Chapter 33

Exodus 33:1-6

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Depart and go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'

And I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."

And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.

For the Lord had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'"

So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.

This chapter is a continuation of the discussion Moses is having with the Lord on the mountain. God commissions him to lead the people to the promised land. He explains that they will have success over their enemies and be given a land that flows with milk and honey, but that the Lord Himself will not be traveling with them because of the rebellious nature of the people.

God is declaring that He won't be traveling in fellowship with Israel as they journey to the Land.

Instead He promises to send an angel as a guide. They will arrive at their destination but will not enjoy communion with God along the way.

This brings up an interesting point regarding the presence of God.

We know that it is impossible to escape His presence

Psalms 139:7-12

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I

say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.

**There is no hiding from God**, even in our darkest places He is there. That does not mean that we are also experiencing fellowship with God.

Even Satan had access to the throne room of God

Job 1:6

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

Remember **Nathanael's** first encounter with Jesus? Jesus referred to knowing what Nathanael was doing under the fig tree, but there was clearly no fellowship happening between him and God since Nathanael did not even know he was bein watched

John 1:48

Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

Clearly there are levels of fellowship with God.

A person can know God but not currently be in fellowship with God

It is also possible to be in an intimate fellowship with God.

Jesus spoke often of eternal life. When He defined it He said

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

**Paul** spoke of His greatest desire in life

Philippians 3:7-8

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

Philippians 3:10

that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

David echoed the same thing when He wrote

Psalms 27:4

One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple.

In contrast Solomon's great desire was for wisdom to become a great leader. Had he desired a little more intimacy than the prestige that comes with wisdom he may not have wandered so far from the Lord

Although He won't be traveling with them, God promises the to give israel victory over their enemies and a land of plenty.

This proves to be unacceptable to both Moses and the people. They determine to repent of their actions and recommit themselves to the Lord. This is successful and leads to the Lord journeying with them

We read that they stripped themselves of their ornaments.

This was a sign of repentance

Paul spoke of true and false repentance:

2Cor 7:9-11 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner,

that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Sorrow and repentance are linked but are different. It is possible to be sorrowful and not repent. In many cases we encounter people who are very sad that they sinned, but go right back to their sinful behavior.

True repentance evidences itself with change. Paul speaks of a person who repents having diligence, indignation toward sin, fear of God and great zeal for the Lord.

**Sadly this is not always our response.** Many would be content with the victories and the blessings and care little about the presence of God.

What does your prayer life consist of? Are you asking for the Lord to do things on your behalf, to make you bigger, faster and stronger or are you fellowshipping with the Lord. The purpose of prayer is communion more than industry. We speak of laboring in prayer but seldom speak of sweet fellowship at the throne of Grace. When is the last time you sat at His feet with no more of an agenda than to commune?

If you have a goal that can be reached without the presence of God then you have the wrong goal.

## Exodus 33:7-11

Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp.

So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle.

And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses.

All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door.

So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

Moses set his tent as the tabernacle of meeting and along with others who desired to meet with the Lord he frequented the presence of God.

It is worth noting that it was here, not on the battlefield that Joshua was being prepared to take over upon Moses's death. If we want to prepare for what is ahead we do so in our quiet time as we reflect upon the Lord and His word.

Moses had to erect a tent as the tabernacle of meeting. We are that tabernacle

1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

It is true that we can meet with God anywhere, but it is also true that those who speak of meeting God anywhere often don't meet with Him at all.

Do you have a place where you meet with God daily? A spot that is reserved for fellowship with Him. It does not have to be a chair that you only sit in for devotions but it should be a place where you meet daily.

It is a good idea to make our homes the meeting place. Occasionally someone will come by the church during the week just to sit in the sanctuary and pray. This is a blessing to see, and we encourage it, but not at the expense of your own home being the tabernacle.

You should be establishing a daily meeting place between you and the Lord.

- •Ps 63:1 It should be early
- Matt 6:7 Get alone with God
- •Ezra 7:10 seek to get to know the Word and put it in practice.
- Take time to read, pray and have something to take with you and put into practice each and every day

### Exodus 33:9

And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses.

