

# MOSES' PRAYER

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EXODUS 33:13-19 • TV202B

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By  
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## **Exodus 33:13-19**

*“Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”*

I didn't know how to entitle this message that I am going to bring to you, except to call it: **“MOSES' PRAYER.”**

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That doesn't sound like a very exciting message but I believe it will be if you will stay with me and listen: "**MOSES' PRAYER.**" The prayer of Moses is very significant and is very applicable to you and me.

I am going to be speaking from the text found in **Exodus, chapter 33**. I am not going to read here at the beginning of the message as we usually do. I am going to refer to some verses as we bring the message, **verses 13, 15, 16, 17, 18 and verse 19 of Exodus 33**. Turn over there in your Bible.

Let me tell you a story before I begin the message. I am going to give you the background of this Scripture, the background of this **chapter of Exodus 33**.

All of you know who Moses was and what Moses did. Moses had a special tent, which he had pitched outside the camp of Israel, on the outskirts. This was not the tabernacle because the tabernacle was not then erected.

This was a special tent; it was far off from the other tents. The tabernacle was in the center of the camp and all the other tents were around it. This little tent was outside of the other tents. Moses called it "*the tent of meeting.*" It is called the "*Tabernacle of the congregation*" but a tabernacle is a tent.

When Paul said, "*This tabernacle must be dissolved,*" he is talking about this tent, our human bodies, just as frail as a tent. It is subject to the winds of the world and easily torn down.

Moses had a tabernacle (a tent), which he called the "*tent of meeting.*" The reason he called it that was because this is where Moses went to pray. This is where Moses went to talk with the Lord.

This was where God met Moses and Moses spoke to God and God spoke to Moses. This was the "*tent of meeting,*" the place of private prayer. Let me stop right here and make just a comment: Are we not instructed of our Lord, (you and me), to enter into our closet and pray in secret? Well, that is what Moses was doing.

I encourage public prayer. I love public prayer and I believe public prayer is a part of worship just as praise, preaching, giving, and these other things. But, I do solemnly and humbly encourage heavily, private prayer. That is where we do business with God. That is where we meet with the Lord God. That is where we pour out our hearts to Him.

Moses went to the "*tent of meeting,*" the place of privacy, the closet. There he spoke to God and God spoke to him. Our Lord said, "*Enter into your closet when you pray; enter into your closet and shut the door.*"

Shut out the world; shut out the people and shut out the distractions, "*and your Father which seeth in secret will bless you and reward you openly.*" Don't neglect private prayer.

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If you must neglect one or the other, just cease to have public prayer altogether (if you have to neglect one). But, don't rob yourself of the blessings and the power of private prayer of calling on God. I know what I am talking about now and I am talking from the Scriptures. That is the heart of it and that is the lifeline.

While we put up with and we encourage public prayer, it is not to even be compared with that private, intimate, acquaintance with the living God. That is where you live; that is where you get your strength.

Moses went to the "*tent of meeting*" and there he called on God. I'm telling you; you can't survive without it, you can't survive.

Secondly: When Moses would go to that "*tent of meeting*" outside the camp, all the people of Israel knew what was going on.

They would rise and stand in the door of their tents until Moses entered into that "*tent of meeting*," into the presence of the Lord. The pillow of cloud would descend upon that tent indicating the presence of the Lord.

That cloud would hover over that "*tent of meeting*" where Moses met with God. The Scripture says God spoke to Moses, "*face to face as a man speaks to his friend.*" That cloud hovering over that tent out there in the wilderness was an evidence of the presence of God.

All the people would watch Moses until he went into that tent and they would all go back into their tents. Moses would speak to God and Moses would pray.

On this particular day, here in **Exodus 33**, Moses went to the "*tent of meeting*" extremely, extremely, troubled in spirit. I know that he was by what took place. I know that he was extremely troubled and had such a heavy responsibility and burden, awareness of the situation upon him.

He presented to God a three-fold request. You and I are allowed to eaves- drop by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the writing of Scripture. We are allowed to eavesdrop on this conversation between God and Moses.

You read **Exodus 33**; I challenge you to read it (we don't read the Bible like we ought to, do we?). I challenge you to read it with this background. Read it and you will be allowed to do something that even the Israelites in the wilderness weren't allowed to do (you think about this).

They didn't know what Moses said or what God said, but you and me, we can eavesdrop on God's conversation with Moses. Moses, in **Exodus 33**, presented a three-fold request to God and I am going to give it to you.

