

“Show Me Thy Glory”
Exodus 33:11-23
(Preached at Trinity, June 7, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As **Chapter 33** opens we find Israel receiving the worst news any human being can receive. God had departed from them.
“Exodus 33:3 “I will not go up in the midst of thee”
While God would fulfill His promises He’d made to the patriarchs of a land in Canaan He would not go with them!
2. This is the truth that should cause all men to tremble. The reason was because of their sin. Sin separates us from God.
Isaiah 59:2 – “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.”
3. Early Church Father, John Chrysostom wrote in the 4th century, “To be separated from God is greater punishment than a thousand hells.”
4. There is no greater curse than to lose the presence of God. The news that they had lost the presence of God caused great mourning in Israel. As a sign of their distress they refused to put on any of the ornaments of jewelry. They removed from them that which had been a part of their sin.
5. In **Verses 7-11** we find Moses setting up a tent outside the camp.
Exodus 33:7 – “And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp”
 - a. It was referred to as the tent of meeting. Some believe this was the place from which Moses judged the people. Most important, though, this was the place where Moses went to meet God. God may have been removed from the people of Israel but not Moses.
 - b. The text tells us in **Verse 11** that God met with Moses “face to face” as a man speaks with his friend.
 - c. It doesn’t mean that Moses could see God. It describes the unique way in which God communicated with Moses.
With other prophets God spoke in dreams and visions.
God spoke with Moses directly by His Word.
Deuteronomy 34:10-11 – “And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face”
 - d. God meets with us face to face. We don’t need a human mediator. We have Jesus Christ through whom we come directly into the throne room of God. He speaks with us directly through His Word as the Holy Spirit provides illumination.
6. Moses was God’s mediator to Israel. He met with God on their behalf. He was also charged with leading them to Canaan.
Exodus 32:34 – “Therefore now go, lead the people unto *the place* of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee:”

7. Moses has some definite concerns. He was not willing to go forth without the presence of God.

This is the heart of every believer. Oh God, don't leave me alone. And He has promised us, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

8. Moses comes before God with his concerns. God is pleased as we bring our petitions before Him. We aren't informing Him of anything He doesn't already know but we must continually come before Him in absolute dependence and submission.

Moses brings three different petitions in this passage.

- A. In **Verses 12-14** Moses asks something for himself.
- B. In **Verses 15-17** he asks for something for Israel as God's people
- C. In **Verses 18-23** Moses asks for something for himself as one who was seeking to know God more.

9. Tonight I want us to look at these three petitions.

I. **Verses 12-14** - Moses asks something for himself.

A. Moses again lays his case before God

- 1. God, you've called me to lead this people
Exodus 3:10 – "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt."
Exodus 32:34 – "Therefore now go, lead the people unto *the place* of which I have spoken unto thee. . ."
- 2. Moses' concern was that God was sending him alone. An angel? What angel? God, I want your presence.
 - a. Moses' whole life was bound up in God. His hunger was for God.
 - b. He knew he couldn't do this calling on his own.
- 3. He makes a request from God that demonstrated his heart for God.
Exodus 33:13 – "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. . ."
- 4. Moses wanted God's leadership and direction – "shew me now thy way"

B. Moses' heart should be the heart of each of us.

- 1. God has called each of us to a life of service – but it is overwhelming. To walk alone leaves us helpless
- 2. We must not settle for anything less than the abiding presence of God and a knowledge of His ways.
- 3. How can we know the mind of God?
 - a. On one hand it is impossible
Romans 11:33 – "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"
Isaiah 55:8-9 – "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

- b. We can't enter into the sovereign mind of God. His exercises of sovereign dominion are not revealed to us.

Deuteronomy 29:29 – “The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God”

4. But God has given us His revelation – His revealed will
Deuteronomy 29:29 – “The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we may do all the words of this law.*”
5. We know His revealed will through His Word. Remember from last week, God speaks with us face to face through His Word.
6. Our prayer is for God to teach us by His Word. That the Holy Spirit would illuminate our minds giving us spiritual understanding.
Psalms 86:11 – “Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.”
Psalms 119:9-12 – “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word. ¹⁰ With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. ¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. ¹² Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.”
7. You cannot function in your Divine calling, no matter what it is, without God's instruction by His Word.
We need God to teach us how to be single, how to be married, how to be Godly parents, obedient children, how to be a good student, a faithful employee, a Godly employer.
“Oh God, walk with me continually and teach me by Thy Word.”
8. God answered the prayer of Moses
Psalms 103:7 – “He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.”

