



THE GLORY OF HIS NAME

Exodus 34:1-14

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, I want to invite you to leave them closed for just a minute; we're going to open them up in just a minute. I want you to leave it closed. It's great to have your Bible; we'll get to it in a second. But I want you to pull out the notes that are in your Worship Guide. And I want to invite everyone to do this: Whether you are a member of Brook Hills, a guest with us today, whether you're a follower of Christ or maybe not a follower of Christ, I want to invite everyone to do this. This is not something that's going to be taken up at the end of class today, or not something that you would need to look off somebody else to see what they're going to write. This is just between you and God.

I want you to take those notes and turn them over to the backside, where it's completely blank. The last few weeks here at Brook Hills, we've been talking a lot about sin in the camp, and we've been talking about the seriousness of sin, the gravity of sin and the weight of sin. We've been talking about the effect of one sin, just one sin, upon God, the effect of one sin upon our lives, the effect of one sin upon the lives of people around us that we care about and the life of the faith family as a whole. We've been talking about the seriousness of sin, and I hope and I pray that God by His Spirit has internalized these truths in your heart, where you are in your spiritual journey.

And so what I want to invite you to do before we dive into the Word today is I want you to imagine with me that you are right now sitting in a room alone with Jesus Christ Himself. Nobody else is around; nobody else is even near. It is just you and Jesus Christ alone in a room, and you are sitting face-to-face, head to head, knee-to-knee, toe to toe with Jesus Christ Himself. The One from whom you can hide absolutely nothing, the One who knows everything about you.

What I want you to write down on the back of those notes is the answer to this question, and I want you to be honest, even painfully honest. The question is, "What do you think Jesus would say to you?" If you were sitting in a room right now alone, face-to-face, knee to knee, head to head, toe to toe with Jesus Christ. You alone know what all is going on in your life, especially in a lot of the journey over the last few weeks. What do you think Jesus would say to you right now? And that's what I want you to take.

We're just going to have a couple of moments in silence for you to write down on the back of that sheet your answer to that question. What would Jesus say to you? Take another minute or so. I dare you to be honest. What would Jesus say to you if you were sitting face to face with Him right now?

Okay, let's pray together. God, we pray today that you would speak clearly to us. God, that you would take your Word in Scripture that we see and we read. God, I pray that you would use my words to accurately represent you and who you are. And Father, we pray that you would take your Word, and you would apply it to individual lives across this room, that you would apply it to this faith family, this church. And God, we pray that you would give us

grace to know what you are saying to us. God, even in this couple of minutes here, I know that some of us struggle to even think about what you would say to us. Some of us have all kinds of different thoughts about what you would say to us. So, God, we pray that you would bring great clarity today regarding your Word for our lives, and that you would do it in such a way that you'd get great glory from it. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Okay, now if you have a Bible, and I hope you do, I invite you to open them with me to Exodus 34. Exodus 34, and I say that, at the beginning, I want to remind you, if you don't have a Bible, we always have those available for free in the lobby for you to grab on your way in. So, if you don't own a Bible, if you're visiting with us and, at any point, forget your Bible, just grab one on the way in and bring it in. That way you can turn with us.

Exodus 34, the second book in the Bible. We're actually going to be at the end of Exodus 33 and then dive into Exodus 34. While you're turning there, I want to share this with you: I realize that every Sunday that, as I stand before you and I stand before this group of people in each of these different services, there are a variety of different people that are sitting in front of me. And there are a variety of different spiritual journeys represented in front of me. I know that there are many people that are followers of Christ, and there are many of you who may not be followers of Christ. I know that on any given Sunday, I'm pretty sure, based on the Word of God, that there are probably many of us who think we are followers of Christ, but we're not actually following Christ.

I also know that in any given Sunday, there are people who are sitting before me that have grown casual with sin, grown flippant with sin. It doesn't seem like it's that big a deal. There are even followers of Christ who think forgiveness is almost flippant, who confess sin to God and the very next instant move on, almost like God is this big pushover who doesn't care that much about sin because of what Jesus did on the cross. So, He overlooks the things in my life that are offensive in His sight. And it's that group of people that we've really been diving into over the last few weeks in talking about sin in the camp. We need to see the gravity, the reality of sin.

At the same time, I realize that while addressing that group of people, there's a whole other group of people who are sitting before me that feels the guilt of sin, feels even condemnation for sin and is weighed down by it. And if these folks were completely honest, there are a lot of people who sit in a room like this on Sunday, who deep down, feel like they're beyond God's forgiveness in their sin. They're in so deep, and they feel the weight of that, and talking about sin in the camp just brings it home more and more and more, and sends you deeper and deeper and deeper into a pit that you never feel like you can climb out of.

That's the danger of even talking about sin in the camp and the wrath of God and the justice of God toward sin, the severity of sin. That's the danger of talking about those things, because you want to speak about those things in a way that doesn't stroke the egos of people who have grown casual with sin and flippant with sin. At the same time, you don't want to bring those who are feeling the guilt of sin into deeper and deeper and deeper discouragement.

