

Show Me Your Glory

Exodus 33:18-34:9

Last week we left off in Exodus 33 with Moses clinging onto the God. God had promised that He would bless Israel, and provide for them and protect them, sending His angel before them as they went into the promised land. But God wasn't going with them into the land, God's visible and tangible presence would not go with them. Israel was stubborn and rebellious against God, Intimacy between God and Israel was not going to work, He might react with righteous judgement and wipe them out. Moses began to plead with God not based on Israel's worthiness to have God go with them but upon Moses' own relationship with God. Moses argued that basically He was nothing without God and that the people of Israel nothing with God. The Lord was the only thing that distinguished them from any other people and if God didn't go with them, then they shouldn't even go. God finally told Moses that He would go with Moses and the people.

Pastor Bobo told me last week that if he had this kind of interaction with God and God gave him this kind of answer he would have gone running and leaping into camp, announcing at the top of his lungs that God was willing to go with them. But Moses does not stop there.

1. Show me Your glory.

Exodus 33:18 Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

- Moses wants more, he wants a deeper, more intimate and personal relationship with God. But what exactly is Moses asking? He had one of the closest personal relationships with God that history has ever recorded. God spoke to him as a friend. Moses wanted to see even more of God, not in a burning bush, not through an angel, not the throne of God like he saw in Exodus 24, not God represented in a pillar of cloud or fire. He had seen the works of God, and the reflections of God’s glory, now Moses wanted to see God. What is glory?
- The word glory in Hebrew is *kabowd*.
- **The most literal meaning of the word is *weighty or heavy, it carries the idea solidity*** – this is the idea of a weighty person in society, someone who is honorable, noteworthy, impressive and worthy of respect. When this word is used to describe a human being it points to someone who is wealthy or influential, someone highly honored or someone who has attained a weighty stature in the community.

We see this in English when we say things like “their opinion carries a lot of weight.” In the Scriptures, this word *kabowd* (glory) is also used to describe great beauty, things that are beautifully glorious like the garments of the priests, (Ex. 28:2; 40) the glory of a great city, or the trees of a mighty forest (Isa. 8:7; 10:18). We use it in English also, *she looked glorious tonight, or they were standing there in all their glory*. Yet when the word is used to describe the eternal God it stands in contrast to human or earthly glory which is temporary and fading, the created things reflect God’s glory. But God’s glory endures forever (Psalm 104:31). When we began to grasp this aspect of God’s glory we get a sense of awe, power & honor, a near-blinding quality that is beyond description. The psalmists and prophets push the limits of language and thoughts trying to explain God’s power, God’s authority, God’s beauty, God’s transcendence, God’s sufficiency, these are all just minute aspects of the glory of Lord. The psalmist writes: *The Lord wraps Himself in a garment of light, He stretches out the heavens like a tent, He makes the clouds His chariot and rides on the winds of the wind. He makes the winds His messengers and flames of fire His servants*. These are poetic descriptions of an indescribable God.

- **When you’ve begin to think of the glory of God, when you begin to perceive a glorious God.** His glory, His weightiness in your life pushes every other thing to its rightful place in the periphery. God

is the only thing that lasts. And the things that matter to Him are truly the things that last. Everything else is temporary.

- Moses says, Lord I want the full experience of the weight of who You are, I am ready, bring it on! Show me all of you God! I want to know the *real You*.
- **This is one of the things I have learned to love about Moses.** The Lord has confirmed His love for Moses in many ways. He talks to Him, He favors and loves Him. God has been answering almost all of Moses' prayers with a "yes." If that were happening for you how would you receive it? What would you do? I would be like, "*This is great, I am satisfied, I am a friend of the Lord and I have learned to pray within His will. He gives me the things I ask for and desire. That is enough*" But not Moses. He wants to know who God is. He wants to see the depths of God, the face of God, the heart of God. He pushes and says *I want more!*

