



DESPERATE FOR HIS SPIRIT **Exodus 33**

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, I invite you to open with me to Exodus 33. It's the second book in the Bible, Exodus 33. Let me encourage you to pull out the page from your Worship Guide that is completely blank for notes this morning. I don't want you to think that it's because I've just been lazy all week and just didn't feel like putting something in front of you.

On the contrary, it's the exact opposite. I have been wrestling this week with so many different truths and thoughts and things that God is teaching me, and I believe desires to teach us. You've got to understand that I came into this year with the entire year's worth of sermons planned. I don't do that. I'm a procrastinator. I do things last minute. I decided to turn over a new leaf, and so I planned out the whole year, and there's some good stuff that I had planned. Some really good sermons, some great sermons that were going to be there this year and maybe some of them will come along the way.

But a couple of weeks ago leading up to last Sunday and this week, God has really taken me a different direction completely in my life and my leadership. If you did not have the opportunity to worship with us last Sunday, I hate that you missed that. God really took us in a different direction and made us aware of the fact that, if we want to know His glory, we've got to want His Spirit. We had concentrated time in prayer for each other unplanned, and I wish you could hear some of the stories, some of the conversations that have come about since that time.

One person who came up to me after one of the services and basically shared in so many words that she is not always in church. She decided to come that morning, really at the end of her rope. In so many words, said she was ready to take her life, and God provided hope through people gathering around her and praying for her last Sunday morning. Talking with marriages that, even as recent as Saturday night before last Sunday morning, hit rock bottom, and Sunday morning had the opportunity to pray over husbands and wives in circumstances like that.

I got this email. I won't mention the name. The email says,

There's no way I can explain to you what happened to me during the 10:45 service, but let me try." [She said her and her husband usually come at 9:00, but today, came to the 10:45 service.] There's so much that led up to this happened, which I don't have time to tell you in this letter. But when you called for us to come to the front for prayer for physical healing or spiritual healing, I went forward. I have something bad wrong with my feet and have for years now. The doctors can't find what's wrong. I literally have been crying out to God for help. My husband has been interceding for me also.

While standing at the front with all these people surrounding me, I felt a very

tentative little hand touch my left heel. I felt the Spirit rise up in me. I knew I was in a very holy moment. My first thought was, "Who is that touching my foot? It must be someone who knows me and my struggle."

I finally opened my eyes and looked down and from underneath many people, literally coming between legs of the people in front of her was an arm and hand reaching to touch me. Wow, what boldness to get down on your knees on your face and reach under people's legs, between people's legs to touch someone's feet she didn't even know. Only the Spirit of God would move someone to do that.

After you got through praying, I turned around to see who it was, and no words explained the look on her face. It was one of humility, as she said in an almost apologetic tone, "God told me to touch your feet and pray for healing." I was weeping at this point and said, "It's for healing for my feet that I came to the altar." She started weeping with me. We hugged and held each other. It was like no one else was in the room.

At the end of the service, I asked for her name. She wrote this on a piece of paper. "I know it was all God and none of me. Praise Him, our precious Jesus and let's do it in such a way that only He gets the glory." She had not signed her name and said, "Thanks for the privilege to intercede for you."

I've just decided this week that I'd rather last Sunday not be an anomaly at The Church of Brook Hills. Now, I don't want you to be scared by that. It's not because I have a desire for ecstatic experiences or for special giftings or baptisms or long to go into an unbridled mysticism that is devoid of truth. It's none of that. It's simply the fact that in my own life, my own leadership, as the pastor that God in His grace and wisdom has entrusted to you, He is showing me in a painfully clear way the limitations of what I bring to the table apart from the Holy Spirit of God. He's showing me very clearly that there is no way I can do what God has put in my heart to do apart from the Holy Spirit of God. And I don't believe that there's any way that The Church of Brook Hills can do what God has put in our hearts to do apart from the Holy Spirit of God.

Really, it comes down to this bottom line: We, as the people of God, today have created means and methods for doing church that, in the end, require little, if any help at all, from the Holy Spirit of God. It is possible...it is dangerously possible for us to carry on the machinery of the church as smooth as possible, and months, years down the road never realize that the Holy Spirit has been absent and His power has been absent all along. We don't have to pray and fast for the church to grow. We can market for the church to grow. We don't have to pray for the crowds to come to faith. We've got publicity that will take care of that.