And so, what I want to do this morning is I want to speak especially to that second group. I want to speak especially to men and women and students who are here this morning, and you feel pretty discouraged, weighed down, maybe even by your own sin, weighted down. You may be even feeling like you may be beyond the reach of God's forgiveness, like you are in a pit that you can't climb out of. I want to speak especially to you, if you fall into that category this morning, from Exodus 34.

Now, we come to this chapter with a couple of chapters before this that have been pretty heavy. Remember at the beginning of Exodus 32, and we've looked at this, how the people of God worshipped a golden calf. They're bowing down before this idol and worshipping it. God's wrath is set against them. He says He's going to destroy them. Moses intercedes...we talked about this last week. Moses prays that God would show His grace and not destroy them.

What happens...we didn't read this...at the end of Exodus 32 are two things in particular. First, three thousand men are struck down dead. It's not a very good day amongst the people of Israel. And you get to the very last verse of Exodus 32, and it says, "*The LORD struck the people with the plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.*" (Exodus 32:35) And so, even after God spares His people from total destruction, you still see the consequences of idolatry unfolding through the end of Exodus 32 and then into Exodus 33.

We come back to where we started this whole journey in Exodus a couple months ago, at Exodus 33, when God told Moses, "I'm going to give you the Promised Land, but I'm not going to go with you into the Promised Land." And Moses prayed, and he said, "God, we can't go without you. We're not going to go one step without your presence." You get to Exodus 33 and look with me at verse 17. Moses is praying that, and the Lord responds. "*The LORD said to Moses, 'I will do the very thing you have asked...'*" In other words, "I will go with you because I am pleased with you, and I know you by name."

And then, verse 18, "*Moses said, 'Now show me your glory.'*" This is the boldest request we see in Moses' life. "God, show me your glory." He had seen God in a burning bush. He had seen God. He was on the front lines of seeing God show His power in plague after plague after plague in Egypt. He had seen God in a pillar of cloud and fire. He had seen God, literally, meeting with God, enveloped in a cloud of His glory on Mount Sinai. He had met with God in a tent of meeting, where a cloud hovered over that. If anybody had seen glory, Moses had seen glory.

And then, he comes to Exodus 33:18, and he says, "Now, God, please show me your glory." And God responds to him; listen to what He says. Verse 19,

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. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 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. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Now, all over this passage, we're seeing...and we talked about this last week...we're seeing anthropomorphic language, which basically means human terms that are used to describe God. We see talk about God's back and His face and His hand, His Spirit. He doesn't have these things like we have these things. At the same time, we've got this picture of God saying to Moses, "Moses, you want to see my glory, but you will be destroyed if you see my glory. And so, that's not going to be what's best for you. Instead," He says, "I'm going to put you in the cleft of a rock, and I'm going to cover you so that you see part of my glory, a partial glimpse of my glory, but you can't see the whole thing. You can't see all of my glory."

The picture I've got, just to kind of imagine this: I was in Atlanta preaching this weekend, and I was driving back yesterday with Caleb, our almost two-year old son. And he was in the back in his car seat. And we were driving on I-20, coming west toward Birmingham, and the sun was coming down. Some of you have been on this drive before, and you know when the sun's coming down, and you're going on I-20, there it's just glaring; it's just eye level glaring right at you.

And I look in the back, and Caleb, when he's finished eating, will say, "All done. All done." And so all of a sudden, I hear Caleb yelling, "All done! All done!" And I knew he wasn't eating. And the sun was just blinding his eyes. He was saying, "All done! All done!" He wanted it to stop. And so, he was panicking. He's all done with the sun shining. And so, I start putting down things to try to cover up the sun, and none of it's covering up the glare that's coming right into his eyes.

And so, I kind of start positioning my hands to where...I'm all the while driving on the interstate...positioning my hand to where it covers just where the sun is coming to his eyes. And so, I get it kind of set, and he starts playing. The only problem is, my hand is now stuck here for the next two hours. And you're kind of thankful when a cloud comes by, and it's like, "Ah, yeah. Okay." And then you put it back up.

And so, Caleb can't look straight at the sun. It's not that he can't see the effects of the sun, or see the glory of the sun, but he can't look straight into it. That's the picture God is saying to Moses. "You can't see all my glory. I'm going to put my hand in front of you. I'm going to shade you, in a sense, from seeing all my glory, because you just can't handle it, to see all of my glory."

And what happens when you get to Exodus 34 is this whole picture unfolds, and God passes by Moses in all of His glory. And I want us to read Exodus 34. We're going to read verses 1 through 8 in just a second. I want you to pay close attention to verses 6 and 7. They're some of the most famous verses in all of Scripture, and I want you to imagine this scene. Exodus 34:1, *"The LORD said to Moses, 'Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.'"*

And I'll just pause there for a second. You remember, God has already met with Moses on Mount Sinai once and given him His covenant there, given him the Ten Commandments. Moses came down from that meeting to find the people worshipping a golden calf. He threw down the tablets, and so they had broken. And so, what we see is God meeting with Moses, the representative of His people, a second time, which is amazing that God is still meeting with His people after Exodus 32.

