

GOD IS AT WORK FOR HIS OWN GLORY – The Glory of God

Our great hope is to be a God-centered church, captivated by God's final pursuit of Himself. Ironically, in pursuing His glory our greatest joy is found. As a result, our confidence is not in ourselves, but in his work. God is always going ahead, behind, and alongside of His people. The Church is first and foremost His great work. Our calling is to participate in what He is already doing.

Exodus 33.18 – Moses said, 'Please show me your glory.'

Read Exodus 33.17-23; 34.5-8

Context & Meaning

Moses' request to see the glory of God comes on the heels of some of the most important happenings in the book of Exodus – 1) Aaron's making a golden calf and leading the people in the worship of it (Ex. 32.1-6); 2) God' threatening to consume them for this rebellion (Ex 32.9-10); 3) Moses' intercession before God on behalf of Israel and God accepting his request (Ex. 32.11-15); 4) Moses' smashing of the Ten Commandments, his admonishing of Aaron and the people and the LORD sending a plague because of the golden calf (Ex. 32.15-35); 5) God saying that he will not go with the people into the Promise Land lest his holiness consume them and then again 6) Moses pleading with the LORD to go with him and yet again the LORD granting Moses' request (Ex. 33.1-16).

It is in light of all these happenings that Moses makes the boldest request of all, 'Show me your glory' (The word 'glory' in Hebrew means 'weighty' or 'heavy.' In other words, the glory of God is his weightiness, his worthiness, his splendor, his majesty his uniqueness). And as verse 20 makes plain, this is a request that, if fully (emphasis being on fully) answered could cost Moses his life. Man, in his sinful state, can not see the full splendor of God (his face) and live to tell about it. In this sense, the glory of God would consume Moses. And yet, in his graciousness God does grant Moses' request by placing him in a cleft of a rock - You shall not see my glory in full, but instead you will see the 'backside' of my glory from a sheltered spot.

Apply

Glory!? We hear this word often (especially as we encounter the Scripture) and we may even use it ourselves on various occasions, 'That was glorious!', or 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...' but have you ever really stopped and asked, 'What does the word 'glory' mean?' More specifically, have we ever stopped and pondered what the phrase 'the glory of God' might mean?

Scripture is quite clear that the word 'glory,' and particularly the phrase 'the glory of God' is hard-wired into who we are as human beings. We were created *with* glory and we were created *for* the glory of God (see Ps. 8.5 & Is. 43.6-7). Therefore, if we are going to come to terms with who we are, individually as well as corporately as a church, we must seek to grasp the meaning of the 'the glory of God.' We must, like Moses, be willing to ask the one true God to 'show us his glory.' And we must be prepared to be surprised as well as challenged to the core of our being when he, out of his sheer grace, answers our request.

For Reflection and Discussion – The Glory of God (*Exodus 33.17-23; 34.5-8*)

1. Using this passage, how would you describe the glory of the Lord?
2. On the surface, ‘the glory of God’ may seem very abstract (what does this have to do with me?) therefore making it all the easier to push it to the periphery of our lives (a Sunday word only rather than a Sunday thru Saturday word). Do you think the glory of God is relevant to your life? Why or why not? (Answer this in light of the answers given to question 1).
3. Why is it important that we encounter the glory of God? How can we go about doing this?
4. From this passage, in what ways does the glory of God confront us as well as comfort us?
5. Reading from Romans 1.18-32, what has humanity done with the glory of God? How is this played out in your life personally?
6. In what ways is Redeemer seeking to stay committed to the centrality of the glory of God? How can we continue to do so? In what ways are we doing this?

Prayer *‘Please show us Your glory and teach us and enable us to live for you.’*