I want to call us as a faith family to say, as The Church at Brook Hills, "We are not moving forward without the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit of God." I am convinced that the greatest, maybe the greatest hindrance to the advancement of the gospel in our day may just be the attempt of the church of God to try to accomplish the work of God apart from the power of the presence of God. The greatest hindrance to the gospel in our day may be our own attempts to accomplish the work of God apart from the power of the presence of God.

That's why I want to bring us to Exodus 33. I want us to see here...I've got a feeling we're going to be here a few weeks. There is so much here, and I want you to see this: Exodus

33:1. I want you to listen to what God said to Moses. I'm going to read here and then a few verses later, then we'll fill in the blanks as we go along. Listen to what God said to Moses, Exodus 33:1:

The LORD said to Moses, "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your decedents.' I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. [And here He drops the bomb.] But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way" (Ex. 33:1-3).

What do you think God is really thinking? Go over to verse 15; Moses responds.

Moses said to God, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you're 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?" 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." Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory" (Ex. 33:15-18).

God, help us to consider the depth of these words. God, help us in this room to consider the danger of trying to move one foot forward apart from your presence. And God help us to realize what it means to cry out in desperation, "Show me your glory." God, give us that heart and desire. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

When I first came to Brook Hills, the first Sunday I preached and the day the church voted me as pastor, I asked this church question. I asked us a question. I said, "Are we going to die in our religion or are we going to die in our devotion?" We were studying Hebrews 13. Will we die in our religion or will we die in our devotion? Eighteen months later, I'd like to put another question on the table, and that question is this: Will we be dependent on ourselves or will we be desperate for His Spirit? Will we be dependent on ourselves or will we be desperate for His Spirit?

Context here, leading up to Exodus 33, is you've got the people of God who were slaves in Egypt, and God delivered them out of slavery in Egypt. Sent all these plagues and brought them out. Brought them to the edge of the Red Sea, and He split the sea in half, and they went through. After they passed through the sea and walls of water on each side, they look in their rearview mirrors, and those walls of water come crashing down on the Egyptians.

And He brings them on a journey where He provides food that, literally, falls from heaven, and He provides water from rocks. He guides them during the day with a pillar of cloud and night by a pillar of fire. He brings them to Mount Sinai, and there He shows His glory to them in the picture of consuming fire and billows of smoke coming up from the mountain as the people of God are meeting, encountering the glory of God. They don't even want to get near the mountain.

And there, God meets with Moses, the people's representative, and gives them His law. And there He talks with Moses about how He's going to dwell in the middle of His people; He's going to tabernacle there. And He gives them instructions leading up to this...leading right up to this about how He's going to live in their midst, and how they can construct this tabernacle to be a place for His glory to dwell in the middle of His people.

While all of that is happening, the people of God are down the mountain, and they have taken their gold and their possessions and brought them together and created a golden calf, and they are bowing down and worshipping a golden calf. They are singing and dancing and indulging in revelry, the Old Testament says, as they worshiped this idol. While the glory of God is meeting their representative, they are singing the praises of other gods.

Moses comes down from the mountain, sees this, and right at the end of the chapter before this, 3,000 men are struck down dead. And God comes to Moses in Exodus 33:1, and He says these words. He says, "*Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out Egypt, and go up to the land I promised you*" (Ex. 33:1). Don't miss it: God is saying, "I promised you the land of Canaan. I promised to deliver the people in front of you so that you could take that land. I'm telling you to go and take it. It is all yours, but I am not going with you." The Israelites are coming face to face with the possibility of life without God, but with all the blessings that God had promised.

Now, let me ask you a question: How do you think you would respond? How do you think we would respond if we were told this by God: "I'll still give you the land, but I will not go with you?" Now, we're a really spiritual people, and so we say, "Well, of course, that would upset us." But, really, when you get down to it, would it really? Think about it with me. Isn't this what most people want? Don't most people want all the gifts and all the blessings and all the good things God offers, but they don't want to have to have the work of a relationship with God on the side over here?

I'm not just talking about people outside the church; I'm talking about inside the so-called "church". This brand of Christianity that prevails in our church culture that says, "You can pray a superstitious prayer and ask Jesus to come into your heart and then go live your life however you want to apart from Him. You can make this decision, and you get heaven, regardless of what happens in your life from that point on." You don't even have to have God. You get heaven, and you get forgiveness of sins, and you listen to the evangelistic invitations across our church landscape, and you come to Christ, you get heaven. You come to Christ you get forgiveness. You come to Christ you get life better than you ever could have imagined. You come to Christ you get satisfaction. Blasphemy! You come to Christ and you get God. That's what matters. You don't go to heaven if you don't want God.