What's even more amazing are the words that unfold here. Verse 2, He says, *"Moses, be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain."* You have to be invited to be in the presence of God. Even if you're an animal, you have to be invited to be in the presence of God.

So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining

love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." And Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshipped. (Exodus 34:1-7)

"*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.*" (Exodus 34:6) Those words are quoted dozens of times throughout the rest of the Old Testament. This becomes, in a sense, a confession of faith for the people of Israel. This becomes, in a sense, their working definition of who God is. This is God.

You see it all throughout the Psalms, the Prophets, the history of the people of God. They're constantly coming back to this picture right here in Exodus 34:6-7, and there's a reason why. Don't miss it. When Moses asked God to see His glory, God revealed to Moses His name. Do you watch that? Moses asked God to reveal His glory; God revealed to Moses His name. And here's the truth, and it's not in your notes here, but I would encourage you to write this down. When you grasp the name of God, you glimpse the glory of God. When you grasp the name of God, you glimpse the glory of God. God is equating His glory here with His name. "You want to see my glory? Here is my name."

And He starts off, and He says, "*The LORD, the LORD...*" He says it twice, His name. Same name that He'd revealed Himself to Moses as back in Exodus 3 at the burning bush. "I am the LORD, Yahweh. I am the great I AM. This is my covenant name that I establish with you. The LORD, the LORD." And then, He begins to describe the glory of His name. What does it mean for God to be the Lord?

And what I want to do...and you've got in your notes there just a list of attributes of God. And I'll just say from the beginning: I feel completely insufficient in my words to even try to add to the picture, explain the picture that is given to us here in Exodus 34:6-7. But I want us to grasp the name of God here in Exodus 34, because when we do, we will glimpse His glory. And I'm convinced we'll fall down on our faces, just like Moses did, and we will worship.

I am the LORD...

So, what does it mean for God to say, "I am the LORD"? And all throughout these attributes of God, you'll see in your notes there, it's "I am," repeated over and over and over again. This is who God is. This is how God revealed Himself to His people, by using this name, "I AM."

To the downcast, I am compassionate.

And so, we'll start with the first one. What does it mean for God to say, "I am the LORD"? It means, first of all, for Him to say, "To the downcast, I am compassionate; to the downcast, I am compassionate." "*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate God...*" This is an incredible picture of the very first attribute that God gives us in the revelation of His glory. It is a word of sympathy, a word of concern. And it makes sense, because this is where this whole journey started.

Hold your place here, and go back with me to Exodus 2. Go back to the very beginning of the book, when God's people were still slaves in Egypt. They were suffering in their slavery, and listen to what it says back there. Exodus 2:23. It makes sense that God would give us

this picture, the compassionate God, from the very beginning of revealing His glory in Exodus 34. When you go back to Exodus 2, when this whole thing started, verse 23, listen to what it says. Exodus 2:23, *"During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them."* (Exodus 2:23-25)

You get into Exodus 3; this is when the whole burning bush thing happens. And you get to the end of verse 6, and Moses is hiding his face because he doesn't want to look at God. And you get to verse 7 and listen to what it says: *"The LORD said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.'"* This is the picture from the very beginning of God bringing His people out of Egypt. It's a God who sees His people. He hears their cries, and He is concerned about them. He feels sympathy for them. He has compassion on them.

You get over to Psalm 103:8, and it's one of the places where Exodus 34 is quoted. Psalm 103:8, *"The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."* And then you get about five verses later, and you get to Psalm 103:13, and it says there, *"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him..."* It is a beautiful picture.

It was a year ago Friday that Heather and I stood before a judge in Kazakhstan and listened to this proceeding talking about how Caleb had been abandoned by his mom, with no dad in the picture. How he had been in this orphanage, and no one in Kazakhstan wanted to adopt him. And we left that proceeding that day, and we went to that orphanage, and for the first time, I had the privilege of holding my son in his arms with the compassion of a father that he did not have.

This is the picture that God introduces His glory with. "I am compassionate toward you. I see your needs. I feel your suffering. I hear your cries." Don't miss it, ladies and gentlemen: The God of justice and wrath that we have seen in Exodus 32 is the God of compassion in Exodus 34. He says, "I am compassionate and gracious."

To the undeserving, I am gracious.

Second, "To the undeserving, I am gracious." He is the compassionate and gracious God. Now, to give grace means to give someone what they do not deserve, what they completely don't deserve. If you get grace, you don't earn grace. You don't merit grace. There's not one ounce of merit in grace. It is given freely based on what you do not deserve at all.