This special prayer of Moses in **Exodus 33** here is so significant that I urge your undivided attention; it is so significant. I can say I believe truthfully and quite faithfully that what takes place

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here is the very thing that I desire and that I covet and for which I pray more than any other thing. I am thinking; I am thinking very seriously when I make that statement. I'm not just preaching now, I am dealing with an experience. Listen to this; this is the three-fold request. Look in your Bible at **verse 13**:

Moses said, *"Now therefore, Lord God, I pray Thee."* Do you see **verse 13** there? Do you have it, **Exodus 33**? Moses said, request first of all, *"I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way that I may know thee, that I may know thee. Show me thy way that I may know thee."*

Now, here is something significant and I bet that you have never heard it brought out before because most people don't pay any attention to it. Look where the prayer begins. Look where Moses begins with his request.

Moses does not say, "Now Lord; show me your way that I may know Thee," no sir; he precedes that request with a statement. Did you ever notice that statement? *"Lord, (he said); if I have found grace in thy sight; then show me thy way that I may know thee."*

Moses didn't say "Lord; I have served Thee faithfully all of these years. Lord, I went down into Egypt and I obeyed you. I left my flock out there on the mountainside and I went down to Egypt where you told me to go."

"I delivered the people out of Egypt as you commanded. I did all these things. I have been faithful. I have served you loyally. I have given of my time, a talent, and tithe."

No sir, no sir he didn't. He began where all prayer begins or ought to. He began where everything ought to begin; *"Lord, if I have found grace in your sight."*

Grace is underserved favor and unmerited favor, *"if I have found grace."* My friend, we better learn this. This is the fountain of all God's blessings. This is the fountain of mercy; it is all by grace *"for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God."*

*"A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above."* It was what? Don't miss a word of it, *"except it be given him from above."*

We read the Bible and we miss the word; *"the gift of God is eternal life."* It is a gift. You don't buy it, you don't earn it and you don't deserve it.

Moses came to the place of meeting, that holy, sacred, solemn, place. He met God face to face and said, *"Lord God; if I have found grace in your sight,"* then I have a request. Can you get a hold of that? We better; listen to the Scriptures:

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This is the fountain of all mercies. **Genesis 6:8** says, “*Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord;*” therefore, old Lot prayed in **Genesis 19:18**; “*O my Lord, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight; thy mercy has saved my life.*”

Gideon in **Judges 6:17**, prayed, listen; “*Lord, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me a sign that you speak to me.*” Why don't we hear people praying like that? People today pray like they expect an answer or deserve one or ought to get one or merit one.

These men didn't pray that way. Gideon was a man that God selected to lead the 300. He said, “*Lord, if I have found grace in your sight.*” “*If,*” we don't dare use the word “*if*” in reference to God; it is always know so. We are presuming. We are walking on forbidden territory; we are trespassing. We are whistling by the cemetery is what we are doing.

Peter said in **Acts 15**; “*We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved.*” Paul said in **1 Corinthians 15**; “*I am what I am by the grace of God.*” You and I better get a hold of this truth; I wish we could; I wish we could.

Old Moses was a servant of God. He was the meekest of all men. He was triumphant, a conqueror, and victorious; a whole nation followed him. But, when he came before God, he was fearless before the people and bold before the people. He was courageous before the people and unbending.

But, when he came before God, even his own God, he prayed like a little child; “*Lord, if I have found grace in thy sight, would you show me your way?*”

It is grace that chose us, the election of grace, which the Scripture talks about. The election of grace, God's grace given to us in Christ before the world began.

It was grace that redeemed us. Listen to this verse: “*In whom we have redemption through his blood according to the riches of his grace (of his grace!).*”

It was grace that called us. Paul said, “*God separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace.*” You weren't called because of any distinction that you have among your fellow worms; it was grace that called you.

It was grace that supplied our every need. God said, even to Paul, “*My grace is sufficient.*”

**“Amazing grace  
How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost but now I'm found  
I was blind but now I see.**

**Tw'as grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved,**

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**How precious did that grace appear?  
The hour I first believed.**

**Through many dangers, toils, and snares  
I have already come.  
Tis grace that brought me safe thus far  
And grace will lead me home."**

*"Lord, if I have found grace."* You might say; "I see you hanging on that a long time." Well, you better learn this; there is no use in you saying the other if you don't learn this because salvation is the gift of His grace.

