

The Face of Glory **Exodus 34:29-35**

Introduction:

- One of the most distinct memories I have of camp was this one time, I was playing some background music for the speaker while he was doing an altar call. So, with the altar call, some of you might already know how this goes, but usually a camp speaker will give a Gospel invitation and ask Students if they would like to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior and then there's an invitation to recommit your life to Christ. Now I've been to camp almost every year since I got saved back in 2000...and this particular year might have had the most responses for Salvation. What happens is we have all the counselors stand around the room and if a student wanted to be Christian, they would go and find their counselors. Usually we have about half our counselors left but this time pretty much all the counselors had a student in their group go up to them. Of course, after the salvation offer comes the "recommitment" call and what happened next, I don't think I can ever forget. After the salvation offer, no counselors were left so we had to just improvise a bit. The speaker had asked the students to stand up where that were if they would like to recommit their lives to Christ. Once the speaker told the campers to stand up, I remember literally the whole room stood up from their seats...maybe about 10 students stayed in their seats. It was a crazy scene.
- Could you imagine what would have happened with that generation of students if all 180 students were still committed to Christ and lived for the Glory of God? Not being a pessimist here, but I would say that a lot of those recommitments were not kept. I think we know how recommitments go. Maybe you have made a few of those in your youth days.
- For us, we break every commitment, every promise we have made with God. I know you're probably like..."what an introduction...starting off on a high note here." Well, this is where we turn our eyes to God and His awesomeness. The awesome thing is that God will never break His commitment, His promises, and His covenant with us. What's even better is that even though know God knows we will break the covenant, He continues to make a covenant with sinful people.
 - It's like when you got married, the wife goes, husband to be, I know you will cheat on me, I know I will get nothing but the worst from you, but I still make this covenant with you.
- That's what we see here in the last two chapters. Chapters 32-34 goes together in Exodus. The people made an idol, breaking the covenant with God. God then says, you go on ahead, but I will not go with you. You don't want me, so I won't go. Even when Moses starts to make a plea for the people, the tent of meeting is off in the distant. The story continues here.
- The people were waiting in anticipation for a response from God. Last week, we heard about God renewing His covenant with sinful people. But in this point in the story, the people have not heard it yet. Moses is still on top of the mountain but this time He doesn't come down to the people making a god for themselves, rather they are waiting to hear from God at this point in Exodus. The reader knows God has told Moses He is renewing the covenant but the people have not.
- So, what we will look at today is this story about Moses' face shining and how this was a sign of God's covenant renewed. And from this we can know what God is telling the Israelites through his covenant with them, and ultimately, His covenant with us through the new covenant. We see three things: My presence is here with you, this is my glory that you get to see, and you get access to me. And we will see how, even though the old covenant was good and great, the new covenant is even greater.

Old Covenant

God's presence has returned:

- The first thing we can know from God's covenant is His presence is with his people once again. Here we see that Moses is coming down from the mountain again. With two tablets in his hand. Most likely two identical tablets. We usually think like commandments 1-5 on one tablet and 6-10 on the other. BUT We know this is a covenant because when a treaty was made with a King, a copy is made for him and the other for you. Like with any transaction you make these days, all parties get a copy of the forms. God has returned to His people.
- As Moses comes down, he doesn't realize that there's something going on with his face. It was only made known to him because the people would not approach him. They were afraid. Just imagine you had some food on your face or in your teeth...most of the time you don't know what's going on but maybe you're talking with someone and they just keep staring or maybe they make some sort of face. Kind of what's happening. Moses only finds out from the people's response.
- The question now is, what is actually going on with Moses' face?? We don't actually know what is happening. There are two thoughts as to what is going on here.
- We read that Moses' face shone three times in this passage. Verse 29: "Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone..." Verse 30: "...the skin of his face shone..." Finally, verse 35: "...the skin of Moses' face was shining." The verb that's translated as "shone" or "shining" is the Hebrew word "qaran". Q-A-R-A-N. So there may be some sort of light or glow was happening.
- Second, there is a related word, "qeren" Q-E-R-E-N. Qaran is a verb; qeren is a noun. QEREN means "horn." Some have thought that word here is not "to shine," but "to be horned." Some would read this passage and believe that Moses would actually have horns on his head. If you have seen those commercials for the recent movie, Hellboy, it's kind of like that.
 - You can actually google "Michelangelo's Moses" and see a statue of Moses with horns.
- Now it is most likely that there was some sort of glow, some light coming from Moses's face. We don't know but what we can know for sure though, and the first thing that God wants us to know from His renewed covenant is that God has returned to his people.
- God spoke to Moses, and Moses' face shined. God is there. He isn't just going to send them ahead and not go with them. If you read after Exodus 34, The Israelites can move on from this episode of breaking the covenant and having God sending them on their way themselves. The Israelites get to finish building the tabernacle! God is dwelling among them again.
- So, this is the first thing that we can see from this passage.