It's not uncommon, as a seminary professor, for students to come to you and to turn in a paper a little bit late, and they always look at you, and they say, "Hey, Doc, could I get a little grace on this one?" And that's their favorite line. They use it all the time. "Can I get a little grace?" The only problem is, that would not be grace for me to not penalize them for turning it in late; that would not be grace. This would be grace: If I were look at them and say, "That's not grace. Grace would be for you not to turn in anything at all, for me to write your paper for you, turn it into myself, grade it and give myself an A. Now that's grace, and you're not getting it."

That's grace. To think that, "Well, we put some merit forward, and then God gives grace to help us over the edge." That's not grace. There's not one ounce of merit in grace. You don't earn anything. You don't merit grace. Earn and merit have nothing to do with grace. Grace

is freely given. This is a radical truth. We have such a hard time getting our minds and our hearts around this.

In fact, go back to Exodus 33. Look with me at verse 19. This is one of the most hotly debated verses and concepts in Scripture today. Listen to Exodus 33:19: "*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.'*" Then, listen to what God says. He says, "*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*" And people read that, and they look over in Romans 9. Paul quotes it there when he's talking about the sovereignty of God and salvation and predestination and election, and people start just getting into all kinds of debates. "Well, does this mean that God chooses to have mercy on some and not on others?" And all of a sudden, pastors are getting tons of emails. "Predestination and election, what does this mean?" And we all want this nice, neat, theological formula that can help this make sense to us.

Don't miss the reality of what Exodus 33:19 is saying to us. "*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*" The reality this is giving us is that the mercy of God and the compassion of God resides completely in Him, originates completely in Him and is not dependent on one thing in anybody else. "There's not one bit of merit," He's saying. There's not one bit of earning His compassion or mercy. It is all freely given. It is God's sovereign pleasure, God's sovereign freedom to have mercy and compassion on whom He will because it all originates with Him. He is not bound by any constraint outside of Him to show mercy.

We often wonder, and there are a lot of Christian songs that make statements like, "I wonder what it was that God saw in me to save me from my sins. What did God see in me to bring me salvation?" The reality is, ladies and gentlemen, He saw absolutely nothing in you. There's not one ounce of merit in you that would cause the God of the universe, who is completely holy and compassionate, to show you grace. It all originates from Him.

And this is not a truth that we need to sit around and debate; this is a truth that needs to drive us to our knees. This bedrock truth is the only hope for every single life in this room. Praise God, He is gracious. We would not be in this room, not one of us would be in this room, if He was not gracious. We would not have breath at this very moment if He was not gracious. He is the compassionate and gracious God, and His grace originates in Him completely, totally, utterly, wholly and whatever other "ly" words you can add to it. It all comes from God. He is compassionate, and He is gracious.

With the defiant, I am patient.

Third, when God says, "I am the LORD," that means, "With the defiant, I am patient." This is a beautiful description of patience. "*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger...*" The Israelites needed a patient God. They grumbled all the time. They complained over and over and over again. You read through the Old Testament in just looking for some new material. It's the same thing over and over and over again. They're constantly complaining. They're constantly rebelling, and God says, "I am slow to anger."

The Israelites needed a patient God, and so do we. 2 Peter 3:9, "*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to eternal life.*" Praise God, He does not have a short fuse, and He could in His holiness, in His justice, in His wrath that is dead set against sin. But He is slow to anger.

Patience is not an easy thing, even for those whom you love, even for those who you set your affection on. When we were heading over to Atlanta, which...and I know all the other parents in this room know this, but traveling with kids is just not the same as traveling without kids. You have to take the house with you wherever you go. When you're packing up, you think, "Let's just go back inside and tell somebody else they're preaching in Atlanta this weekend. It's just not worth it."

And so you get all that stuff, and you go over there. And we're on the way, and we stop at McDonald's, have a scrumptious McDonald's meal. And we're sitting there and everything is going well until your two-year old son takes his milk and decides he's had enough of it, and the best way to put that down would be to just throw it all over the table. And so, all of a sudden, you've got a table full of milk. And milk's everywhere, and it's dripping off in your lap.

And you love your son. And you have affection for your son, no question. But it's a whole other level to, at that moment, look at your son and say, "Well, son, that was not a very wise idea, was it?" Patience; slow to anger. Praise God, that He is slow to anger for those who sin. Praise God, that with the defiant, even continually defiant, He is patient.

With the undesirable, I am loving.

Next, "For the undesirable," God says, "I am loving." "*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love...*" This word for love is beautiful. It's used throughout the Old Testament. It's the word that describes, over and over again in the Old Testament, God's covenant love toward His people, His commitment to His people. The word really doesn't even have an English word that represents it well. Love, sometimes it's translated "loving-kindness." The picture is of a kind and steadfast covenant love. Kindness that God shows toward His people, continually over and over, that He's committed to showing to His people.

