

Exodus 33:7-23 Show me Your Glory



Amen. This ends this reading of God's holy, inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word. May He write its eternal truth upon our hearts.

Let us pray with boldness as Moses did, "Lord show me Your glory!"

Did you enter into worship this morning praying "Lord, show me Your glory?" Have you been praying that prayer this week? Do you want to see the glory of God in your passion for Christ?

Moses had experienced the many tokens of God's presence. The Old Testament will tell us that Moses would be the only prophet who knew the Lord face to face.

I. MOSES EXPERIENCE WITH GOD

Moses first encounter with the glory of God was at the burning bush in Exodus chapter three. The bush would not stop burning, and as he approached it God spoke to him out of the bush. Yahweh revealed Himself as "I AM WHO I AM" (Exo. 3:14).

Moses also experienced God's presence when he heard His voice and watched how God overthrew the Pharaohs with the ten plagues. The grand climax was experienced at the Passover when Yahweh redeemed Israel and destroyed the first born of Egypt.

He experienced the glory of God, when the Shekinah glory led the people out of Egypt on their journey to the Promised Land (Exo. 13).

He experienced God's glory when He saw the invisible hand of God part the Red Sea and drown Pharaoh's army (Exo, 14).

He provided water in the wilderness from a rock (Exo. 17). The apostle Paul tells us the rock was Christ.

Moses saw God provide manna and quail as their daily meals for 40 years until they entered into Promised Land.

Moses saw the fire on Mount Sinai which demonstrated His presence before the people of Israel. Moses was admitted into the immediate presence of the LORD, and received the Law written by the finger of God of tablets of stone (Exo. 19).

The Law of the Covenant is Broken

Then a tragedy of tragedy occurs as Moses descends the mountain with the tablets of the Law. Israel broke the covenant (Exo. 32:1- 33:3). They made a golden calf and worshipped it. As a result Moses threw down and broke the tablets of the Law (Exo. 32).

In the first year of the Exodus at the "tent of meeting" before the erection of the Tabernacle, God had descended on purpose to honor Moses in the sight of all Israel, and He spoke with him face to face, as a man speaks to his friends (Exo. 33).

Jehovah had appeared to Moses in all these experiences. God had demonstrated His presence. Now there is need for a sense of God's presence to reassure Moses in the work before him. He will need this over the next 39 years as he leads of rebellious, sinful faithless people.

Exodus 33:7-11 "Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the Lord would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would stand and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. So the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent."

Moses interceded for Israel (Exodus 33:12-16).

Israel had worshiped in ways that the Lord had commanded them not too. Therefore, God had spoken His judgment to Moses and to the people in Exodus 32. Moses intercedes with God in Exodus 33, pleads that God would not destroy His people on the spot. God, in an amazing expression of His graciousness refrains from an immediate judgment that His people deserved. But He tells them, "I'll give you the promised land, but not My presence."

The great theme of Exodus 33, positively and negatively, is the presence of God. Exodus 33:1-11 contemplates the people of God experiencing His blessing without His presence. Exodus 33:12 and following, show us the mediator is utterly dissatisfied with that solution. There is the realization on the part of Moses that the blessings of the Promised Land, without the presence of the Promiser, is a curse.

Moses prayer does not change the mind of God. He discovers how forgiving God really is.

The Covenant restored through Moses Intercession.

The LORD said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." Then Moses said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are on the face of the earth?"

Verse 16, Moses goes on to argue that God's presence is the distinguishing mark of His choice of His people. "Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?" Moses is arguing, "*Lord, the thing that makes us different, is that You are with us.*"

As believers in Jesus Christ we need to remind ourselves the thing that makes us different is that Christ is with us. "Christ in you is the hope of glory." That's the only thing that makes us different from this world.

Jesus the Mediator

Here we are seeing a foreshadowing of Jesus the Mediator, with the heavenly Father. The Father knows Him face to face, because He's the unique only one of a kind Son of the Father. There's no one who has found the favor the Son has found with the Father. The Father from heaven declares, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." If you ever doubt that your Mediator has the pleasure of His Father, you listen to what His Father says about Him. Moses' mediation points us to the covenant of redemption, and to the heart of God, and gives us a foretaste of the Mediator.

God restored the covenant with the blessing of His presence.

II. SHOW ME YOUR GLORY

Exodus 33:17-19 "The Lord said to Moses, 'I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name.' Then Moses said, 'Please, show me Your glory!' And He said, 'I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion to whom I will show compassion.'"