Glimpses of God's glory

- The second thing, and a big thing, that happens in the story is Moses putting on a veil to cover his face. What is up with this veil? Again, there's not much to go off on to let us know more about this veil.
- The veil could have been a mask, or a sheer piece of fabric like a bride wears, or maybe a cloth that covered everything but his eyes.
- We're not sure how long he wore this veil for...like when did he stop? After a month? A few years? But we do know when he would wear it. After coming down from the mountain, he calls the people to him, first the leaders approach him and then the rest of the people. After Moses speaks with the people, sharing with them what God has said, that's when Moses first put on this veil. And then there is a pattern.
- Every time Moses would enter into God's presence and talk to Him, Moses would take off the veil. Then Moses would go speak to the people and then put on a veil after He finishes speaking with the people until he goes back into God's presence. So there this pattern. Speaks to God, no veil. Speaks to the people, no veil. Finishes speaking and puts on veil.

- Again, even though we know when Moses would put on a veil, but as to why he did this, we don't know. The story doesn't give us the purpose the veil served. We don't know the reason why He wore it BUT we know what the veil did. It covered up the Glory of God. You can see my Glory through him. But God's glory was covered..it was just a glimpse.
- We know that this is the Glory of God because when Moses went to speak God, his face would change, it would shine. Moses had been with God and it showed. His face changed because of the Glory of God. It reflected God's Glory. One reason we can know this is because Moses was rejected the first time when we went up the mountain. The people got restless when Moses was up the mountain the first time. So this time, God wanted to affirm that Moses is to be their leader. God is showing the people, I am with Moses.
- He is the man I am appointing. Moses was God's appointed leader for them. And at this point Moses was the only one who stood between God and the people. This leads us to the third thing we can know about this old covenant.

Only a mediator has access

- Moses was the only one who stood between the people, He was the only one who had direct access to God:
- 34:³⁴ Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded
- As we mentioned before, we don't know how long Moses the pattern of wearing the veil, but we know that it continued. The verse says, "Whenever Moses went in before the Lord"...Moses goes back and forth between God and the people. No one else.
- This doesn't just happen here. This had already been happening. Back in Exodus 19, the people were saying, Moses, you go talk to God for us. Even with the construction of the tabernacle, not just anyone could enter into the Holy of Holies. There was no direct access for all people.
- If the people heard anything from God, it had to happen through Moses. The people did not hear from the people directly.

Transition

- But praise God this isn't how you and I interact with God today. As good as the old covenant was, there is something greater for us as we live in the age of the New Covenant that Christ has brought. As you can probably see already from the outline the new covenant is better in every way.

New Covenant

God's Promised Presence

- Please turn to 2 Corinthians Chapter 3. Some of you probably knew we were heading to this passage. The first thing we need to know about the New covenant is God's promised presence. God is not only here, but He's here to stay.
- With the old covenant, even though God had returned and renewed the covenant, the people weren't sure what would happen if they were to fail again. What would be the results if they broke this renewed covenant? And if we continue in the narrative of the OT, we know that eventually, the Glory of God in the form of the cloud leaves the temple because of the people disobedience. Once again, God's presence has left them, and it was gone and left the people waiting HUNDREDS of years.
- But if we look at 2 Corinthians 3:3 (Read), The Spirit of the living God changes our hearts. The Spirit of God is in us. He works within us. 3:6 says that He gives us life.
- Lately, I've been trying to encourage the youth TO THINK MORE about the Cross of Christ more and think about the cross of Christ more. Somehow, even though we know that we are

saved by grace and not by works, we still believe that God might still abandon us if we do something wrong or believe that He has abandoned us because we've been living a certain way. We need to think more about the Cross of Christ. We tend to think less about the cross.

- If you have believed that God would abandon you because of something you have done, or that He would love you less because of some moral failures, then you think less of the cross. There's a belief there that believes the cross was too weak to overcome and gain victory over the sin that God has abandoned you for.
- The cross of Christ has given us the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God dwells within you. He has tabernacled here with us...not out there. May you believe that God has not abandoned you and will NOT abandon you. The Spirit doesn't come into you, works in your heart...and says...this heart is too hard to work with and leave. He does not give up on you. The Spirit of God cannot leave you. That is God's promise to you.

