

Delivered – God Still Moves

4/19/26

Exodus 33-34

Sunday AM

Many years ago, I was a committed gym member. I mean... I signed up, toured the facility, and even bought a matching outfit. So, when I walked in that 1<sup>st</sup> day looking like I belonged, I couldn't help but notice that no one else seemed impressed I was there. No one clapped for me or handed me muscles. And it hit me – just being *around the gym* doesn't actually change you – you actually have to put in the work. Just b/c you scan your card and sit on a machine doesn't equate to getting in shape b/c socializing at the gym never builds muscle. Sadly, this is true of too many people at church. We show up (when it's convenient), sit in a room, hear a lesson – yet never actually step into the God's presence. Yet somewhere deep down, we're asking – does God still move or have we just learned how to be around Him w/out being changed by Him?

This was me so many years ago. Most of you have heard my story, but I need to share it again. I was saved at 12, disciplined well until I was 17 when I sensed being called to the ministry, went off the college and to the mission field where I saw God move powerfully in and thru my life – came back to the U.S. to seminary – and somewhere along the way – lost Jesus at church.

I'm not sure how it happened, but in a short time, I found myself going thru the motions wondering if there was more to this than just being religious?

Then thankfully, God moved powerfully in my life in an inexplicable way. Reminding me that the Christian life is about having an intimate relationship w/ God rather than settling for religious pomp/circumstance that so many people have been conditioned to accept.

**SEE** – God wants and has so much more for us if we will slow down to look for Him in our daily lives. If we'll seek/desire His will/Word over our will/wants.

I think of passages like *who may ascend the hill of the Lord – and seek first the kingdom of God – and cast your care upon Him b/c He cares for you* – and so many more invitations and promises of God inviting us into a relationship instead of a religion.

**Listen** – we don't have to settle for less to have more of God; we only need to look for Him, open our lives to Him – and we'll see/experience that He still moves.

**Too me** – from Exodus 33-40 is a wonderful reminder that God wants to be more than some distant deity – He wants us to **know** Him and be **known** by Him. Yet to be sure – His presence isn't something we drift into. It's something we pursue, encounter, and respond to.

So – today, as we close out our series in Exodus – I want us to focus not only that God is still near but also that He still moves in our lives.

I God Is **NEAR** Enough to Be Known

*Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the “tent of meeting.” Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. And whenever Moses went out to the tent, the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke w/ Moses. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent. The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp 33:7-11*

**Prior to the Tabernacle**, Moses took a tent and set it up outside the camp called the Tent of Meeting – but it wasn't just for Him, but for everyone. This detail matters. Too often, we think God can only speak to someone far more spiritual than us, but the truth is, God wants to draw near to each of us – we just have to be willing to go out to meet Him.

If you want to meet w/ God, we learn from this text (and Matthew 6), that it's prudent to <sup>1</sup> *step away from your routine*, <sup>2</sup> *leave the noise of life behind*, <sup>3</sup> *push aside what seems comfortable*, and <sup>4</sup> *go and seek Him*.

But there's more. Notice what the text says about Mo.

*The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.*

Folks – that isn't distant or even formal – but personal. God spoke to Moses as we might speak w/ a friend. And He does the same w/ us. He's isn't hiding from us; He is inviting us.

**But notice** – we have to respond to the invitation by approaching God as Moses did. He didn't stumble into His presence – **he made space for it**. He stepped away from the daily rat race by prioritizing and pursuing meeting w/ God – and we have to do the same.

I can guarantee you that if you make time for God, you will find Him b/c He wants to be found. Yet this isn't a bi-annual experience at Christmas and Easter. Nor is it whenever my schedule allows. To practice His presence requires daily intentionality.

**DYK** only 7-14% of Americans spend time reading the Bible/praying daily while the primary mechanism for knowing God's will is being in His Word.

**Recently** – 200k people were surveyed on the topic of Bible reading revealed that if a person read their Bible 1-3 times a week, it made little difference, while those who read their Bibles 4x or more – 228% more likely to share their faith and serve; 59% less likely to view pornography; 30% less likely to struggle w/ loneliness; and 50% less likely to experience anxiety.

This truth presses into our lives, b/c we often say we want to experience the presence of God, but if we're being honest, we rarely structure our lives to pursue it. We want closeness w/out carving out time. We want intimacy w/out intentionality. But no one drifts into intimacy w/ God – it has to be pursued. And according to statistics – few people actually pursue His presence.

**Example** – According to Statistics...

- 30% of Americans attend church weekly/bi-weekly
- 10% of Americans attend church monthly
- 20% of Americans attend annually/ bi-annually
- 40% of American attend seldom to never

**Here's the deal** – when the Word and not the world become the focus of your life, you will experience the nearness of God and your life will begin to change for the good and for God.

So – **where is your tent?** When do you step away from everything else to actually seek after to meet w/ God?

## II God Is **HOLY** Enough to Be Feared

*Moses said, "Now show me your glory." 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. But, you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." 33:18-20*

So, as Moses sought God, he asked for something bold – *show me Your glory*. And God said, “Mo, you can’t see My face and live – you can’t handle the truth.”

**Now this is important.** What God was saying is while I’m near – I’m also holy – reminding us there’s weight to God’s presence and a seriousness to who He is.

I think of **Isaiah 6** – when Isaiah also got a glimpse of God and he cried out – *God you are holy, holy, holy*. And then he said – *I am undone*. That is, I’m broken and humble before you. This is b/c the remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear Him, you fear nothing else – instead you’re drawn to him.