The picture is we have fast become a people who'd be glad to have the blessings of God. Even in our desperation, we're desperate for God to fix our circumstances and desperate for God to make our lives right and desperate for God to do this and this and this. But when it comes down to it, we're more desperate for those things to happen than we are for God Himself. And God says to His people, "You go up to the land, but I'm not going with you." And at this point, the people of Israel had a choice: "Either we take the blessing of God apart from the presence of God, or we stay here until the presence of God goes with us."

And it's the same choice that we have in that question that I put before you: Will we be dependent on ourselves as we move forward or will we be desperate for His Spirit? This morning, I want to give you four reasons why we must be desperate for His Spirit. Reason number one: Because we have an assignment that we cannot fulfill; we have an assignment that we cannot fulfill.

I want you to go with me to verse 12. I told you we were kind of filling in the blanks here and there. We'll end up reading most of this chapter when we get to the end this. I want you to look with me in verse 12 before the verses we just read. Moses says to God in this prayer, "*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 favor with*

me.' 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" (Ex. 33:12-13).

Now, you think about the conversation Moses is having with God here. He's clearly pointing out a discrepancy. He's saying, "God, you're telling me to lead this people, but there's a discrepancy between what you're telling me to do and the resources I have to do it." Moses says, "There's no way I can lead these people unless I have your presence. There's no way I can lead them into the Promised Land unless I know your mind and the way you think. Teach me your ways, so I may know you and continue to find favor with you." Very clearly, Moses is saying, "I can't accomplish this thing apart from your presence."

There's a truth that is coming home here that was best summed up by Jonathan Edwards in the middle of the Great Awakening, a period in the history of the church where God had poured out His Spirit in an unusual way. Jonathon Edwards wrote a lot of things that were incredible, and he said this...sounds like a simple statement, but it is huge. He said, "Only God is able to do the work of God."

Now, that seems, "Well, of course; that's easy." But you think about with me. We are a people who are so confident in ourselves; we are so confident in our ability and what we bring to the table. It is our American self-sufficiency that rears its head in pride and says, "I can do this Christian thing on my own, and we can do this church thing on our own. We can figure this out. We can program this Christianity in our lives, in our families and in the church, and we can make this thing happen. We can make this thing successful if we put our best to it."

We've been talking...the last couple weeks, we've talked about men, husbands in this room, dads, leading their families in a way that honors God. Husbands loving your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. Husbands being spiritual leaders of our homes. Men, what one of you in this room has the natural ability to do that apart from the power of the Spirit of God? No one. You cannot lead your family to honor God, you cannot be the spiritual leader of your home, you cannot love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her apart from God. You can't do it.

And not just husbands or dads, but across the board. Children obeying parents, wives loving husbands, singles honoring Christ in singleness, professionals across this room working in a way that honors God, and leaders in this church leading this faith family in way that honors God. There is not one of those things that we can do on our own. We need God to do the work of God. We miss this.

Even I, over the last 18 months...I remember when I was praying through the possibility of not moving back to New Orleans. Heather and I were praying about whether or not to come here. Amidst all the things we were praying through, there was one thought that coming to my mind, and I would share with people, and it was a question that just kept coming to my mind, and it was this: It was...you look at this church, this people, all the resources represented in this church. I'm not just talking about financial resources. I'm talking about gifts and skills and talents and leaders and, yes, financial resources, but all those things together. Ask the question, "Can you imagine what this church behind a global mission could accomplish?"

What I've discovered 18 months later is that that is the wrong question to ask, and here's why: Because this church can have all the gifts and all the talents and all the skills and all the best leaders in the city of Birmingham and can have all the money in the world, but if this church does not operate on the power of the Spirit of God, this church will accomplish

nothing for a global mission; nothing. Jesus said it, "Apart from me, you can do nothing." Period.

On the contrary, you switch it around. If this church had the least amount of gifts and the least talented people and the most incompetent leaders in the city of Birmingham and no money, with the power of the Holy Spirit of God, that kind of church can shake the nations for His glory. I am convinced that we can accomplish more with the power of the Holy Spirit of God in thirty days than we can accomplish without the power of the Holy Spirit of God in a hundred years. We can accomplish more in the next month. Do you believe that?