# Exodus 33:11

So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

We learn that Moses frequented the tabernacle often, that he was involved in worship, that he spoke with God and listened to His voice and that he set his life as a pattern for others to follow.

This is a good diagram for a quiet time. We should set aside time daily for worship prayer and reading the Word and we should set the example for others in our family.

A few years ago I heard chuck Norris share his testimony. He spoke of how his wife had come to Christ and began to read her Bible daily. It was her daily devotions that drew him to look at the Bible and to give his life to Christ.

How many times have we heard testimony from adults who come to Christ and speak of a mother who rose early to pray for her children or a grandmother with a worn out Bible?

One of the benefits of frequenting the presence of God is receiving daily direction for living. Moses is not alone, many in scripture spent time with God and received direction for their lives

- Abraham, whose life was marked by altars
- Joshua, who grew up as a disciple of Moses and moved his house to the tabernacle

- David, whose life is marked by devotion
- Paul, who seems to hear clearly from God for life and ministry

Then there is Saul who refused to seek the Lord and when he most needed God's voice it was silent to him

We often complain about not knowing what God wants from us but we fail to spend time with Him for direction. We end up like Saul asking others for what only God can reveal to us. We are happy to pray with you as you seek to discover the will of God for your life, but that is something that you can only truly determine as you frequent the throne of Grace and learn to seek His face

### Exodus 33:12-23

Then Moses said to the Lord, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.'

Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people."

And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.

For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth."

So the Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.

So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

This brings us to one of the encounters between Moses and God that took place in the tabernacle of meeting. Moses will petition God for two things.

**FIRST** 

Exodus 33:13

Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, **show me now Your way**, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people."

Moses desires to know the way of God. In reality He is asking for God to be their guide as they walk through the wilderness. We have already seen that it was unsatisfactory to Moses that they be led by an Angel. He wants to be led by the Lord.

The psalmist spoke regarding the leading of the Lord.

Psalms 32:8-9

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

I will guide you with My eye.

Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding,

Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you."

I am not a farmer and do not have a lot of experience with either horses or mules. With my limited knowledge I have observed that bits are used in horses for an entirely different reason than they are used in mules. Horses want to run free, they must be broken and the harness and bit are to keep them from running off on their own. Mules are stubborn, they are not known for running off but for standing still. The bit and harness is used on the mule to get them going. While I do not have a lot

of experience with horses and mules, I have spent lots of time with Christians and it seems to me that we are by nature a lot like either the horse or the mule. Some of us have the tendency to run off ahead. We are the self reliant, the ones who are constantly thinking that we can handle things and forgetting our need to cling to the Lord. Others of us are more mule like, we are the ones who tend to sit back always aware of our own weaknesses and those weaknesses keep us from venturing out into what God would have us to do.

The instruction the Lord gives to David is for all of us. It does not matter what your natural tendencies are we must learn not to trust in self but to look to the Lord. God does not want to lead us as if we were a domesticated animal. Instead He wants to lead us with His eye. That can mean one of two things. First it can mean that He is giving us signals with His eyes. My wife does that periodically. If we are in a group of people and she wants to talk to me she may signal me with her eyes. The key is that I must be looking carefully at her to get it. God wants our eyes on Him. If we are going to be led by the Lord our eyes must be fixed upon Him. The writer to the Hebrews stated;

### Hebrews 12:2

"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

I think the illustration can mean something else as well. Guiding is with His eyes is only possible when we look at things through His eyes. I can remember sitting with some friends in the mountains on a clear night. The stars were so bright and vivid that our attention was drawn up. One of my friends is an armature astronomer, so he began to explain the various constellations to us. I was having a very difficult time locating the beginning point of one of them so he stood next to me and pointed up. I looked at the stars through His eyes and was able to see what he saw. To be guided with His eye is to look at things through God's eyes. We do that by becoming familiar with His Word. We will only know what God thinks when we spend time reading what He has to say. It has become all too common in our world for us to imagine what God wants

based upon personal experience instead of looking into His Word and seeing life through His eyes. Instead of looking at life through the eyes of culture, experience, trial, pain, sorrow, ambition, fear, want or worry lets look at things through the eyes of God and allow Him to lead us.