Covenant love, and it is abounding in love. He is maintaining love for thousands. This is a durable love. This is a love that we cannot comprehend, and it abounds toward us. He pours it out on those who are undesirable. Again, going back to this picture. He loves us, not because of what He sees in us, but because of who He is, not because of what we earn from Him or merit for Him. He loves us because He is loving, more so than the fact that we are lovable. His love originates with Him and is a steadfast kindness that is set toward His people.

For the doubtful, I am faithful.

Steadfast, durable, which leads to this next characteristic: "For the doubtful," God says, "I am faithful," abounding in love and faithfulness. I am always, always, always faithful in my love toward my people." What a picture! This is a people here, who are always saying, "I wish we could go back to Egypt." Soon as anything would go wrong, "We should go back to Egypt, we would be back in Egypt. Why did God bring us out here?" They were always doubting His goodness. "Is God good to bring us out here?" They were always doubting His provision. "Is God going to provide for us? We've got food and water needs. Where is God?"

They were constantly questioning, wondering about God's plan, where He's leading them. They were wishing they could go back and do things their own way. And God says, "For the doubtful, I am faithful." Praise God, ladies and gentlemen, when we are unfaithful, He is faithful still toward His people. Aren't you glad God is faithful? Aren't you glad God is abounding in love and faithfulness, that He says, "I always, always, always show myself faithful to my people?" "For the doubtful," God says, "I am faithful."

For the disobedient, I am forgiving.

Next, "For the disobedient," God says, "I am forgiving." Now, this is where you wonder, "Okay, how can God, who is holy and just, be faithful to disobedient people?" And the answer is, for the disobedient, He is forgiving. What does it say? It says, "...*maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.*" Now this word, "forgiving", in the original language of the Old Testament, is a beautiful word, "nasah." It literally means "to lift, or to carry someone."

Now, get that picture: A God who looks at His people in their wickedness, rebellion and sin, and He says, "I lift that from you. I carry the burden of guilt that weighs on your shoulders." Is that an incredible picture or what? Forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. It almost seems a little repetitive. If you use all three of these terms to do wickedness means to turn toward that which is not good, that which is not right. The second term, "rebellion", is a little more intense; it is probably the most intense of these three words. It's not just accidentally disobeying the law. This is a willful violation of the law, and not just disobeying the law, but it is disregarding the lawgiver. This is not just saying to the king, "I'm not going to follow your laws." This is coming to the king and committing treason against him. This is being a traitor to your king and saying, "I'm going to rebel against, not just the law, but I'm going to rebel against you, and I'm going to do things my own way instead of your way." It is outright rebellion, willful treason toward our King, our Creator; treason toward our Creator. Wickedness, rebellion, and "sin", probably the most general of the terms. This is a term that encompasses all of moral failure.

Now, why do we have all three characteristics? Why do we have all three of these words? "...*forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin...*" I believe God is saying something about His forgiveness here. I believe God is saying to us that, "Whatever category you put your sin in, my forgiveness covers that. No matter how deep or dark you think your sin is, no matter how far you think you've wandered off, no matter how heinous it is, no matter what it is, even if it's that one thing that everybody in this room knew about that you had thought or you had done, that is a part of your past. It is that sin that, if everybody knew about that in this room, it would send you running out of this room, never to come back again." God says, "That's not out of bounds for my forgiveness."

"Nothing," He says, "Not even willful violation, being a traitor against me in rebellion. I am forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. For the disobedient, I am forgiving. You turn to me, you come to me and you repent of your sin." This is not something that happens automatic; we'll see that in just a second, that once you sin, automatically you're forgiven. That's why we see them over and over throughout the Old Testament. "Repent. Turn from your sin. Turn to me. Trust in me. I forgive you of your sin. For the disobedient, I am forgiving." That doesn't mean that He overlooks your sin, like it's not a big deal, like He doesn't pay attention to it anymore.

Regarding the demands of the law, I am just.

This next characteristic of God: "Regarding the demands of the law," God says, "I am just." You have this whole picture. "*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining his love to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished...*" He punishes the children, and their children, for the sin of their fathers to the third and fourth generation.

Now, we've got to be careful not to be misled here. This is not saying that a son is culpable to God for what his father did in sin. Now, we've seen over the past few weeks the effects of

a father's sin upon those around him, no question. And that is evident in Scripture. It's evident all over this verse.

But it helps us. We don't have time to go there, but if you look in Joel 2:12-13, and you look at Jonah 3:10 through Jonah 4:2, you'll see this verse quoted. And there it's quoted, in both of those places, in the context of urging sons, urging people to turn from the sins of their fathers. There's no question that a father's sin has an effect on those that come behind him. But at the same time, Ezekiel 18:20 says that each man dies for his own sin. The son does not die for his father's sin; the father does not die for his son's sin. There is definitely a relationship there, an effect.

The picture is, God is saying, "I do not leave the guilty unpunished." Now this is really interesting. God is giving us this picture of His glory and His compassion and His grace and His mercy and His love and His faithfulness toward His people, His patience toward His people. He forgives them, and then He throws in, "I'm just, and I punish the guilty."

