

Sunday, October 22, 2017

AM Passage Exodus 33:7-23; PM-No Worship

Exodus 33:7-23 NIV

⁷ 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. ⁸ And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. ⁹ As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

Moses and the Glory of the LORD

¹² Moses said to the LORD, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ ¹³ If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

¹⁴ The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

¹⁵ Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶ How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

¹⁸ Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ But,” he said, “You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

²¹ Then the LORD said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²² When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

Main Point

We talk and listen to God in prayer in a way that displays His greatness and presence.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is one thing you do not fully understand nor can fully explain, yet use on a daily basis? Is it necessary to fully understand how something works in order to use it?

Do you feel as though you fully understand the way God works in the world? Should that prevent you from joining Him in His work?

It’s hard to understand how God works sometimes, and that’s OK. We shouldn’t let our lack of understanding frustrate us to the point that we don’t involve ourselves in what He is doing in the world. Indeed, God is still active in the world today, shining a light through His people and growing His kingdom. Under His kingship, we have the special privilege of being a part of His kingdom growth.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 6:10.

What makes someone a king? In what sense is God king?

What is God’s kingdom? How are we a part of God’s kingdom?

God’s kingdom is anywhere that He reigns. God’s kingdom is in the lives of believers and in the world. As a part of God’s kingdom, we long to experience His presence, just as Moses did in Exodus 33.

Ask a volunteer to read Exodus 33:12-23.

Moses needed God’s presence to guide the Israelites to the Promised Land. He asked God to clarify His relationship with him and to reveal more of Himself and His ways.

What was Moses' single request of God in verses 12-13? What was his purpose for requesting this from God?

Moses wanted to make especially sure God's presence would be with him each step of the way to Canaan. Moses then recalled God's reassuring words that He knew Moses by name and that he had found favor in the Lord's sight.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how insistent was Moses that God's presence be evident? Do we desire that strongly for God's presence to go with us throughout our days? Why or why not?

To begin his special request, Moses alluded to the words the Lord previously had spoken to him at the incident of the burning bush (3:10).

God told Moses that he was favored in His sight. How have you experienced God's favor on your life? Have you seen this reflected in your prayer life?

What types of requests do you tend to make in your prayer life when you need assurance of God's presence?

What made Moses' two requests so bold? In what ways did his requests display God's greatness?

What do God's words in the second half of verse 19 tell us about His greatness and power?

The Lord told Moses that when His glory passed by the rock, He would cover Moses with His hand. In this way, the Father protected Moses from the infinite strength of His presence so that Moses would see the Lord's back but not His face. Both "back" and "face" are metaphorical, so the idea is that Moses did not and could not experience God's full presence (His face) but only the afterglow—God's manifested presence (His back).

In what ways do we have the opportunity to see or experience God's glory without seeing His face? Read John 1:14 for guidance.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

If God allowed you to see His goodness, what things do you imagine you would see and experience?

Moses had a special encounter with God. Reflect on a special encounter with God you have experienced and explain how it changed the way you think about God.

What things keep people from really getting to know God? What is keeping you from being as close to God as possible?

Where might you need to demonstrate an attitude of patience toward God's kingdom? What about an attitude of confidence? Comfort?

Pray

Pray that you would be faithful to seek God's glory in your life. Pray boldly for God's greatness to be shown through your life.

Commentary

Matthew 6:10

6:10. "Your kingdom come" could be translated "Your reign come." The kingdom has come in the hearts of all who have submitted to Jesus as Lord. It also is coming as more people yield their hearts to His reign. The kingdom will not have come fully, though, until Jesus returns and establishes it absolutely and forever. This petition asks the Father to bring people under His reign.

Exodus 33:12-23

33:12. Moses alluded to the words the Lord had spoken to him at the incident of the burning bush (3:10). Moses recalled God's reassuring words that He knew Moses by name and that he had found favor in the Lord's sight. Anyone who seeks to serve the Lord likely feels inadequate for the task. Moses needed the Lord's reassurance that he would not be alone as he fulfilled the mission God had for him.

33:13. Moses also wanted God to teach him His ways so he could continue to lead God's people. Moses' request was not for his own glory but for God's glory among His people. Moses' prayer shows that he had in mind the big picture. He wanted God to bless him because the nation of Israelites was His people.

33:14. God assured Moses that His presence would go with him and that He would give His people rest. The word translated "rest" in the Hebrew language means "quietness" or "absence of strife."

33:15 Even after hearing God's promise, Moses responded by letting the Lord know he could not lead the people without His presence. And even though Moses had yet to encounter all the difficulties that lay ahead for him and the Israelites, he knew that leading the people was a task too great for him to do alone. Moses committed himself to walk with God rather than against Him.

33:16. Moses recognized that the Lord's presence was the defining mark of this nation of former slaves. The Israelites would be distinguished from every other nation on earth because of their commitment to the Lord and His presence with them.

33:17. God favorably answered Moses' request. He promised that His presence would go with Moses as he led the people. He had found favor (or grace) in God's sight. The Old Testament writers referred to both Noah and Moses as those who had found favor in God's eyes. Because Moses was favored by God, he received the Lord's grace to help him lead the people from Egypt.

33:18. Moses, confident because of God's answer to his first request (Ex. 33:13), made a second request of the Lord. He asked God to let him see His glory.

33:19. God once again answered Moses' request in the affirmative. Moses had made two bold requests, and God answered his bold prayers. God promised that His goodness would pass in front of Moses. The goodness of God in this verse appears to be a synonym for God's presence or His glory. While passing by Moses, God also promised to proclaim the name Yahweh before him.

33:20. God placed one restriction on Moses. Moses could not see God's face because no person can see God and live. Obviously Moses could not have handled the fully manifested presence of God's glory, so God shielded Moses from seeing His essence.

33:21-22. God placed Moses in the crevice of a rock when He passed by. God also covered Moses with His hand so he would not see God's face. Obviously God is not limited to a personal body like that of a human, but God manifested Himself to Moses in terms he would understand. God's hiding of Moses was yet another way Moses experienced God's grace.

33:23. When God passed by the rock, He promised to remove His hand, allowing Moses a glimpse of His back. Evidently the glory of God was so great that Moses could only see its after-effects.