If we want to know the ways of God we need to look at life through the filter of His word.

What filter are you using?

**SECOND** 

Exodus 33:18

And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

Moses is not satisfied with simply knowing the ways of God it is his desire to know God. This is the loftiest prayer ever recorded, but is one that is often repeated. Every time a person cries out to know God or frequents there devotion chair and seeks the God of Scripture they are repeating the request of Moses. His prayer is to see the glory of God.

Within the text the word glory is used synonymously with the word "name" and the word "goodness." Essentially Moses is asking to know God. It is not because he did not know Him. Moses met him in the stories his mother told him as a child, later at the burning bush and had frequent encounters with Him ever since. We watched as he spent 40 days on the mountain with God and even turned his home into the tabernacle. Moses' request is to know God better. This should be our desire as well. Paul in his prayer for the Ephesians church capsulized this concept when he wrote,

Ephesians 1:17

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

The word "knowledge" is the word used by Jesus to describe eternal life with the prefix "epi" together this word means to have a deeper fuller knowledge of God. The Ephesians had met God at the cross and walked with Him for some

time, what they needed was to get to know Him better. This is done through spending time in the word **and** putting the word into practice in your life.

An expert on accounting is not someone who reads a bunch of books on accounting but one who knows how to put the truths of those books into practice within a family or company

# God has a plan for revealing Himself.

Moses must hide behind a rock as the goodness of God passes before him. This is a good illustration of how God has revealed Himself to us in Christ.

We cannot see God, so He wrapped Himself in human skin to hide some of His nature that we might be able to grasp who He is.

If Moses wanted to see God he had to hide in the rock. If we want to see God we must look at Christ. He alone reveals the Father and we cannot know God apart from Him.

1 Corinthians 10:4 (ESV)

and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

John 10:30 (ESV)

I and the Father are one."

Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)

For to us a child is born,

to us a son is given;

and the government shall be upon his shoulder,

and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of

Matthew 1:23 (ESV)

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,

and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us).

John 14:9-10 (ESV)

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not

### Hebrews 1:3

who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

# Chapter 34

This chapter will focus on the fulfillment of Moses' prayer and God's promise to reveal Himself

Exodus 34:1-4

And the Lord said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke.

So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain.

And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain."

So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.

God instructs Moses to cut two new tablets of stone. Although the commandments of God were broken they are indestructible. Jesus said heaven and earth will pass away but the word of God will never fail.

Moses is then instructed to come up to the top of Sinai on the following day.

On the following morning Moses rose early and with tablets in hand made his way up Sinai and hid in a cleft of the rock. God then passed before him and revealed Himself to Moses.

# Exodus 34:5-7

Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

This is what God wants Moses to declare to the people regarding who He is. He is not angry with them, nor does He want to destroy them. He wants them to know that He is a God of goodness, mercy and grace

Notice how God was revealed, what is revealed about Him and the affect if had upon Moses

# HOW

**God proclaimed His name.** This is always the case. God reveals Himself through His Word. If we want to get to know God it must be done through revelation. It is dangerous to look at God through the filter of experience, emotion or imagination, when we do we become guilty of the same sin referred to in Romans one

Romans 1:23

and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Building our theology apart from the bible causes us to change the glory of God into something He is not

## WHAT

As God passes before Moses, He declares 9 things about Himself

**LORD God** - he is the almighty God. Nothing is too hard for Him. He is the one who is omnipotent over nature, disease and death. He is the one who created the laws that govern nature but is the only one who is not subject to these laws. We see this in the life of Jesus who defied gravity when He walked on water and the laws of thermodynamics when He created new matter to feed the 5,000

**MERCIFUL** - this speaks of the compassion of God. Compassion is to be moved by pity. It is more than feeling sorry for someone but speaks of being moved to action by their condition. It is perhaps best illustrated by Christ when His compassion moved Him to touch a leper and cleanse him of the disease and its effects. It is mercy that stirred Him to redeem us from our sins

From our perspective mercy is not getting what we deserve. It is highlighted at the cross where we are pardoned for our sin.

