

Sermon Notes

16th February 2020

Exodus 33:1-11, 33:17-34:9

Background

- God had chosen the Israelites to be his own special people (2:24, 19:5-6), revealed his name to them (3:13-14), rescued them from slavery in Egypt (12:50-51) and brought them safe across the desert.
- He had given them his laws (20:1-17) and they had promised to obey (24:3). He had made a solemn covenant (treaty) with them (24:8). The first two of his commandments (20:3-6) are about having no other gods and making no idols.
- He had met with them face to face (24:9-11) and he had given them plans for a Tabernacle (chapters 25-31), a place he could live among them and be accessible to his people (25:22).
- Yet, despite all that, in Ex 32 we read that they rejected Moses their leader (32:1), made an idol in the shape of a golden calf, and worshipped it as their god (32:4).
- The result was that Moses and God were furious with them. So, what happens when God gives us everything, and yet we mess up big time and completely fail him. Does that mean it's all over for us?
- We've all experienced it. But how can God ever be close again?

What a friend we have...

- Moses was the only one untainted by the incident with the golden calf – he was up the mountain at the time!
- He still is close to God and meets with him (33:11). He uses that to pray for the people (33:15-17).
- Cultivate friends who will stick with us, even when we've messed up. Who will help us find the way home.
- Perhaps we are that friend. We know our own shortcomings, but can we help someone else?
- Doing that is sharing in something God is already doing himself:
 - Romans 8:34 – Jesus is at God's right hand, interceding (praying) for us
 - Romans 8:26 – the Holy Spirit prays with us, even when we have no words, only groans

Because of who God is

- God hides Moses in a cleft in the rock and reveals his glory (33:18-23).
- 34:6 He declares his name (remember Exodus 3:14 – Yahweh, the Lord, I am who I am) and his character (the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness).
- Sin has consequences, perhaps long lasting (the third and fourth generation, v7) but, to those who repent, there is love and forgiveness extending to thousands.
- Our hope in God's presence, especially when we have failed, is not in ourselves, it's in his character, his mercy and faithfulness.
- How far does that mercy and faithfulness extend? Consider Romans 8:31-35
 - God didn't spare even himself, in the person of his Son
 - He was willing to suffer the cross for us – knowing all our failures
 - He has proved his faithfulness – he won't turn his back on us now
 - This is his settled will – nothing can separate us from his love
- Our response? To worship. To trust. To avoid sin where we can. But to trust in his faithfulness when we fall.

Space for your notes

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