"Show me Your glory!" Moses uses the word *kabod* meaning "heavy" or "weight." It describes the infinite weightiness of who the LORD is. The glory of Yahweh reflects the totality and substance of His divine attributes, perfections and essence. It refers to His power and holiness. Here is described the divine character of God. With this word *kabod* we see His holiness, righteousness, wrath, sovereignty, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, steadfast tender mercies, goodness, grace, love, etc. All of the attributes of God are expressed in the *kabod*. God's glory in the Old Testament usually appears as a bright light or a burning fire. It is enveloped in a cloud to protect the eyes of the beholder from its burning brightness. The glory both conceals and reveals God.

Waite a minute. God has been showing Moses His glory ever since He spoke to him at the burning bush.

"Show me Your glory." It seems to be a request not only for God to reveal His essential nature to Moses, but also for God to come again in a visible manifestation like He had when He called Moses into this service in the beginning at the burning bush.

There have been special occasions in my life when the Holy Spirit has suddenly and clearly brought me back to the day He laid His hand on me and called me to His ministry. Those days are precious and reassuring to the soul. They are usually when He is preparing us for another opening or a special ministry. Those are precious moments when He shows us where He is at work and invites us to come and join Him in what He is doing.

We must go back reflecting over and over, especially in those moments of our lives when we are tempted to doubt the Lord's goodness in our dealings, when He does things that are inscrutable, when He does things that break our hearts, when He takes away that which is most precious to us, when it seems to us He gives to His children stone for bread. That is when we must remember this marvelous revelation in His Word. "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion to whom I will show compassion." "I am gracious and merciful. That's what I am, Moses. You want to know what I am really like?" "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest."

It is the auto-revelation of God to Moses.

Verse 19, "And will proclaim the name of the Lord before you." This is God the Preacher saying, "Moses, I am going to preach My name." I am going to preach My character to you, I am going to preach My attributes to you, I'm going to preach My nature to you. I am going to self-reveal who I am to you.

"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show compassion to whom I will show compassion."

God is sovereign, but He is never arbitrary. We can never complain about the way that He administers His justice. Moreover, we can never claim that His mercy to us is based on something in us, because "I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion, I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." His justice is always deserved; His grace is never deserved. To those who are not "in Christ," "God is a consuming fire." The Lord sees us in our utter ruin and depravity, and He chose to have mercy on those who have no claim to it. Grace upon grace, upon grace, and mercy.

Whatever Moses saw of God's holy nature was transformed into a blazing glory of bright light described as "God's back." He never gives us details of what he saw. Moses saw the "afterglow" of God's presence.

When Moses encountered the glory of God restrictions were necessary.

Verse 20, "You cannot see My face, for mankind shall not see Me and live!"

"Face of God"

The "face of God represents the display of His glory. Remember, God does not have a literal face. He is Spirit. Neither does He have arms, feet, legs, hands or other body parts. The Scriptures use anthropomorphic expressions to teach our finite minds truths about our infinite God. He uses elementary terms to teach us about His attributes. He brings it down to our level so we can understand.

This reminds us again that God is incompressible, that He dwells in unapproachable light. Even in our unfallen state we couldn't have come into God's presence. The angels themselves around the throne shield their eyes. There is this refrain you continue to see in the Scriptures. The LORD is a thrice holy God. We hear Jesus say in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts," cried the prophet Isaiah.

We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13:12 can say, "Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then, face to face." And, of course, there's the glorious passage in John 1:14, that tells us, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." That passage is based upon this Exodus 33 text. John is saying nothing less than that in Jesus Christ we have seen the Father's glory.

We have an even greater revelation of the LORD our God. "No man has seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has declared Him." The Lord Jesus has "in Himself all the fullness of the Godhead." He is "the image of the invisible God." The LORD God who is invisible to mortal eyes has become visible to us in the person of His Son, who is the brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of His person. Those who have seen Him have seen the Father.

This was the truth, a mystery that Moses probably did not understand at this time. In Christ, "mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other."

In **John 17:19-21**, our Mediator prays that you would be invested with His glory, that you might be united to God, that you might behold His glory forever. Yet there breaks a far more glorious day, when the saints rise in bright array. And we see the King of Glory in all His beauty and omnipotence. 1 John 3:1-3 becomes more precious to the soul with each passing day.

God enables those whom He calls to see His glory. Do you have a greater desire for a deeper intimacy with God?

Desire for Deeper Intimacy with God.