If you ever know Christ, it will be by grace. If you ever love Christ it will be by grace. If you ever wind up in the way of life it will be by God's grace. It won't be because of something you gave God but something God gave you.

*"If I have found grace in Thy sight;"* what did he ask for? *"Show me thy way that I may know thee."* How does a man know God? How does a man get in God's way? *"Show me your way that I may know Thee."*

You are not going to know God going your way. You are not going to know God going the denominational way. You are not going to know God going some preacher's way; you are going to know God by going His way. He said, *"Show me your way that I may know thee."* Our Lord Jesus Christ said; *"I am the way. No man cometh to the Father but by me."* God is revealed in Christ. That is how you know God; He is God's way and in walking in Him you know God.

In **John 10:30**, Christ said; *"I and My Father are one."* In another Scripture He said, *"No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him."* Phillip said, *"Well Lord; show us the Father and we shall be satisfied."* He said, *"Phillip, have I been with you this long and you don't know me? He that hath seen me hath seen God. I am the way, the truth, and the life."*

Moses wanted to see Christ; *"show me your way that I may know thee."* He wanted to see God's righteousness, God's sacrifice, and God's salvation. Christ is the brightness of God's glory. Christ is the express image of God's person.

Learn Christ and you will learn God. Love Christ and you love God. When you come to Christ you come to God. Worship Christ and you worship God. Deny Christ and you will miss God. It is just that plain.

But all is the gift of grace. Moses, do you hear him; *"Lord, if I have found grace,"* because it is a revelation of grace.

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God said, "I will do what you say; you will know my way." If a man wants to know God's way he will know it. We want our way. *"All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone, what did it say, to his own way."*

*"There is a way that seemeth right unto men and the end is destruction."* God said, *"My ways are not your ways,"* not your ways, you have missed it; you have missed it.

But, you want your way; well then, have it. Moses didn't want his way. He said, *"If I have found grace, if I am an object of your grace, would you show me your way that I may know you?"*

Could you forget your tradition long enough to look to God in sincerity and honesty and cry out to know God's way? I don't care how God reveals it to me or through whom He reveals it, I want to know God's way that I may know God.

Secondly: In **verse 15**, do you have it there in **Exodus 33:15**? He said, *"Lord;* (listen to this, this just gripped my soul when I looked at it today), *"Lord, if your presence goes not with me then carry me not up hence."* That is what He is saying, "If you don't go with me, if your presence is not with me, I don't want to go."

Now, what is he talking about? Well, Egypt was behind him; that is settled. Egypt is behind him, that is a fact. They have come out of Egypt; they left Egypt and Egypt is behind them. Egypt is gone and forgotten.

The Promised Land was before them; it was in the future. The long, hard, wilderness was upon them. That is what Moses is talking about; the long, hard, wilderness of 40 years is upon them. Moses wanted reassurance of the presence of the Lord on this difficult journey.

*"Lord, if your presence go not with us, don't even let us go."* Now, this is a picture of my experience and a picture of yours. Are you with me? We who have been saved by God's grace, we've been saved and Egypt is behind us (the sin, the world).

We have been delivered from the curse of the law, the condemnation of the law, the penalty of sin from the power of sin and from the practice of sin. Egypt is behind us and heaven is certainly before us, the Promised Land, the land of joy and gladness and the land of God's presence and God's glory is before us.

Do you know what is upon us, contrary to what most of the modern preachers are trying to preach? The wilderness journey of life is right here with us. I am talking about 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, or 70 years we have right now.

I don't know how long you are going to live but I know that however long you are going to live, you are going to walk through a barren, bleak, and pagan, heathen, sin-infested world. You are going to be subject to the trials and tribulations, temptations, and attacks of Satan and of men.

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There will be trials sent by God and you better pray that same prayer in your private closet right now; *“Lord, if you don’t go with me (I am done for; I don’t even want to go).”*

Listen to Paul when he is talking about that thorn in the flesh. He cried, *“Lord; remove this thorn.”* Three times he prayed and the Lord Jesus Christ said to him; *“Paul, my grace is sufficient.”* It is sufficient for any thorn. It is sufficient for any trial. It is sufficient for any testing. It is sufficient for any tribulation. It is sufficient for any affliction. It is sufficient for any infirmity.