II. Verses 15-17 - Moses asks for something for Israel as God's people

- A. Moses ended his first petition with:
Exodus 33:13 – “and consider that this nation *is thy people.*”
 1. God didn't seem to hear this part of Moses' petition because Israel was not included in God's answer
Exodus 33:14 – “And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest.”
 2. God's answer was in the singular – God promised to be with Moses, but He was not promising to be with Israel
 3. This led to Moses second petition
Exodus 33:15 – “And he said unto him, If thy presence go not *with me (lit. us)*, carry us not up hence.”
- B. In essence, Moses was telling God that without His presence the Promised Land meant nothing
 1. It would be better to remain in the wilderness than to go without God
Moses understood Israel's place in God's redemptive plan. If God was not with them nothing else mattered.
 2. Israel never learned this. Have we? Have you?

3. We must not be willing to go anywhere without God. Is God included in all of your decisions?
What distinguishes you from all other people? Is it not the presence of God? Is it not your relationship with Him?
Exodus 33:16 – “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?”
4. God heard this prayer as well – **Verse 17**

III. In **Verses 18-23** - Moses asks for something for himself as one who was seeking to know God more.

- A. This request is both wonderful and audacious – “show me thy glory”
 1. Again, Moses is demonstrating the heart of every believer
“Oh God, I want all of you! I want to know all of you, behold all of you!”
Moses wanted to see God in all of His majesty and splendor.
 2. What is the glory of God? I have preached on this many times but never quite satisfied with my conclusions.
The Hebrew word is קָבוֹד (kabowd)
The Greek word here is δόξα which comes from the Greek verb δοκέω which means – to think or to be of an opinion. In the NT it always refers to a good opinion of someone.
 - a. As it applies to God glory refers to His excellence, brightness, splendor – the fullness of all that God is, the fulness of His Divine being.
 - b. When describing the fulness of the Divine essence we are talking about the full sum of all that God is. It is described as God’s attributes.
 - c. Moses was asking to see all of God.
 3. Moses had already seen something of God’s glory
 - a. He saw God displayed in the burning bush
 - b. He saw the awesome display of God’s glory on Mount Sinai.
Exodus 19:16 – “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount”
Exodus 19:18-19 – “And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. ¹⁹ And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.”
Exodus 24:15-17 – “And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. ¹⁶ And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷ And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.”

- c. Moses had just spent a great time of communion with God on Mount Sinai – As intimate as any man had ever experienced.
 - 4. Moses knew there was more to God. He wanted to know God intimately. Moses was saying, “Oh God, show me the fullness of your divine essence. Notice, it was Moses’ time with God that gave him the desire for more of God.
- B. What was God’s answer?
 - 1. First, God told Moses that his request was impossible. No mere mortal could survive a glimpse at the full glory of God
 - Exodus 33:20** – “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”
 - a. Since God is infinite in His Divine being and we are finite we can’t comprehend His fullness.
 - b. No man has ever seen the fulness of God
 - John 1:18** – “No man hath seen God at any time. . .”
 - 1 John 4:12** – “No man hath seen God at any time.”
 - c. We have beheld God in Christ
 - Colossians 2:9** – “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”
 - John 1:14** – “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
 - 2. Second, God told Moses He would show him a portion of His glory
 - Exodus 33:19** – “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.”
 - a. God tells Moses He will show him some expressions of His glory – some of His Divine essence
 - b. His goodness – expressions of His love to humanity
 - c. God said He would proclaim His name to Moses – God’s name is also the fullness of His Divine essence.
- C. Is this your great desire – to know God’s glory?
 - 1. Is there anything higher than this? To see the glory of God
 - 2. If God’s glory is the fulness of His divine essence in all its majesty and splendor how are we brought to see it?
 - 3. It would seem that today many Christians are looking for a supernatural manifestation of God – some sensational experience.
 - 4. The Christian life is experiential. It is a relationship with the Divine. We are living and walking with the living God. It is an exciting experience.
 - 5. But how do we grow in this experience?
 - God is implying to Moses that to behold His glory is to know Him.
 - “I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee”
 - 6. Too many people want to “experience” God without knowing Him. And they want to know Him apart from the means of grace from His Word.

7. Listen to the Psalmist
Psalm 119:9-12 – “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word. ¹⁰ With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. ¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. ¹² Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.”
NAS **Psalm 119:38** – “Establish Thy word to Thy servant, As that which produces reverence for Thee.”
8. God’s means of grace are not to be looked on in a mechanical sense – He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy.
 But the experience of God seldom comes apart from the means of grace.

Conclusion:

1. May God grant us to see large measures of His glory. Some of the richest manifestations of His glory are found in His love.
Ephesians 3:16-19 – “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; ¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”
2. The richest manifestation of God’s glory is found in Christ.
 Moses indeed saw this at the transfiguration.
Matthew 17:2-3 – “And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. ³ And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.”
3. We too have beheld Him.
John 1:14 – “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
 Do you know Him?