God, help us to believe that; help us to realize what small goals we have if we are living with what we bring to the table. Moses says to God, "I need your sponsorship to make this happen." God, make us a church that says, "We need your sponsorship to make this happen."

Husbands, if the only way for you to live out your obligations as a husband or a dad is with the power of God, that means the only place you need to be on a daily basis is on your face before God asking Him to do His work in and through you. Wives, men and women, students across this room, church, the only place where we belong...if only God can do the work of God, our only posture is prayer. We have an assignment that we cannot fulfill. We need God to do everything. It's all God in...it's all Christ in us. That's the picture.

It's Saint Patrick; one of my favorite prayers is when Saint Patrick said,

Christ with me, Christ above me, Christ beneath me, Christ in me, Christ beside me, Christ in front of me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie, Christ when I sit, Christ when I arise, Christ in every heart that thinks of me, Christ in every mouth that speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me, Christ in me, He is my everything.

Ladies and gentlemen, is He your everything? Everything...is God your everything? Completely, totally your everything? That apart from His presence in your life, you cannot take one step forward? Are we living in that kind of dependence on God? Is God your everything? God, we are a people that are desperate for you in everything. God, help us to realize the truth that Moses knew. That for him, to try to take one step forward apart from your presence, would be disaster.

God, I pray that you would raise up men and women, students, kids across this church who believe that, who are so desperate for your presence, who have not bought into the lie that we can manufacture this Christian life on our own. Christ, we humble ourselves before you, and we pray that you would consume us with your presence. God, for the hurts represented across this room, be their everything. God, for the joys represented across this room, be everything. We pray that you would help us to realize that there is absolutely nothing we can do of any eternal significance apart from the power of your presence. So, help us to live in your presence. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Second reason why we must be desperate for His Spirit, and while you're opening back to Exodus 33, let me just add this little side note. As we pray together and sing together, I want you know that you always have the freedom to respond in those times however you would like to, whether that's standing or kneeling or coming to the front kneeling here or singing or sitting and reflecting. I hope that we all realize that external expressions of religion are intended to be internal expressions of our heart, and so you let those external

expressions be a manifestation, a picture of the internal realities in your heart however that looks.

So anyway, reason number two. We have a responsibility, an assignment we cannot fulfill. Second reason why we must desperate for the Spirit is we have a privilege that we cannot forsake. We have a privilege we cannot forsake. I want you to go with me to the end of verse 12 and verse 13. Moses says to God, "*God, you have said, 'I know you by name,' and you have found favor with me. If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you*" (Ex. 33:12-13). This is an incredible picture of the intimacy that is being depicted between Moses and God. For Moses to make this statement, "You have said, 'I know you by name.'" That's not saying, "God, I know that you can pick me out of crowd, and God I know that you remember who I am." This is Moses saying, "You know me intimately and you have shown favor to me."

You back up. Go to Exodus 33:11. Look at what the Bible says there. This is when Moses went to meet with God and was meeting with Him here in this conversation. Listen to what it says in verse 11, "*The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend*" (Ex. 33:11). What an amazing statement! Underline that in your Bible. "He would speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to with His friend."

Now, we know that doesn't mean face to face, personally, like you or I would sit down and looking at each other's face. We'd find out later you look down in verse 20, God says, "*You cannot see my face for no one may see me and live*" (Ex. 33:20). And so by nature of the fact that Moses is still alive at the end of Exodus 33, we realize he's actually not seen the face of God. But we do have this incredible picture of intimacy, of God and Moses conversing as friends. If this does not astound us, we have no clue how great God is. God and Moses, face to face as man speaks with His friend. What a privilege Moses had.

But this is one of those areas where we just can't leave this story in the Old Testament. Hold your place here because we're going to come right back. Hold your place in Exodus 33. Go with me to the New Testament, John 15. I want you to read with me some words that Jesus says to His disciples that I think, maybe, helps us to even read these words, if we've read them before, in a new light based on what we're seeing here in Exodus 33. This picture of Moses speaking to God face to face as a man speaks with his friend. Go with me to John 15:15 and listen to what Jesus says to His disciples. Jesus says, John 15:15, "*I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead I have called you—what?—friends, for everything that I learned from my Father, I have made known to you*" (Jn. 15:15). Jesus calls His followers friends, because He makes known everything from the Father known to them.

