

Knowing God

Exodus 33 & 34

Life's Greatest Question – Life's Greatest Quest

Who is God—really? This is the single greatest question in all of life. The way you answer this question impacts everything about you. How can you know Him—truly know Him? This is the greatest quest in all of life. Everything else pales in significance next to this. Moses realized this. That's why he couldn't rest until he experienced more of God and knew God more deeply. Exodus chapters 33 and 34 are about Moses pressing in to know God more deeply. This is the heart and soul and climax of the Exodus story. This is the heart and soul of your story as well. Your freedom, identity and purpose in life are all inescapably connected to your personal knowledge of God. It is the quest of a lifetime. But will we “pursue” God so that we might truly know him?

The Israelites had already given up on this quest. They had become fearful and impatient. Instead of pressing in to know the reality of God, they decided to chase after the prevailing cultural values of their world. This seemed so much easier; so much more “tangible.” So they made an idol in the form of a young bull (strength, prosperity, fertility) and worshiped that as god. What a tragedy. In the end it led only to emptiness and heartache for them.

The Real Purpose of God's Grace

Moses saw through the error of the golden calf and set his heart to seek God even more earnestly. Moses had heard the loving promise of God's grace for his life (Exodus 33:12), and he understood the real purpose and power of the grace of God in his life. He saw grace as an incentive and an opportunity to grow even closer to God. So he came back to God with a personal request. In Exodus 33:13 he says: *“If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you.”* Moses had some “momentum” in his own experience with God. So, rather than being satisfied with that and turning his attention to other things, he wanted to build on the grace he had found and go deeper with God. His deepest desire was to “see the glory of God!” (Exodus 33:18)

This is a key lesson for us. All too often people misuse the grace of God as *an excuse to not seek God*. They are glad for grace because it covers their mistakes and shortcomings. But they miss the real purpose of grace – it is God's incentive and opportunity for them to press in to know God more deeply.

The Surprising Truth about the Glory of God

God promises to reveal His glory to Moses (Exodus 33:17-21). The dramatic encounter is carefully set up so that Moses can see the glory of God and not actually die! But when God does reveal his glory it is not what we expect. We expect to see an overwhelming display of special effect. We expect Moses to have an experience that is so mystical that it cannot be communicated in mere words. But what happens instead is that God declares to Moses the essential qualities of his personal character. This is the revelation of God's NAME (Exodus 34:5-7). The surprising truth about the glory of God is that it is the very character of God's being that is the essence of his glory!

Why We Love, Worship and Seek Jesus

All of this becomes clearer through Jesus Christ. Read John 1:14-18. Jesus came that we might fulfill the greatest quest of our lives—to truly know God. To know Him, not just as an abstraction, or a spiritual experience too deep to be expressed in “mere words.” Jesus came to reveal the very character of the God of the universe. Jesus said, “If you have seen me you have seen the father” (John 14:9). This is why we love, worship and seek Jesus. The knowledge of God is given to us in Jesus. The entire earthly life of Jesus was a living declaration of the NAME of God, the glory of God, the character of God. And now we have the great opportunity to know Him personally. No wonder we are told in 2 Peter 3:18 to: *“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen.”* But the choice is ours. Like Moses we can press in to know Him more deeply. Like Paul we can make it our highest aim to know Him (see Philippians 3: 7-14). Or like the Israelites we can settle for something infinitely less; something so much easier and immediate—pursuing the values of our contemporary culture instead of deep relationship with God. But let's each determine today to love, worship and seek Jesus earnestly. This is our highest and most rewarding quest!

Spend some time this week reflecting on Exodus 33 & 34. Journal or pray about what the Lord is doing in your life right now.

The Quest of a Lifetime

When you think about your faith in the LORD, do you think of it as a life-long quest? Is your Christian faith right now more about religion (i.e. obligation) or relationship?

Grace is God's Incentive and Opportunity to Press in and Know Him More Deeply.

Respond to this statement. Can you think of a time when the Grace of God in your life was at work in a powerful way? How did this impact your relationship with the LORD?

SUNDAY 04/29

Baptism Service, 7pm,
RWLG

SUNDAY 05/06

Introducing River West,
7pm, RWLG

WEDNESDAY 05/16

HS Pure Choice 07'
OSU, Corvallis
Meet @ 4:30, RWLG

SATURDAY 06/26

Family Fellowship
Day at the Park
Details to come!

EVERY WEEK

Thursday Night Group
7pm, RWLG
A drop-in Community
Group with Pastor Adam.
Childcare is available

COMING UP

HS Summer Retreat
June 20th-24th

Vacation Bible School
July 9th-13th

JH Summer Retreat
July 16th-20th