What we need to see in this portrait of the glorious God in Exodus 34, and what He's showing to Moses is that the justice and the wrath that God has shown in Exodus 32 and Exodus 33 is not separated from the compassion and grace of God. They are all together and one. God is compassionate, and He is just. He is gracious, and He is wrathful. He is loving, and He is severe. He is all of these things in one. And we miss the character of God, and we miss out in the worship of the glory of God if we take any one of these characteristics and isolate them from the others and focus on, "That's who God is," to the exclusion of these things. We'll miss out on the glory of God.

This is what we've done in 21st century Christianity. We've taken different portraits of God and said, "We like that and that and that." And we've gone to God like a supermarket, and we've said, "We like what we think here and here and here." And what we're doing is we're missing out on the very glory of our God. We're missing out on what it means to worship God for who He is, in creating God to be like us, to have the characteristics we like.

We have this dangerous tendency to create a nice, middle-class, American God who fits with our concepts of what He should look like. And the danger when we do that is when we come into this room, if this is the God we're worshipping, if this is the God we're lifting our hands to and singing praises to, the reality is we're not worshipping God. We're lifting our hands and singing to ourselves. And idolatry creeps in to the very heart of worship of the people of God. Do you see the danger here? We need to see God in all of His fullness, God for all that He is.

And Moses sees this whole picture. Where is Moses? He's on His face. His face is in the dust of the earth. He bows down before the Lord and worships. He's awed by this God. And as He's on His face, and He begins to pray, God responds. Look at what God says to Him in verse 10. We're going to read verses 10 through 14. Pay attention very close to verse 13 and 14 as Moses is praying.

The LORD said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you. Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you're going, or they will be a snare among you. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles."

Regarding the devotion of your heart, I am jealous.

All these things are used to worship pagan gods. And He says in verse 14, "*Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*" Moses is on his face before God. And God looks at him on that mountain and says, "Moses, worship. Worship, Moses. Worship and worship me and me alone. You continue to worship me and me alone. Because, not only regarding the demands of the law am I just, but regarding the devotion of your heart, I am jealous. I am jealous. My name is Jealous, and I am a jealous God."

Wow, what a picture. This makes sense. We know that there's a negative, even sinful kind of jealousy. We know that. But we also see in Scripture a picture of a God-like kind of jealousy, a God-honoring type of jealousy. And that type of jealousy fits right in with this picture we're seeing here in Exodus 34.

This is a picture of a covenant. We've talked about this before. When God entered into covenant with His people, this is like a marriage. In fact, marriage is a covenant. And this is why all throughout the Old Testament especially, you see the covenant between God and His people described in terms that would be used in marriage. You see God being faithful to His bride. You see His people being unfaithful to Him, and when people are unfaithful to Him, what are they called? They're called adulterers.

And God gives us this picture of how, when His people sin against Him and are unfaithful toward Him, it is like a wife who is cheating on her husband with all kinds of lovers and turning aside from the one who loves her most. This is the picture we see throughout Scripture. And there is a good, a right, a God-honoring, God-exalting jealousy in that kind of context. In a marriage context, there is a God-honoring jealousy.

I want the affections of my wife; I want her affections. The thought of her giving her love and affections to someone else is virtually unbearable. And as a result of a jealousy for her affections, anyone or anything that tries to steal her love and affection for me away from her will be met with the strongest opposition from this husband. And that's a good thing in our relationship with God. It is a great thing. The jealousy of God is a source of great comfort and a source of great hope. He has confidence for His people.

Now, this is not an insecure jealousy that God is worried that you're going to go out in the world, and you're going to find someone or something that is better than Him. He knows that He is infinitely good for you. He's not worried you're going to be able to find something else that can even compare with Him. He knows you go, and you prostitute yourself to the things of this world, that you put them all together, and the best things you find won't even begin to compare to His infinite goodness towards you. He knows this.

But here's why the jealousy of God is a great thing: Because anyone or anything in this world that tries to steal away the devotion of His people for Himself, He meets with the strongest of divine opposition. He is jealous for the devotion of your heart. That's why He says to Moses, "When you guys go into that land, when my people go into the Promised Land," He said, "you strike down everything that is not dedicated toward my worship."

Ladies and gentlemen, we must strike down everything that competes with the greatness and glory of God, that competes with our affection toward God, even the best things this world has to offer. This is why we cannot live in Birmingham day by day by day, going on, indulging ourselves in the pleasures that we're all surrounded by, if we are not on our faces day by day by day before God saying, "You're all I want. I cling to you. Not my house, my car, my job, even my family, but I cling to you. You have all of my affections." This is worship. This is radical worship, and it's so foreign to our concept of God, plus all of these

things and our affections. God, plus our families and our work and our jobs and our homes and our material possessions, and all of these things, plus we have God on Sunday, and we have God at different parts of the week.