David wrote; *“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”* I am walking through it right now. I have walked through it this day and I will walk through it tomorrow. What do I need?

*“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil”* because I am going to depend on a “positive, mental, attitude.” I am going to depend on “I’m ok and you’re ok.” I am going to depend upon “positive thinking.”

No sir, no sir! He said, *“I will fear no evil because thou art with me.”* Our Lord said, *“I’ll not leave you.”* He said, *“Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the earth.”* That makes every thing all right. That is what Moses is asking here; he is saying, *“Lord; if your presence does not go with us; carry us not up hence.”*

Then, look at **verse 16**; this is very significant. Moses says, *“How shall it be known that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight if thou goest not with us?”* “If we don’t have your presence what evidence do we have that we found grace in your sight? What evidence do we have? We don’t have any if your presence is not there.”

The presence of the Lord with us is evidence that we have found grace in His sight. *“He that hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.”* That is exactly right! Every believer has the presence of God and an indwelling Holy Spirit. If he does not then he is not saved.

That is what Moses is saying here; *“If your presence, go not with us, then we haven’t found grace in your sight.”* Watch this; look at **verse 16** again, “Your presence separates us from the other people on the earth. Your presence distinguishes us as your people, a particular people, and a particular grace.”

The presence of the Lord is an evidence of the grace of the Lord and it distinguishes and separates God’s people from the people of the world. And God said in **verse 17**, *“Moses, I will do for you what you ask; you have found grace in my sight.”* You may feel that I over emphasize this matter about God’s grace in relation to God’s blessing.

You know, when I started this message off, the first request where Moses started with this prayer, *“if I have found grace in your sight, show me your way,”* when He made those two requests and God said in **verse 17**, *“I will do what you ask, you have found grace in my sight,”* He closed it with the same thing that Moses opened it with and that is the reason.



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Because, now watch the 3<sup>rd</sup> request, one more request, he said; *“Lord, show me your glory.”*

Now, have you ever thought about the magnificent things that Moses had seen? The things he seen would be sufficient for most people.

Moses saw the bush that burned and was not consumed. We could spend the rest of our lives talking about that. This is all that God would have to show most of us, just show us the bush that burned and wasn't consumed.

We would advertise ourselves and hold a special meeting so fellows could say, “I saw the bush burn and it wasn't consumed.” Everybody would come and hear us and we would tell it ten thousand times.

And the plagues, the death of the first-born and the Red Sea divided, Moses saw all of that. Think what an eye-witness one would be in seeing the dividing of the Red Sea, what a crowd he would get in this day of so little power and so little demonstration of God's power.

Boy, I would tell you, we would be satisfied with that wouldn't we, or the manna from heaven, or the smitten rock. A fellow can heal somebody of a twisted ankle and pack an auditorium for several months. That is all we need.

But Moses, though he had seen all that, said; *“Lord, show me your glory; I want to see your glory. (I know these wonders and miracles are not your chief glory); I want to see your glory. I want to see the glory of God.”*

The chief glory of God; that glory of God of which He spoke in the beginning, in which He will speak in the end, what is that glory; God said in **verse 19**; *“Moses, I will cause all my goodness;”* God's goodness is His glory, His goodness, His grace is His chief glory.

It's not His miracles but His grace. *“I will cause all my goodness to pass before you. I will proclaim the very name of the Lord before you. Moses; I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.”*

God's greatest glory is His redemptive glory. You better learn this; God's greatest glory is His redemptive glory. There is grace to the guilty and mercy to the miserable, God lifting the fallen, God opening the blind, the spiritually blind eyes and spiritually deaf ears, and raising spiritually dead people from the grave. That is God's greatest glory.

Christ prayed, *“I have finished the work you gave me to do. Now Father; glorify thou me with the glory I had with thee before the world was* (before there were any camps, heart trouble, or broken legs).

I want the same glory I had and that glory is given to Christ in the finishing of and the accomplishment of, sufficiently and effectually, the work that the Father gave Him to do. That is

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not straight and crooked limbs but straight and crooked hearts and lives and brings men to knowledge of God.

The heavens declare the creative glory of God. History records the providential glory of God. God said to Pharaoh, *“for this same purpose have I raised you up that I might show my glory in you.”*

And the cross reveals the redemptive glory of God *“that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of his grace toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

What a prayer! *“If I have found grace in your sight, show me your way. Send your presence with me and show me your glory.”*