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. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." 21 Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I

have passed by. **23** Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

- God is using figurative language when He speaks about His face or His hand. He is saying: *I will show you a glimpse of my goodness but that is all you can bear Moses.* God would shield Moses, Moses could stand in an indentation in the rock, God would pass by, and preach a sermon about who He was and Moses could gaze briefly at the glory trails, like the jet stream that we see after an airliner passes by.
- **Yet God said, *you can't look at my face.*** What does that mean, to look at the face of a Spirit being? If you want to know someone, who they are, how they look, what their emotions are, etc. you look at their face, you look them in the eye. Our face distinguishes us from others. If people want to hide their identity, they cover their face. God is saying you can't see the real me. If God allowed Moses to experience the full weight of his glory and His identity, Moses would become a heap of ash, like one of the dry pine boughs that disintegrated in seconds this summer as it was exposed to the full fury of a raging forest fire. Moses, as a fallen man, couldn't handle seeing the face of God.
- When God reveals His glory, the fullness of His identity, it exposes our non-glory and our frailty. People like to say, *“I like to think of god like this. I can't believe in a God like this. The God I believe in is like this and not like this.”* That is not a glorious God. Because the glorious God is honored for

who He is, He is above my likes and dislikes, I do not construct Him, His existence and attributes are not dependent on my perception of Him, my thoughts do not define who He is. When I even get a glimpse of his glory I begin to understand that His thoughts matter more than anything else in life.

- **No person in any place in Scripture, whoever gets even a small glimpse at the glory of God finds fault with God.** They feel undone, they feel helpless, they feel unclean, they feel exposed, like wax before a furnace. But Jesus died for our sin, He came and purified us and so Jesus begins to create the glorious things within us. A transformative process has begun in each of us. The amazing truth is this is that with the Holy Spirit of God living in us. (2 Cor. 3:18) Tells us that we are being transformed daily by God's internal testimony within us, we become more like Christ, an Agent of change has entered into our souls and it is transforming us. And ultimately, when we die, or when Christ returns to us in His second coming the transformation will be finalized.
- *1 John 3:2–3 Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. 3 And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.*
- **A useful question: Do you want to see the glory of God if it changes you?** Seeing the glory not just like watching a movie with awesome special effects, it's on a screen and we get to sit back and watch, removed from the powerful scene at a distance. If we are exposed to the Real God, who He is,

in His glory. Parts of us are going to burn up, and melt away. We are going to be undone. Some things that you love and cling, sinful and selfish things, cannot exist when exposed to His glory. Some of the ideas that you hold onto, about who God is, about what is good and bad, about what you like and dislike about God, are not truly His glory, He will not change, He does not need to change. When you come face to face with God, somebodies gonna change and it wont be Him.

- **Do you want God to consume your life or would you rather just have God be a part of your life?**
- A small piece of the pie. Example My brother in law as my college room at: hung up a picture of Jesus. *“There now we have or religion covered!”*

Chapter 34:1-4 God gives instruction to Moses about new stone tablets for the 10 commandments, He is going to reconfirm His covenant with Israel. There is a lot there, that I could say, but we will skip over it because of time. If you would like we can talk after service about it, there is great symbolism here, that looks forward to Christ.

2. The Lord: as defined by the Lord.

If you had to describe what God is like in just a few sentences what would you say? That is pretty tough to do, we have seen that people struggle to do it all through the Bible. But here we have the Lord, in His own words, preaching a mini sermon to Moses, describing Himself. **What is God like? 5 Then**

the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. God exists in every place and in every time that the world has ever known. Yet God caused Moses to experience a very intense, yet still limited sense of His presence. I can't even imagine, the power, the electricity, the sound, the heat, the color, the intensity of what Moses was being subjected to at this point. Moses stood just at the cusp of what any human could physically or spiritually endure. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD,

- God says His name twice for emphasis. This word is Yahweh. We talked about this a lot in Ch. 3. Yahweh, is the covenant name that God has given His people. It has its roots in God's statement, I AM, or I BE. It describes God's transcendence and eternity, the Lord has always been present, He is present now, He always will always be present, everywhere, and in every place, and every-when, in all time. The name Yahweh describes God's eternal power. He is dependent upon nothing, He needs no one, and all things are dependent upon Him. And we could God on and on.

The Lord is gracious: The lord continues... *the compassionate and gracious God, (God cares about His Creation, He provides for everything and everyone, He shows favor and blessing, goodness and mercy to all, to those who know and follow Him and even to those who never acknowledge that He exists. If anyone or anything has experienced goodness this comes from the Lord.*

The Lord is patient: *slow to anger*, - we don't think of the Lord especially in the OT as slow to anger, yet the judgments of God within Scripture when you consider the amount of time, and know how often people break God's commands, the judgments of God are few and far between. God sends prophets over and over to all His people warning them to change before he brings judgment

