

# For The Glory Of It All Seeing His Glory

## Lesson 1

### Discussion Starters:

1. Can you recall a time in your life when you have experienced God and his holiness?
2. Can you recall understanding him in a fresh way?
3. Have you ever felt the presence of the Lord and seen his glory?
4. What does the glory of the Lord look like and how do you recognize Him in your life and others?

### Introduction

For the next four weeks, we will be discussing the Glory of the Lord and our experience with Him face to face. We will see the God of holiness and power. We will experience an encounter with Him, see his radiance, feel His presence and give Him glory. Through the study of his Word, may we come to a better understanding of who He is and be drawn to Him. In our fresh encounter with Him, may we glorify God together as a group as He allows us to see Him and understand His amazing Glory.

### Focal Passage

*<sup>12</sup>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 favor in my sight.' <sup>13</sup>Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." <sup>14</sup>And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." <sup>15</sup>And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. <sup>16</sup>For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" <sup>17</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." <sup>18</sup>Moses said, "Please show me your glory." <sup>19</sup>And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. <sup>20</sup>But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." <sup>21</sup>And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, <sup>22</sup>and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. <sup>23</sup>Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."*

### Exodus 33:12-23

## Background

In this passage, Moses has just returned to the mountain to plead for the people of Israel, who had fallen into complete unfaithfulness during his extended time with the Lord. Just one chapter earlier we found them building a golden calf to worship because they wanted a god, any god, to worship while their leader was away. This sinful act leads Moses to anger, and yet He pleads for his people and asks forgiveness for them. But even though God is filled with wrath towards His people, he still continues to feed Moses, instructing him how best to lead them. God encourages them to go to that Land He has promised, but the tragedy is he will not go with them.

Moses spends time with God in the “Tent Of Meetings” and it is written that this time is spent “face to face,” meaning they talked as friends. Moses asked for a guide, pleading for the presence of the Lord to join him. Moses had many one-on-ones with the Lord and encounters where God allowed him to see his glory. In this passage, on the heels of Israel’s sin, I see Moses longing to get even closer to God and be drawn in to experience his presence in a fresh way. He wanted to reach the next level of intimacy, longing to see Gods glory in a way he had not before experienced it.

Is that our desire, to see his glory and to go deeper with Him to a place we have not gone before? Do we have the desire to allow the glory of the Lord to shine around us? Or do we disengage from that thick presence of Lord for fear it will require something from us? Maybe it would require going to a place we are not willing to go, a place that scares us away up because it is far too intimate.

In this passage Moses, is begging for the presence of God to go with him. He is longing is to see God in a way he has not before. He desperately desires that experience. He begs for the Lord not to leave, but to show His glory.

God had already:

- Called Moses
- Shown Himself and His mission with a burning bush
- Used Moses to bring Israel out of Egypt
- Parted the Red Sea and allowed Moses to be seen as the people’s leader
- Spoken to Moses and given him The Ten Commandments
- Given him a team to support his ministry
- Continued to give Moses instruction for His people

In this passage, Moses desires *even more*. He wanted the security of knowing the God of the universe who has come down hard on the Israelites for their sin of worshipping a false idol. He wanted to know that he would not be left. This would give him security and comfort as he led God’s people.

## Commentary and Lesson

In verse 12, we see Moses asking God for a little more security about who will go with him into this new land. He struggles with the fact that God has told him to go, but not told him who will go with him.

In verse 13 – 14, he is looking for favor that is only found in Him. Moses wants the Lord to not leave him because of the people, even as he continues to fight for Israel. He promises rest.

Verse 15 -16 says, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.” Moses pleaded with God not to send them away from Mt. Sinai if his constant presence would not go with them. He pleaded without demanding, asking the Lord how others will know they are God’s people if God’s presence does not go with them. He will use this same approach later in Numbers 14:13-16. Moses’ plea also poses the question of how anyone will see God’s greatness and experience God’s glory if He does not come with Israel. Basically, he is telling God that because He has claimed them, His glory is shown to others through them. He did not want to undertake this exodus without the Lord making a way.

In verse 17 we see the favor of the Lord on Moses. He says “This very thing you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” They have a special relationship and because of his prayerful petition, God would send more than an angel. He would personally go with them.

In verse 18 we see Moses ask to see God in all His glory. Why would he ask this? Had he not already seen His glory in the past? The fact is, he had seen and experienced His glory, but he longed to see it again. Seeing God’s glory gave Moses confidence on his new journey. It also brought a fresh, new closeness to he and the Lord’s already special relationship.

In verses 19-20, we see God would bringing Moses as close as He could to experiencing the goodness and presence of the Lord without showing Him more than he could handle. As we know, no one can see the Lord’s face or he will die.

In verse 21-23 we see that God explaining that while Moses’ experience of seeing the Lord in passing would be extraordinary, it would also be limited. In the same way we do not see much of a person when we only see them from the back. That is the same way Moses would experience God. In the Hebrew idiom, however, to see only the back and not to see the face means, in effect, seeing virtually nothing. The place in which the Lord put Moses - the cleft of the rock - can only be identified as the site of Mt. Sinai. This is the same place where God had met Moses in the past. God not only says, I will hide you in the cleft of the rock, he also says, “I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.” This showed his provision and protection.

## Application

In this passage we see the true desire of Moses to experience a fresh encounter with the Lord. The Lord told Moses to take the people to the place He had promised them. But He also told them He would not go with them. Moses pleads with the Lord and the Lord says His presence will go with the Israelites. This gives Moses security about the leadership role he has been given, especially after what we learn from the passage in Exodus 32 about the idolatry the Israelites were struggling with. This allowed Moses and his people to see the Lord had truly forgiven them and would go before them to face their enemy and lead them to the place He had prepared for them. This would also be the example to others of the true glory of God.

Moses asked God to show him His glory and the Lord agreed to show him the back of Himself and all of His goodness would pass by him. The Lord was good to Moses to give him this closeness again and again. Even though he had experienced Him, he desired to see Him again in His complete glory.

In Psalm 126 we see a similar situation to that of our focal passage. When the Israelites were going to worship in Jerusalem, they sing a Psalm of Ascent thanking God for the good things He has done. The Lord had brought them out of captivity. They are praising the Lord and saying, "He has done great things." Then we see the people ask for God to do it again in Psalm 126:4 "Restore our fortunes like streams in the Negeb!" What they are really saying was "do it again!" Just as Moses was saying I have seen your glory, but do it again, God. Show me your glory today.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What was Moses pleading with God about in this passage?
2. Why did he ask to see God's glory?
3. When was a time in your life where you can recall experiencing God's glory? Can you recall how it happened and where you were?
4. What is our part in seeing and experiencing God's glory?
5. Are you willing to allow His presence to fill your life? What would we have to give up? Is there anything we must change in order to experience a fresh encounter with God, just like Moses?
6. Seeing the glory of the Lord should be our greatest desire. What desires get in the way of that desire?

Break into groups of 3-4 and discuss one thing you will take away from this lesson and pray for each other to experience God and His glory as we grow together in groups and through our worship services over the next few weeks.

-Tanya McAvoy