DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE



TEXT SUMMARY

In this week's text, <u>Exodus 34:1-9</u>, we see how Yahweh answers Moses' request to see His glory. There God reveals His glory in His goodness: His mercy and grace, His patience, His faithfulness, His forgiveness of sin, and His justice.

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

- 1. How are the instructions and phenomena in v. 1-5 **similar** to what we saw the first time Moses ascended Sinai to meet Yahweh? How is this time **different**? (Hint: God hewed the first stone tablets.)
- 2. Moses asks to see the **glory** of Yahweh. What two things does God say He will reveal to him (33:19)?
- 3. Our English word "**goodness**" encompasses both **moral** goodness (as opposed to evil) and **interpersonal** goodness (as opposed to unkindness or cruelty). What sort of goodness does Yahweh reveal to Moses?
- 4. In v. 7, there is a contrast between the extent of the faithfulness of God and the extent of His justice. How is this contrast expressed in terms of **generations**?

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

- What proportion of Yahweh's self-descriptors fall into the category of His "interpersonal" goodness? What does this proportion suggest about what is really at the base of His character?
- 2. The words about Yahweh visiting "the iniquity of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" are troubling to our cultural (individualistic) sensibilities. These words are an **echo** from one of the Commandments. If we look at **Ex 20:5**, what more do we learn about how God holds generations accountable for the iniquity of their fathers? (Note the last five words of the verse).

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SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

- 1. Hebrew has different words for sin as we have different words for rain.
 - "Iniquity" refers to our inner corruption, our propensity for sin.
 - "Sin" refers to missing the mark.
 - "Transgression" speaks of the most egregious and deliberate sins.

What kind of offense does Yahweh visit "to the third and fourth generation"?

- What different meaning would that sentence have if it said that God visits the "sins" to the generations?
- Have you seen iniquity passed on from generation to generation in your own family?
- Have you seen generational curses broken in your family line?
- 2. The faithfulness of God is much clearer in retrospect than it is in the moment. When he was languishing in prison in Egypt, Joseph had no idea his suffering was actually a token of God's faithfulness to him and his family. But later he would tell his treacherous brothers, "What you intended for evil, God intended for good, the saving of many lives" (Gen 50:20).
 - Have you ever, like Joseph, detected the faithfulness of God in retrospect, a time when you realized that what had seemed to be unanswered prayer (or even tragedy) was actually part of God's long game to bless you and others?
 - Have you ever shared that story with a younger believer?
- 3. Have you ever experienced an astonishing gesture of mercy, grace, and forgiveness from someone you had wronged?