David spoke of the benefits that are ours because of mercy

Psalms 32:2

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

**Gracious** - Grace refers to the giving nature of God and is the source of all that pours out from Him. His throne is called the throne of grace and from it we can receive all that is necessary for walking with and serving Christ. Whatever is missing we can go to throne and He will pour out grace for us. The gifts of the spirit that are given to the child of God for Christian service are called "charis" in Greek literally meaning "graces"

From heaven's perspective grace refers to the giving nature of God

From our perspective grace refers to getting what we do not deserve.

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

**Long suffering** - We have seen this aspect of God's nature already expressed numerously in Israel's journey from Egypt. Time and time again they have faltered in faith only to be met with the long suffering of God.

After being redeemed from Egypt they faltered in faith at the Red Sea, when they reached the bitter waters of Mara, when the food source ran low, when they were parched in the desert and when Moses delayed his return from Sinai. And this long suffering will not be extinguished here. They will experience the patient hand of God down through the centuries. It is important to keep in mind that their story is our story in many ways. The thousand year history of Israel from Egypt to Babylon is an illustration of the life time of the believer. As His patience did not dun out on hem it will not run out on us. This does not mean that we will not suffer consequences of turning from God and embarking upon sin.

**Good** - this is the part of the nature of God that the psalmist lost sight of and was close to walking away from the Lord.

Psalms 73:1-2

Truly God is good to Israel,

To such as are pure in heart.

But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped.

Later upon entering the house of the Lord he would come to realize the goodness of God

James tells us that all that is good stems from the hand of God. He will not give what is bad. All that He forbids is by nature bad

Since the garden Satan has been attacking the goodness of God. His questioning it led to Eve's rebellion. The same is true today. Whenever something does not go our way the devil is there to call into question the goodness of God.

Truthful - Paul explains that it is impossible for God to lie

Titus 1:2

in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

More than that this means His promises are unbreakable. There is no force on earth strong enough to break the promises of God. We often fail to realize this because we do our best to create an environment where we do not have to rely on God. We want financial security, good health, comfortable living conditions, a safe environment and control over every area of our life. It is however when we get outside of those borders we have imposed for ourselves that we really get a chance to see the promises of God come into effect. Without the marching of Egypt's army Moses would have never know a sea could part

**Merciful** - this is a different word in Hebrew and speaks of the kindness of God. This is revealed in the loving way He cares for us. Isaiah put it this way

Isaiah 40:11

He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

**Forgiving** - this will be expressed in many ways throughout scripture but it finds its ultimate expression in the cross where Jesus paid our debt for us

**Just** - although forgiveness is offered if it is refused justice must be meted out. We see this clearly in the judgment that fell upon Israel for the golden calf incident. 3,000 people died that day but it was not necessary for any to die.

The same truth is seen I the cross. Jesus agonized in the garden because He would be bearing sins penalty upon the cross. It was there that He encountered the wrath of God and paid for sin. It is only when a reason rejects the work of Christ that they are destined to pay the penalty themselves.

THE AFFECT

Exodus 34:8-9

So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped.

Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

Moses bowed, worshipped and prayed

- o Go among us
- o Pardon our sin
- o Take us as your inheritance

This is one of the great truths of Scripture. We are the inheritance of God. Paul put it like this

Ephesians 1:18

the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Christ paid our debt so we could belong to God. We are His prize.

### Exodus 34:29-35

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.

So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them.

Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai.

And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.

But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded.

And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

There is one final result of Moses' encounter with the Lord. His face glowed. Shone means to shoot out rays, like the sun bursting forth from the clouds. We should not expect to glow in the dark as a result of having a daily quiet time, but we should expect to be transformed by time spent with Jesus.

# It happened for the apostles

Acts 4:13

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

# And it happens for us

It is actually a spiritual law that cannot be broken. We become like what we worship.

# Psalms 115:4-7

Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat.

We even see this on the playground when our children and there friends begin to talk, dress and act alike

# BACK UP THE MOUNTAIN.

All in all Moses spent another 40 days on the mountain with the Lord. In addition to the encounter where the goodness of God passed before him he also received further instruction regarding the nation and their consecration to YHWY