How does He do that? We don't talk to Him face to face. We don't see His face right in front of us. Go to the next chapter, John 16:12. Look at this. This is key. Jesus says,

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you" (Jn. 16:12-15).

Jesus says all the Father has belongs to Him. All that He has, He's going to make known to us. And how's He going to do it, through the, what? Through His Spirit. The Spirit is the divine communicator here, the Spirit of God is the One who enables us to come face to face

with Christ as His friends and be exposed to the fullness of the glory of God. What an incredible privilege!

Now, I told you to hold your place back in Exodus 33. Go back there with me to verse 7. We keep backing up a little bit in the story. I want you to see how this whole meeting with God came about. Listen to this; you've got to picture this scene with me. Imagine this, Exodus 33:7.

"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. 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. As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses" (Ex. 33:7-10).

Now, is that cool or what? I mean you're hanging in your pad over here, and all of a sudden, you hear the news that Moses is headed towards the tent, and everybody comes out. They're standing; they're watching. You can imagine the hushed silence as Moses walks by, and he goes into this tent, and you're looking and this cloud comes down over the tent. How intense is that as the people of Israel, innumerable people, are standing in awe while one man meets with God personally in a tent and cloud covers it up.

Now, if you can just imagine the intensity of that, let me take you to the intensity of this. Ladies and gentlemen, we no longer have to wait for a representative to go into a tent and meet with God on our behalf. Ladies and gentlemen, you and I, each one of us, has the privilege of going to the tent, experiencing the presence of God Himself face to face as a man speaks with his friend. This is the great high privilege that Christ has granted you and me. We don't watch some dude go into the tent. You live in the tent! You walk in the tent! You experience communion with God face to face as a man speaks with his friend, as very friends of Jesus Christ on high; you are His friends, and He communicates to you all of that the Father is and all that the Father has through His Spirit. This is a privilege we cannot forsake.

If that is true, then how can we not live our lives on a daily basis on our faces before this God? This privilege the people longed for and looked and watched to take place in the Old Testament, you and I live in. How can we forsake this privilege? God, make us a church that dwells in the tent. That's the whole picture. The Holy Spirit of God is the privilege we cannot forsake. That's why we must be desperate for the Spirit. Fear the day when you or I will stand before God in heaven and look back over our lives and see the hours we wasted on the trivial and paltry things of this world when we could have been in the tent with God Almighty. We have a privilege we cannot forsake.

Third reason why we must be desperate for the Spirit is because we have a family we cannot forget; we have a family we cannot forget. Now, here's where it gets kind of weird. Verse 14, *"The LORD replied, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest'"* (Ex. 33:14). God says to Moses, *"My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'* *Then Moses said to [God]—and here's where it gets really weird—'If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here'"* (Ex. 33:14-15). Do you see a little disconnect there?

It's kind of like, guys, have you ever found yourself in a situation with your wives, maybe, where you're having a conversation, and I've heard guys struggle with this. I don't, but you're...I have a friend who told me about a conversation he was having with his wife and,

just kind of part way through, just kind of checked out of the conversation and really wasn't listening, and then heard the silence and thought, "Well, I'm supposed to say something now." And said something which sounded utterly ridiculous in light of what had actually just been said that he had not heard. And your wife looks at you...or looks at my friend and says, "Did you not hear what I just said?"

When you get to this part of the conversation between God and Moses, you just wonder if Moses just checked out for a minute. If he just kind of let his thoughts wander. I mean, God said, "*My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest,*" so Moses said to Him, "*If your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.*" Moses, come on man, this is God.

Actually, Moses heard God perfectly, and He was listening. I want to show you something really interesting in this passage. You might mark this in your Bible, verse 14. I want to encourage you to circle the word, "you." It's used twice. "*My Presence will go with you...*" Circle it there. "*...and I will give you rest.*" (Ex. 33:14). Circle it there. Then draw a little line out to the side and write the word "singular." Not like the AT&T deal or whatever. Singular as in one, singular. You don't see this in the wording here, but in the original language of the Old Testament, when God says this, He says, "My presence will go with you," i.e. you, one person, Moses. "My presence will go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest."

