground.



So, where are you standing right now?
Are you in the middle of a weary and exhausting daily life?
Are you wandering in a wilderness, unsure of your calling? Or perhaps in a lonely and isolated place?
Wherever God's presence comes, that place becomes holy ground. And God still speaks to us today:

"WHERE ARE YOU STANDING? TAKE OFF YOUR SANDALS. I AM CALLING YOU."

In the ancient world, removing one's sandals was more than a gesture of respect. It was a declaration: "I am your servant." It was a sign of humility and submission before the authority of the master. When God told Moses to take off his sandals, He was saying: From now on, I will be your Lord, and you will stand before Me as My servant. Sandals are like a small shield, protecting us on rough paths, guarding our feet from stones, dirt, and danger. To take off one's sandals before God is to lay down every shield we rely on to expose our weakness, while confessing that God alone is our protector. Sometimes those sandals may represent our accumulated experiences, our pride, our stubbornness, or even our sufferings. Yet God calls us to lay them all down, to stand with bare hearts, just as we are. God does not wait for us to feel "ready." Instead, He calls and uses us precisely when we feel most unworthy. God's calling is not primarily about accomplishing great tasks. His purpose is to shape us into the likeness of Christ to make us people of love. Wherever we may be, we are called to love God, to love like God, and to love with the strength God supplies.

Moses, too, was called not merely to lead Israel but to love them as a parent loves a child to endure with patience, to nurture with care. (Numbers 11:10-17) In other words, his calling was to embrace and shepherd with love.

A newborn child knows nothing but itself. Parents, however, step back, pouring all their energy into the child. As the child grows, they come to recognise their parents' love and eventually fill that space with love in return. So it is with God and us: as we grow, we begin to understand God's love, and we fill the space He stepped back from with our love for Him. Love always involves free will. We must choose to use our freedom rightly for our neighbour, for God and ultimately surrender that freedom back to God. To love God is to yield our will to Him, so that His will becomes ours, trusting Him with how He rules and guides us. God Himself becomes the standard of our values.

Holiness, then, does not come from great or impressive places. Holiness can be found in the ordinary our daily routines, our schools, our families, our relationships. Every space can become a holy space where God works. What makes it holy is not the place itself, but our heart's response to God. Therefore, the place where we stand right now is holy ground. Wherever God's presence dwells, that is where His work begins. So let us take off our sandals. Let us lay down our worries, our fears, our pride, our comparisons. Let us humble ourselves before God, listen to His voice, and grow to resemble the God of love.

**Dear fellow KOSTANs, holiness is not about finding a special place,
but about responding to God's call. God is calling us here and now.
May we confess that this very place is holy ground because God is here.
And may we, by responding to His holy calling,
be set apart as vessels for His glory.**