No, God wants everything. "Strike all down. Turn to me. Give me all of your affections. I am jealous for the devotion of your heart." And the picture is of a bride who loves her husband, and who experiences His riches and His beauty and His glory and His goodness day by day by day, in ever-increasing goodness, so that His bride is weaned off even wanting the things of this world anymore. That's the picture of a God who, regarding the devotion of your heart, is jealous.

So, He says, "Moses, worship me. Worship me in all of my glory." Now, here's the deal. We get to this point, and Moses is bowing down on his face before God. But we realize all of this that evokes such awe: "*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining his love to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin...*" This picture of God is still only a partial picture of glory; it's still only a partial picture of glory.

And what we've got here in Moses is the picture we have of men and women throughout the rest of the Old Testament. Throughout the Old Testament, they are longing to see the glory of God in all His fullness. Psalm 17:15, "*I, when I awake in your likeness, will behold your righteousness and will be satisfied in your likeness. I want to see your likeness for all that you are and be satisfied in you.*" Psalm 27:4, "*One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, that I may gaze upon your beauty in your temple.*" Psalm 27:8, "*My heart says, 'Seek your face. Seek your face.'*" The Psalmist is crying out to see the face of the glory of God, even that which Moses was hidden from; he wants to see His face.

Psalm 102:12-17, "Longing for the day," the Psalmist says, "when God will reveal His glory in Zion among His people. When God will show His glory." Isaiah 40:3-5, "*Prepare the way for the coming of the LORD.*" There is coming a day when God will show His glory among His people. Isaiah 60:1-3, "*Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD is going to be revealed among you.*"

This is what the prophets and the psalmists were longing for. They wanted to see the fullness of God's glory. Over and over and over again, throughout Scripture, they're crying out, "We look forward to seeing your glory, want to see your glory. One thing we want is to dwell in your house, to gaze upon the beauty of your face forever and ever." That's what they're crying out for, over and over again throughout the Old Testament.

And then, you get to the New Testament, and you come to the first chapter of the Gospel of John. Go there with me. John 1. Look at what it says. People of the Old Testament were crying out to see the glory of God. Listen to what it says. Jesus comes on the scene in John 1: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*" (John 1:1) This is talking about Christ. He is the Word of God made flesh.

Listen to verse 14. Now, you have the picture. All of the Old Testament is leading up to here, longing to see the glory of God, longing to glimpse the glory of God. John 1:14, "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*" "Word", "revelation", "logos". "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his...*" What? "*...his glory.*" "*We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*"

Do you realize the magnitude of that verse in light of the entire Old Testament leading up to this point? John is celebrating. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father, full of God, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) Same picture in 2 Corinthians 4. "*We see the glory of God in the face of Christ.*" (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Get down to verse 18, last part of this section here, this prologue in John. Listen to what he says: "*No one has ever seen God...*" And this is talking about, just before this verse 17, the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Christ. This is a difference between Exodus 34 and John 1. "*No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*" (John 1:18)

Ladies and gentlemen, please do not miss the magnitude of what is being taught us here in John 1. Put yourself in Moses' shoes. Just put yourself in his shoes in Exodus 33. You've been bold enough to look at God and say, "I want to see your glory." He says, "Okay, I'm going to put you in the cleft of a rock, and I'm going to cover you with my hand, because you can't see it all or you'll be destroyed. You can't handle that."

So, Moses rests content with seeing the back, so to speak, in Exodus 33. He sees a glimpse of the glory of God with his face covered from the brightness of the sun, so to speak. He longed to see His glory, and he saw what he did. "*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate, gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining his love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.*" (Exodus 34:6-7) He sees that, and Moses falls on his face.

Just put yourself in his shoes, and the shoes of those who would come after him, that would long to see His glory so much that they would return over and over and over again, quoting Exodus 34. "Remember when God showed His glory? He is the Lord, the Lord, the gracious and compassionate God." This was the working definition of God. This was the one they always looked back to. This is who God is. This is God in as much of His glory as we can see.

Then, you get to John 1, and you realize that this privilege that was reserved for Moses in Exodus 34 is now the rightful privilege of all who see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Do you know Jesus? Do you know Jesus? Then, you know the glory of God. God has revealed His glory in the face of Christ, and the more we know of Christ, the more we know of the glory of God.

To all who desire to see My glory, I am Jesus.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, fall on your faces before Him. See Him for who He is. He says all of these things. He is compassionate. He is gracious. He is loving to the undeserving. With the defiant, He is patient. He says, "I'm not disregarding the demands of the law. I am jealous regarding the devotion of your heart. But ultimately, to all who desire to see my glory, I am Jesus."

And over and over and over again in the book of John, Jesus reveals Himself with this title. "I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the good shepherd. I am the gate. I am the vine." He says, "*Before Abraham was born, I am.*" (John 8:58) Jesus is equating Himself with the God of Exodus 34 and saying, "Do you want to see the glory of the Father? Look in my face."

