

“Responding to God’s Glory”
Exodus 34:8-9
(Preached at Trinity, June 28, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 33** Moses asked a most audacious request from God.
Audacious - bold or daring; recklessly brave, unrestrained
Exodus 33:18 – “And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.”
 - A. Moses knew something of what this meant.
 1. He had already seen great manifestations of God’s splendor
 - He had seen the burning bush.
 - He had seen the miracles God performed in the presence of Pharaoh.
 - He had seen the terrible majesty of God on Mount Sinai.
Exodus 24:15-17 – “And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. ¹⁶ And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷ And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.”
 - Moses had spent days in the presence of God receiving the Law and the instructions for the Tabernacle
 2. Moses had experienced the presence of God like few men had ever known.
Exodus 33:11 – “And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.”
 3. But Moses knew there was more to God – much more.
In essence Moses is saying, “Oh God, I want all of you! I want to know all of you, behold all of you!” Moses wanted to see God in all of His majesty and splendor.
 - B. As we’ve seen the glory of God refers to His excellence, brightness, splendor – the fullness of all that God is, the fulness of His Divine being – the full sum of all that God is. It is described as the full expression of God’s attributes.
Moses was asking to see all of God.
2. God’s response to Moses helps us to understand more about the nature of God
Exodus 33:19-20 – “And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. ²⁰ And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”
3. God is saying that no mortal man can look full into the Divine being. God is infinite. His divine essence fills the universe. But His glory can be seen in His character – in the attributes that make up the Divine essence.
4. In **Verses 5-7** God shows this glory unto Moses by declaring His name.

5. Moses beheld God in the essence of His divine character. He saw God in truth. I've heard people say, "Doctrine bores me. I don't want to hear about theology." This is probably the worst statement anyone could ever make. Doctrine points to God and theology is the study of God. In essence it is the pursuit of God's glory!
 6. God showed Moses His glory by revealing to Moses His character. Moses' reaction was typical of all who meet God.
- I. He responded in worship
- A. There is a belief today that worship demands setting the proper atmosphere
 1. Music is at the very heart of today's worship
 2. It is indicatory of the diminished theology of our day
Gary Johnson – "It should not come as a big surprise that when theology is obviated, churches become preoccupied with other things. Entertainment in the form of drama and comedy skits replaces preaching, which, unless it is entertaining, is often described as boring. More and more stress is placed on music style that attempts to evoke an emotional response simply for its own sake."
(The Coming Evangelical Crisis. Chicago; Moody Press, P. 61)
 3. The problem for many is they have never met God. Moses was not looking for some heightened atmosphere. He had met God. This drove him to worship.
 4. Remember, that which drove Moses to worship was his knowledge of God. God revealed who He was and Moses fell on his face.
 - B. Truth is an essential aspect of worship
John 4:23 – "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."
 1. God must be worshipped in accordance with His revelation of Himself. Our worship of God must be consistent with His character
Exodus 34:6 – "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"
 2. Moses learned that God could not be approached as a man. He is not flesh and blood. God is a Spirit.
This is the essence of the first two Commandments.
Charles Hodge – "The two fundamental principles of the religion of the Bible are first, that there is only the living and true God, the maker of heaven and earth, who has revealed Himself under the name Jehovah; secondly, that this God is a Spirit, and, therefore, incapable of being conceived of or represented under a visible form. The first commandment, therefore, forbids the worship of any other being than Jehovah; and the second, the worship of any visible object whatever.
 3. True worship demands bowing before God as He is
True worship is not primarily for us. Worship is to be directed to God. True worship must be God-centered

4. We come as His lowly subjects and bow in total subjection. This is the aspect of worship most neglected today. For many today man is the focus. Our feelings are the primary consideration - having our needs met. They insist that worship needs to be an uplifting experience – man being uplifted instead of God. This is why for many preaching is seen as irrelevant in worship. Preaching calls upon man to bow, submit, and obey.

C. Moses was greatly stirred to worship

1. He “made haste” to worship. He felt an urgency. There was nothing of a lazy approach. Worship for Moses was his top priority.
2. Coming face to face with the glory of God caused Moses to bow before God.

The word for “bowed his head” is the single word קָדַד (*qadad*)

The Hebrew word for worship is שָׁחָה (shachah) – which means to bow down, to prostrate oneself

3. Every venture into God's presence should cause in us great homage
Every time we come to worship we should approach with holy reverence
This is the essence of the Third Commandment – God has revealed His name to us – the fullness of His divine being – **Verse 5**

We must not take His name in vain

D. True worship is a matter of the heart

1. True worship is our expression of our love for God and thus comes from the heart. Moses’ whole life was captivated by God.
Exodus 33:13 – “Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee”
Exodus 33:18 – “And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.”
2. Worship that doesn’t come from the heart is rejected by God.
Mark 7:6 – “He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.”
3. John Calvin – “Hence it is perfectly clear that neither words nor singing (if used in prayer) are of the least consequence, or avail one iota with God, unless they proceed from deep feeling in the heart. Nay, rather they provoke his anger against us, if they come from the lips and throat only, since this is to abuse his sacred name, and hold his majesty in derision.”
(John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, Moody Press, Volume 2, P. 180)

II. Second, seeing the glory of God resulted in prayer.

Exodus 34:9 – “And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us. . .”

A. His knowledge of God made Moses desire God more

1. He prayed to God for His abiding presence
“I pray thee, go among us. . .”
2. He wanted God in everything he did

B. When a man meets God he will be driven to prayer

1. He desires to commune with God
The means of communion with God on this earth is prayer

2. We talk with God
Exodus 34:9 – “And he said” – the word means “to speak”
3. Prayer becomes for us another aspect of our worship
Charles Hodge – “Prayer is the converse of the soul with God. Therein we manifest our express to Him our reverence, and love for his divine perfection, our gratitude for all his mercies, our penitence for our sins, our hope in his forgiving love, our submission to his authority, our confidence in his care, our desires for his favor, and for the providential and spiritual blessings needed for ourselves and others.”
4. The believer seeks time to be alone with God. This has become our heart
Listen to our Lord’s disciples.
Luke 11:1 – “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray”
5. Prayer and worship are at the very heart of our relationship with God

III. The third effect of a man meeting God is an intense understanding of God’s holiness

Exodus 34:9 – “pardon our iniquity and our sin,”

- A. When God revealed His great name to Moses He revealed His holiness and perfect justice

Exodus 34:7 – “. . . will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.”

1. The Bible presents God as infinitely holy
Isaiah 6:1-3 – "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory."
2. To meet God is to be instantly aware of our own sin and unworthiness.
Isaiah:
Isaiah 6:5 – "Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

NAS, NIV - "Woe is me, for I am ruined!"

David:

Psalms 41:4 – "I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee."

- B. Moses, as the leader of God’s people felt a huge burden for their corporate sin

1. He had already witnessed God’s consuming wrath
Exodus 32:9-10 – “And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people: ¹⁰ Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them. . .”

2. He had already interceded on their behalf
Exodus 32:31-32 – “And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. ³² Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”
3. Now Moses has a fresh revelation of God’s holiness and again acknowledges their sin and seeks reconciliation.
 Notice Moses includes himself - **Exodus 34:9** and pardon our iniquity and our sin
 - a. Remember Isaiah – “Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips”
 - b. David:
Psalm 51:1-3 – "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me."

Conclusion:

1. To stand in the presence of God is to tremble before His glory. Moses bowed low confessed his sins and beseeched God for His blessings.
 Coming into the presence of God Moses was forever changed.
2. Have you met God in Christ Jesus? What effect has it had upon your life? What effect has it had upon your worship? Your prayer life?