Fullness of God's Glory in the Face of Christ

- Just as God's promised and permanent presence is great in the New covenant, the Glory of God is no more veiled in the new Covenant.
- In the new covenant, we get to see the Fullness of God's glory in the Face of Christ. In 2 Cor 3:14-18 (read) – although in Exodus 34, we didn't know the purpose of the veil, Paul here uses the example of the veil to describe what happens for us who are in Christ. For someone who has not (vs16) turned to the Lord, there is still a veil...something that blocks you from seeing the Glory of God COMPLETELY. But someone who "turns to the Lord, the veil is removed."
- We don't see only glimpses of God's glory any more. We see the Fullness of God in Christ.
 - Colossians 1:15 – He is the image of the invisible God
 - Colossians 1:19 – the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.
 - John 1:14 – The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- "The biggest need in your life is to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
- Can I hope to encourage those who in here are feeling dry? Who FEEL like God has abandoned them? Or maybe you don't know who God is and you're searching for something...searching for truth...really anyone in here because all of our souls long for the Glory of God.
- You know...I've been so thrown off by the song "As the Deer." It's such a nice song. It flows. It's gentle. You sing that to a baby when you're trying to get the baby to go to sleep. But it's not like that.
 - Psalm 42 – As the Deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God. My tears have been my food day and night...There is nothing nice and gentle about this song
- Bambi in the Desert. Without Christ...Without gazing into the face of Christ...we're like Bambi in the desert. All of our souls are longing for more...and it will always long for more if you aren't filling yourself with Christ. You long for the Glory of God and gazing at the things of the earth will not give you the Glory of God...only Christ.
- I imagine gazing at the world and taking in the things of this world is like eating mud pies. Now I don't mean that dessert, but there's actually people in Haiti eating these "cookies" made out of mud. It's s real thing. In my notes that will be posted, I have a link to a video about these mud cookies.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3337cj4sJQ>
- When you and I gaze at the things in this world, it's like eating these mud cookies...it's empty, hallow, it's so unsatisfying...is leaves our souls longing for the Glory of God like a thirsty bambi in the desert.

- We get to gaze into the face of Christ and see God's Glory...everything that you've been longing for. Your biggest need.
- Just to be clear...WE get to gaze. You get to look. You're not seeing God through another person. And that's our last point.

Christ provides access for all believers

- All believers have access. In Exodus, Moses was the messenger, but You and I don't need a messenger any more. You don't need to wait to hear what God says through another person. You can go directly to God Himself. 2 Corinthians 3:3 says "We ALL, with unveiled faces"
- You have access to God. It's a simple truth, but I hope you see the deep benefits from it. Not only do we get to see Christ...but you have to see what happens when we gaze upon Christ...2 Corinthians 3:18...we are transformed into the same image. Just as Moses spoke with God and was changed. Deyoung – "We become what we behold."
- Do you show any signs of having been often in the presence of God? How many of us radiate something of having been with the Lord? Just like Moses, He spoke with God and his face changed. To go even further...now that you have access to God directly, Are you being changed by sermons/Sunday School/Small group more? Or has the most growth happened in your life from being with God in your times with Him directly? What we do in here, in those classrooms...as important as they are, what happens at home will be most vital in your growth in God. If you aren't growing and being transformed at home, then it's probably not happening here.
- Some time ago, I came across this old scrap book. This was from the first time I had left to go to school. And I started to read through it. I think it also had some E-grams from camps. A lot of the notes and e-grams had said things like..."Thanks for your passion for God...it's very contagious"...not those exact words but something to that extent. I'm not trying to toot my own horn here because it got me thinking, I don't think things like that have been written about me recently. There was something visible in my life before and I think more recently it hasn't been as obvious.
- Over the years, I believe that I have been caught up in the worries of ministries, pressures, expectations of ministry, rather than the God of the Ministry...rather than the Glory of God. -- Pastor Fred challenges me, before I start work, pray for 10 minutes. Go to God.
- If we behold God, then people will see our Passion for Him. We become what we behold. Have you been beholding God? Have you been looking at the Face of Christ? Or maybe we've been caught up with so much Netflix, our access to social media has overshadowed our access to God. Our pleasure in these things we hold in our hands will come out in our lives. It will show that they are more pleasurable.

Not only is God here to stay, but His glory in Christ is what we need, and we can run straight into His presence to gain all that our souls are longing for.