Now, that brings us full circle. Turn your notes page over to the back. Remember, you are sitting in a room alone with Jesus Christ Himself, face to face, knee to knee, head to head, toe to toe right now with Jesus Christ. What do you think He would say to you? I don't know

what you have written on the back of that page. I don't know if you have written that Jesus would say, "You need to work on this and this and this." If Jesus would say, "You're doing good here, but there's still some things over here that you need to deal with." Maybe Jesus would say, "I don't know you." Maybe you think Jesus would say, "Why don't you spend time with me?" Maybe you think Jesus would say, "Why don't you listen to my Word? Study my Word?"

I don't know what you think Jesus would say. But I'm convinced, based on the picture of the glory of God that we have seen in Scripture today, that if you were sitting face to face, knee to knee, head to head, toe to toe with Jesus Christ Himself, picture it: He would look you right in the eye, and I am convinced the first words out of His mouth would be, "I love you. I love you." I believe He would say it repeatedly. "I love you. I love you." I don't think He could stay in his seat. I believe He would jump out of His seat, embrace you in His arms and cry out, "I love you. I love you!"

And you start to say, "Well you don't understand what's going on in my life. I've got this and that," and He would say, "I love you." And you say, "Well, you don't understand. Look at me. I've got this, and this, and this, these things going wrong in my life." And He would look at you and say, "See me. I am the Lord. The gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining my love to thousands, forgiving your wickedness, rebellion and sin."

All glory be to Jesus Christ! Fall on your faces, ladies and gentlemen. Fall on your faces before this God. He is not just jealous for the affections of our heart. He is worthy of the affections of our heart. He is worthy of all of your affections, not just now, but in every moment of your life. Wrap your life, wrap your voice, wrap everything that you are in His love and give Him the glory that He is due.

Let's be finished and done with coming to a worship service to hear a word, be entertained and move on. Let's come and gather together and glimpse the glory of God in the face of Christ. Lift our hands, fall on our faces and give Him honor and praise, and then scatter from this place to shout His glory from the rooftops of Birmingham and to all nations. Because He is worthy, not just of our glory, but He is worthy of the glory of every single person in the city of Birmingham, and He is worthy of the glory of every single person in all nations.

This is why we live like we do, because we have seen His glory. We are captivated by His glory and compelled by it, consumed by it, to go and proclaim it to the nations. The Lord, the Lord, He is the compassionate and gracious God. He is slow to anger, praise God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. He is maintaining His love to thousands, forgiving their wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Would you bow your heads with me? As we bow our heads and close our eyes, I want to invite you to glimpse the glory of God in the face of Christ. There are some of you who are here who have never looked at the glory of God in the face of Christ. Many of you who have grown casual with the glory of God in the face of Christ. I said from the very beginning that I wanted to speak especially to those who are discouraged today, those who are downtrodden in sin; maybe it is your own, or maybe it is affected by other sin. I want you to know there is a God who sees your life, who hears your cries. He knows everything that is going on, and He is compassionate and gracious. And there is not one ounce of merit you bring to the table in this moment, and yet, He freely gives compassion to His people.

And I'm going to ask these guys to begin playing in the background, and what I'd like for us to do during the next few moments is to respond as Moses did. And whether that is you humbly, in your heart, giving God praise, honor and glory where you sit, or whether that is you coming down here to the front and kneeling here, I hope you feel the freedom to take advantage of that opportunity in this moment, before this God, for you or you and your spouse, you and your family, your friend. I pray that you say, "Let's fall before God as Moses did. Let's put our faces in the ground before this God. He is worthy."

And I'm going to ask these guys just to play for a minute or two before they even begin to sing. And they're going to sing about how we find our rest in God, where He is worthy of all our praise. And I want you to find rest there before we even hear them sing. I want to give you an opportunity to let these truths soak in. And if you'd like to sit and pray, to come down here to kneel and to pray or to stand at any point, you respond with freedom.

Glimpse the glory of God and pray, and pray especially if you are discouraged today, if you are doubtful, if you have been defiant. If you find yourself thinking that you are too far beyond the reaches of God's forgiveness, I remind you that you are not. He looks in your face today, and He says, "I love you." How will you respond?

God, give us grace in these moments to respond to the glimpse of your glory. We have grasped your name as much as we can in these few minutes together, and God, we have glimpsed your glory. God, we go now into a time as your people where we respond in worship. God, keep us, we pray. God, keep our mind's attention off lunch or whatever is next in our lives, whatever else is going on. God, keep our mind's attention and our heart's affection completely fixed on you. And God, we pray that you would be honored, that you would be glorified in our prayers across the room, that you would be honored and glorified as we begin to sing and celebrate your Word. God, that you would be honored in our worship as we fall down before you, the One who is jealous for the devotion of our hearts.

Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material provided that you do not alter it in any way, use the material in its entirety, and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to the media on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Radical.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: By David Platt. © David Platt & Radical. Website: Radical.net