It’s like standing near something powerful, like a massive waterfall. At first, it’s beautiful, but the closer you get, the more you realize this isn’t just something to admire – this is something that’s overwhelmingly powerful – a picture of meekness and majesty.

**This is what Moses experienced.** God had taken him to the mountain top to commune w/ him and bring a word to the people – and while there, Moses asked to see God’s glory. Well, knowing His glory was too great for Moses, God had him place his face in the cleft of the rock, covering him – just to allow Moses to get a glimpse of His glory.

One commentator wrote – *even God’s friend couldn’t fully w/stand the presence of God.*

I think we have become too comfortable w/ God often reducing Him to something manageable, predictable, and convenient. But God can’t be managed. No one can reshape God, and neither should we approach Him casually. After all, He is holy, just, good, righteous, and faithful – and we should only come surrendered w/ reverence/awe and w/ a healthy awareness that we are stepping into the presence of a holy God.

I am certain that when we hold these (2) truths together – ***God is near*** and ***He is holy*** – something amazing will begin to happen in our lives b/c God will show up to allow to see His glory and goodness. ***And when God shows up it becomes visible in our countenance.***

## III God Is **AWESOME** Enough to Transform Us

*When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai w/ the two tablets of the covenant in his hands, he wasn’t aware that his face was radiant b/c he had spoken w/ the Lord. When Aaron and the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near.*

This is my favorite part of the close of Exodus. As Moses came down the mountain, although he didn’t realize it – his face was shining. Not b/c he tried or earned it, but b/c he had been w/ God – and it freaked everyone out b/c when a person has had a genuine encounter w/ God and His holiness shows up, it exposes everything and transforms everyone.

Here’s the inescapable truth – ***no one can have a genuine encounter God and remain unchanged.*** And this is where it gets uncomfortable, b/c we’ve created a version of faith where we can attend, serve, and learn, and never actually be transformed.

It's like sitting in a tanning bed w/ the light off. You can stay there all day, but if there's no light, then nothing happens.

Some people have been around spiritual things for years w/out ever stepping into the light of God's presence. B/c transformation doesn't happen thru proximity; it happens thru surrender, obedience, and actually being w/ God. But when it happens, you might not be able to explain it, but others will see it.

They'll see it in your *attitude*, in your *responses*, and in your *priorities*, b/c the when God shows up He always shows out – and it leaves a mark. On the mountain, God turned Moses into a human glow stick.

I think about when Paul/Silas were thrown into a Philippian jail. Instead of complaining, they chose to worship – and God showed up and literally everyone present experience a faith quake – w/ no one leaving the same. His presence changes everyone/thing.

*If any man be in Christ, they are a new creation, the old is gone – behold, all things are made new.*  
2 Corinthians 5:17

And this brings us to the final truth...

IV God is **PRESENT** Enough to Dwell With Us

As we fast forward to Exodus 40, a great deal occurs in Exodus 34-40 – namely, the Tabernacle is designed, built, and inhabited.

A few items God taught me in these pages is that our God is both personal/precise, obedience is the highest form of worship and that excellence is worship.

But as it pertains to how God still moves, I want to focus on Exodus 40:34-38:

*The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses couldn't enter the tent b/c the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud didn't lift, they didn't set out – until the day it lifted. So, the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during their travels.*

So, after everything – the cloud of God's presence descended and His glory stood at the entrance, surrounding and indwelling it. And this changed everything, b/c what was **external** for Moses b/c of the cross has become **internal** for us.

**See** – thru Christ, God no longer dwell in tents – He dwells w/in us. Once we're saved – God indwells and fills us. He indwells us at salvation and fills us when we choose to abide in Him. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the H.S., who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; but have been bought at a price. Therefore, honor God w/ your bodies. 6:19-20*

This means if you belong to Christ, you don't have to go climb a mountain to find Him b/c His presence is already w/in you. The issue isn't proximity; but awareness. God will never be absent. But this doesn't mean that WE can't be distracted or distant.

**The question turns to us.** Are we living aware of His presence and in alignment w/ His will/Word? Are we seeking to abide in the Vine and desiring to live under the influence of the H.S. every day in every way?

For when we walk in the Spirit, just as God descended on the Israelites He descends on us filling us w/ His Spirit so that we *bear fruit in every good work, grow in the knowledge of God, are strengthened w/ His power to have endurance, patience, and gratitude.*

This BTW was Paul's prayer for the Colossians – and for all believers – no just that we're indwelt w/ the H.S. securing our salvation, but also filled w/ H.S. so that our lives are empowered for accomplishing His will. When this occurs – **we will see that God still moves.**

**Truth:** God is near enough to be known, holy enough to be feared, awesome enough to transform, and present enough to indwell – He still moves. He still draws near. He still reveals His glory – and He still changes lives. The question is no longer – does God move? The question is – are you positioning your life to experience His moving?

Have you ever sat around a campfire and experienced the warmth, the light, and the glow? You can feel it, you can see it, you can enjoy it. The closer you get to it – the warmer you feel; while the further you move away, the colder it becomes. Yet, at some point, if you step back far enough, you can still see the fire, but you're no longer experiencing it. This is how many people live spiritually. They can see God from a distance, they know He's there, and even remember what He once felt like, but they've drifted – and now they're just close enough to recognize it, but not close enough to be transformed by it.

Yet God hasn't moved or changed. His power and presence haven't diminished or faded. The fire is still burning. The question is – how close are you willing to get to experience and enjoy God so that you don't just know about Him but know Him intimately? B/c God still moves and He wants to move in your life?