For forty days Moses had been within the cloud, the earthliness of his nature had been refined, and his whole being was imbued with the light and love of God.

The glory we behold and give back to God is not the incomprehensible, incommunicable glory of the absolute divine perfectness of God. It is reflected glory. It is the beholding of Him with the soul by faith, the perception of Him in His truth by the mind, and feeling Him in His love by the heart.

God's saints are those who press nearer and ever nearer into His secret fellowship. By believing in Him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of grace. By faith we see God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ready and able to reward His people. We rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

The Gospel is a revelation of the "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

We have seen the glory of God.

We have seen the glory of God as we dig deeper into the Word of God. It is not the shallow reading that reveals His glory.

We have seen the glory of God in Christ Jesus in our new birth, and it has changed our hearts. It has renewed us after the very image of our Lord and Savior.

We have seen the glory of God in His atonement with all the perfections of God harmonizing and glorified.

We have been washed in His blood and cleaned of all our defilement.

We have seen Him to be faithful, and just for forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

With each subsequent view of His glory we grow in the work of sanctification being changed into the likeness of Christ from day to day. In this way our progressive sanctification is carried on to perfection. Do we need to see more of the glory of God in our sanctification?

We have seen in Christ how God can be "just and yet the justifier of sinful men."

Christ manifests Himself to the believer as He does not unto the rest of the world.

We have seen Him faithful in His provision for the needs in our lives and our ministries. "My God shall supply all your needs in according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

We have seen Him faithful to give us a sense of His divine presence for ministry. "I can do all thing through Christ who strengthens me."

Yes, we have seen the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 "We all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

A growing, deepening knowledge of God's glory will ignite our hearts with a blazing passion to love Him, and serve Him for His glory.

When once we have been brought into union and fellowship with the Eternal, our thirst for God becomes unquenchable. We want more of Him and His divine presence. We want to make ourselves more and more available to Him. Lord, show me Your Glory!

God's Answer to the Plea

God's used four stages of protection from death.

Exodus 33:22-23 The Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

The Mercy of God Discovered.

The only veil which really dims God to us is the veil of sin and unbelief. When we praise God it is done away in Christ for all who believe in Him as their Savior. "We all, with unveiled face, behold and reflect the glory of the Lord."

Our magnificent Savior has sprinkled the mercy-seat with his precious blood, and offered up the incense of his own prevailing intercession on our behalf.

Christians Reflect the Glory of Christ.

We must gaze directly upon the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ without a veil between. When we pass on to others that glory which we behold, we become transfigured into His likeness.

We are to reflect Jesus, as a mirror reflects and flashes in the light that falls upon it. If there be a veil between the mirror and the sun, there is no possibility of its reflecting the radiant beams. If there is any sin upon our heart which hinders our fellowship with Jesus, there is no possibility of our passing on His beauty. "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants on account of Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:5).

It is the transformation that endures.

The more complete is our view of God, the more firm will be our confidence in Him.

You want a changed life? You want a passion for Christ? You want to grow in His grace and likeness? It begins with the holy desire to see His glory. It begins by laying down our hearts

before Christ. Contemplate Him. Love Him. Think about Him. Let the pure face of Christ shine upon the heart and spirit. He will be formed in you.

Reflect Jesus Christ in every thought, act, and speech.

F. B. Meyer: "The Glory of Christ and the Glory of Moses. The difference between Moses and Christ lies here. When Moses saw the glory, and reflected it, it was only skin-deep, and it died away upon his face. In the case of Jesus the glory did not come from without, but from within; it welled up in fountains and cascades, and issued forth from every pore of the body of His humiliation. You may look upon Jesus from the outside, and only get a transient likeness; whilst if you have fellowship with Him, and He is formed in your heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, you will be transfigured, beginning from the spirit, and passing thence to soul and body. This is perhaps the deepest thought."

Growth in Christ is a lifelong gradual process. We are changed "from glory to glory." This life of contemplation is therefore a life of gradual transformation. The glory which we behold in Christ sinks inward, and changes us as we look into its own image. Spirits that dwell with Christ become like Christ. Don't become impatient. It will take a lifetime.

Our prayer as believers in Christ must become, "Oh Lord, I beg you, show me Your glory!"

Let us have this one desire of the Lord, that we may behold His glory, and exalt His glory for all eternity.

Like King David we can sing:

"God, You are my God; I shall be watching for You;

My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You,

In a dry and exhausted land where there is no water.

So have I seen You in the sanctuary,

To see Your power and glory."