So Moses responds and listen to what he says, Moses said to Him, "*If your Presence does not go with—who?—us.*" Circle "us" there. "*...do not send us up from here*" (Ex. 33:15). Draw a little line out. That's plural. Don't miss this. God just told Moses, "All right, Moses, I will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Now, it's at this point that the rampant individualism of our culture and our Christian culture steps out and says, "I have the blessing of God on me. God has chosen to bless me." And we look down on others because they don't have the blessing of God. Others in the church even who are not quite up to where we are in the blessing of God, but we've got it and we're moving forward with the blessing of God. That's not what Moses does though.

Moses says, "I'm not going forward without them either." You see, Moses realized that he was called to lead the people of God; he was not an individual. He was part of a community of faith. He was a part of a people. He just didn't need the presence of God; they needed the presence of God. They needed God to go with them. Moses...and you can see it in his praying. Verse 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?*" (Ex. 33:16).

You see, Moses knew the whole deal here was about delivering His people, God showing His greatness in delivering His people. That's what the whole Exodus was about. When God brought His people out, He didn't just bring Moses out. He brought His people out, and He did it in a way that showed His glory.

All those plagues...you ever wonder why He had to go through all that? Why not just jump to number ten and skip the first nine? He was showing His glory, how He provided for His people. He brought them to the edge of the Red Sea because He wanted to show how He splits the sea for His people to go through. This is a community of faith, a people that He has promised the land to.

Moses said, "We're going forward, but we've got to have your presence. How will all these other peoples, how will all these other nations that follow polytheistic religions and worship

foreign gods and idols, how will they know your greatness if it's just me? You are making a people for yourself so show your greatness in the way you go with us, with all of us, with your people. We're going into the land. We don't have wealth. We don't have money. We don't have gifts. We don't have all the other things these nations have. We've got you. Without you, we've got nothing."

Here's the picture. We miss it so much because, even when we talk about the work of the Spirit of God, and people talk about revival from the Spirit, almost inevitably, you will hear statements...you will hear people say, "If God's going to bring revival, it's going to start with me. If God's going to bring revival, it's going to start with my heart." And there is a grain of truth to that. It's not that that is a completely off-base statement.

But here's the deal. I want to ask the question: What if God's going to bring revival, and it's going to start with us? What if this whole plan of God is not about you and does not revolve around you or me? What if it revolves around a people? What if it revolves around a family of faith, a community of faith? What if God desires to revive and awaken the people of God called The Church at Brook Hills? What if God wants to do something corporately here that we must do together not as individuals? What if we really belong to each other in Christ? What if the very Spirit that He's given us is the Spirit of unity like the New Testament teaches? What if we need to throw off bitterness and quarreling and complaining, gossip so that the Spirit can make this community of faith a great picture of the glory of God in Birmingham?

God, do it among your people. Moses said, "I don't want to go alone." He said this earlier at the end of Exodus 32. This is right after the golden calf deal. Listen to this in verse 30:

"The next day Moses said to the people, 'You committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD and perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.' So Moses went back to the LORD and said, 'Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written'" (Ex. 32:30-32).

What a statement!

Blot me out of the book? I want to see them know your greatness and your glory and move forward with you. God, help us to see that God has bound up His character in the people of God called the church, and He desires to make a great name for Himself in Birmingham and He's going to do it through the church, through the people of God. God, awaken us so that The Church of Brook Hills makes a great name for you in Birmingham and in all nations. We have a family we cannot forsake. That's why we must be desperate for the Spirit for the sake of each other.

Last reason why we must be desperate for the Spirit is because we have a God we cannot fathom. This is the most startling point. Verse 17, *"The LORD said to Moses, 'Moses, I will do the very thing you have asked because I am pleased with you and I know you by name'" (Ex. 32:17).* That's what he had asked for; that's what he'd pleaded for. You'd think at this point Moses would say, "Okay, I'm going to exit the tent here. I've gotten what I've prayed for." Instead, he looks at God, and Moses said, "Now, show me your glory." Just abruptly, "God show me your glory."