The Lord is loving and loyal: *abounding in love and faithfulness*, This statement is centered around word *khesed*. **This word appears more than 240 times in the OT.** It is often translated *unfailing love or steadfast love*. But my one of my favorite professors argues that the best translation of this word is *loyal love*. This is how God's loyal love works. When you enter into a covenant with God, He does not forget it, He does not turn away from it, there may be times of discipline and struggle... when God allows His people to struggle because of their rebellion. But God offers a loyal love to all those who follow Him and God will never leave or forsake those with whom He has covenanted. People pray all throughout the OT, especially when they experience difficulty, "*Lord please remember your hesed, remember your loyal love, remember Your unfailing love.*" **Psalm 6:4** *Return, O LORD, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love.* This is amazing when you think about it because it is a prayer based on God's identity and His faithful love and loyalty not on our faithfulness. *Save me because of who You are God. Not because I deserve it Lord! But because I am in a covenant with You*

and You offer Your people a loyal, unfailing love. That is who You are God. And I know that so that is why I pray. Over and over in the psalms, the writers cry out save us because of who You are, save us because of your loyal love. The out working of is seen in verse 7.

7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. This is what God's loyal love produces a love maintained to the multitudes, and multitudes of sins forgiven. And so we look at this and say: Yes! This is the kind of God that I love! I, as an a western Christian am all about a gracious, patient, loving, loyal, forgiving God. And that is good because that is who God is. But now the description changes.

The Lord is just: *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.”*

Oh God I was loving this so much but then You had to go and put this in there. This seems to be antithetical, the opposite of what was described before. A warning: You have put yourself in the position of judging God, the clay looking to the potter. But part of the reason this may seem harsh to you is because of who you are and how you have been raised.

One of my fellow students in seminary was a guy name Celestin Musekura. I had a class with his wife. He is from Rwanda. He is the president of *African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries*. He is a pastor who goes into the war-torn areas of Africa and other parts of the world and teaches about forgiveness and reconciliation through the gospel. This was never his goal, but God led him to it in one of the craziest testimonies you could ever experience. He was formerly a pagan witch-doctor, who was lead to Christ and then trained in Seminary in America. While he in the US in 1994, his home country Rwanda, experienced a civil war between Hutu & Tutsi, tribes which involved a violent genocide where almost 1 million people were killed - most of killing was done with machetes. Most of Celestin's family was killed in this war. After the war, he and his brother who are both preachers, went through the nation reconciling these tribes and bringing forgiveness through the gospel. When Celestin goes into these areas and teaches on the Lord's graciousness, His patience, His loyal love, His forgiveness, in war-torn areas he constantly receives death threats from the people he was teaching. Why? They want hear about a forgiving God. They wanted to hear about a just God, who punishes the wicked. When Celestin receives death threats announces in his classes: *"If you are going to kill me, may the Lord's will be done, but please don't kill me until after the class time tomorrow."* He wants more time to explain the different attributes of God. God is a God who is gracious and forgiving, but He is just too. God is the true and righteous avenger and will righteously and justly punish the wicked. Celestin's family

experienced a challenge to their faith in who God is in the greatest way. He and his brother were baptizing people who had received the gospel. His brother baptized a little girl and as he lowered her into the water, he recognized a very distinct dress that the girl was wearing. It was his daughters dress, and it was then that he realized that the father of this girl had killed his own daughter with a machete. (This truly happened) It took every ounce of faith to trust that God was the avenger and to not hold this girl underwater and drown her.

I have talked to people who have been abused as a child, and people who have been raped. And these folks struggle with the forgiveness of God. They struggle with the idea that a person who tormented them could come to faith in Jesus Christ and be forgiven. And so we have stop and look at the fact that God will punish, God is just, but also trust that punishment might be endured by Jesus.

If God is not just, then He is not good. Graciousness without justice is not good. Justice without patience, love and forgiveness is not good.

- Jesus is the intersection of God's grace, patience, loyal love and justice. On the cross Jesus forgive sin by absorbing the punishment for it. On the cross Jesus can extend grace because He is absorbing the penalty for the broken law. The God who hung on the Cross offers an even greater glimpse of God's glory. We, with Moses hear God say, *"I am compassionate and gracious, patient and*

forgiving, I offer loyal love to those who trust in me, yet I will not allow sin and guilt to go unpunished” We read it and hear it. But on the cross we see it play out. All of those qualities of God come together at the crux of all history, in the person of Jesus. God’s glory comes streaming through.

- **How should we respond to God’s revealed glory?** Moses shows us what to do.

8 Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. 9 “O Lord, if I have found favor in your eyes,” he said, “then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance.”

We should do what Moses did. We should bow down in worship. We should thank God for letting us be HIS, We should cry out for His presence in our lives, we should ask God to forgive our sins to Him. And we should pray that He would show His loyal love to us. Not because we deserve it, but because of who God is.