Now, we don't realize how astounding this is until we realize who's asking God to do this. This is Moses. This is the guy, who in the first part of this book, came in contact with a

burning bush that wasn't being consumed and had a conversation with God there. That's pretty intense. The guy who had a firsthand role in seeing all of these plagues happen and God reveal His glory time after time after time. They guy who led the people of God, took the first steps through the middle of the Red Sea as the water surrounded them. This is the guy who saw food coming down from heaven, saw water after he struck a rock water coming out. This is the guy who followed this pillar of cloud and this pillar of fire at night. This is the guy who got to meet with God on the mountain. If anybody had seen it, this is the guy who got to go into the tent and had the cloud come over. He got all the privileges. "Let somebody else in on the action, Moses."

Here's the deal: Our first thought is, "If anybody had seen the glory of God, it was Moses. Why would he say, 'Now, show me your glory'?" And the answer is and the beauty of it is, once you taste the glory of God, you begin to get an insatiable appetite for more and more and more and more, and you long for more, and you weep for more, and you mourn for more, and you wrestle for more. This is the testimony of men and women throughout Scripture. They were never content to accept Christ and move on with their lives as if the pursuit had stopped. The pursuit had just begun. It's Paul saying in Philippians 3, "I want to know Christ. I want to know the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of sharing and His sufferings. I want more of Christ. I want more of Christ."

Ladies and gentlemen, have you grown content? You, plural, have we grown content with our knowledge of God? Ask yourself that, really. Honestly, have you grown content with going through this life and these levels of Christianity incrementally, here and there, getting a little more knowledge, or do you have an insatiable thirst day after day after day after day that would come before God and say, "Please, show me your glory. I want to see more radiance and more splendor?"

Now, the wild thing is Moses had no clue what he was asking. Verse 20, God looked at Moses and said, "*[Moses,] you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live*" (Ex. 33:20). What an awkward moment for Moses to realize that he's just asked God to do the very thing which would annihilate him. This is an incredible truth here. Moses needed to be protected from God by God.

Now, you think about that all through lunch and maybe try to kind of wrap your arms, mind around it. Moses needed to be protected from God by God. God's glory is so great, that if he were in His presence, he would be struck down immediately, and so he needed God to even protect him from His glory, so that he could see His glory and yet live. So he could see His glory and still be able to live, God needed to intervene.

We fast forward to the pages of John 1, and we see the picture of how the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. It's a picture of Christ being the very presence of God among us, and verse 14 says, "*We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*" (Jn. 1:14). Here's the incredible picture of the New Testament. We have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And in His face, we have seen the One, the only one, who can make it possible for us to glimpse the glory of God and live.

Apart from Christ, we would cower in our sin in the presence of God. If we don't think we would, we've missed out on the whole point of what the Bible says. We would cower in our sin. We would stand before Him with sin in front of a holy, beautiful and majestic God, struck down immediately in His presence. The only way to stand in front of Him in that way is with the very righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ attributed to you and through life

with Christ. Beholding the glory of God in the face of Christ, we can come before God and say, "God, we want to know more of your glory."

God, make us a church...Brook Hills, let's get on our faces and ask God to show us as much glory as we can possibly take. God, give us an insatiable desire for more and a thirst and longing and yearning and a weeping for more of your glory. We want to know you. It's more important than anything we will read on the Internet this week, any TV show we will watch, any conversation about sports that we will have. Do we want His glory? I mean, really, do we want His glory?

We have a God we cannot even begin to fathom, and we have the privilege to come before Him. He's made us a family together, given us a purpose, an assignment that we can never accomplish on our own. All of this drives us to our faces to say, "God, we want more. We want to know more of your glory. We want more of the power of your Spirit in our church. We want to realize more and more the privilege you've given us, and we want more and more power to accomplish the mission you've entrusted us. We want more, and we will live for more. If necessary, we will die for more. God, show us your glory."

And that's where I'd like us to tune our hearts and our minds and our affections and our lives in prayer this morning. I want to invite you over the next few moments to fix your gaze on the glory of God and pray in the words of Moses, "God, I want to see more glory. I want to know more glory."

Please, I challenge you during the next few moments, not to let your mind wonder about what is next. One thought about lunch, and you're already heading down a road that bypassed the great glory of God for the paltry things of this world. Fix your eyes on His character, on His attributes, and I want to give you a few moments just in silence, without any music, to just meditate on the glory of God. Whether in your seats or at the front, on your knees, the sides, wherever, standing, I want to invite you to fix your gaze on the glory of God, a God we cannot fathom. Consider His glory and express your desire for more, and we'll let that leads us into praying together, singing together. God, makes us a church that wants more of your glory.

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