

## **Show Us Your Glory – The Road, New Year’s Eve (12/31/17)**

Exodus 33:12-23

Prayer

### **Introduction**

All right guys, today we stand at the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018. And here at The Road we’ve been through some changes this year. So it’s appropriate for us to come together and take some time to earnestly look to the Lord and say, “Lord, how would you lead us over the next year?”

And for our answer, we need to look to no other place than to Scripture. As I have been seeking God and pleading with him, my heart has landed on Exodus 33. In Exodus 33 Moses and the children of Israel have a powerful experience with God. And what they experienced is what I’m longing for us as a Church family here at The Road.

Before I read the passage, a little background. The book of Exodus is the story of how God delivered the children of Israel from 400 years of slavery in Egypt. God raised up Moses to deliver them and God poured out 10 plagues on the Egyptians that caused Pharaoh to release the Israelites from bondage. But if you’re familiar with the history you know that Pharaoh’s heart was hardened one last time and he pursued the Israelites with his army to destroy them.

It’s estimated that there were more than a million Israelites that walked out of Egypt. God had led them out to the Red Sea and so by the time Pharaoh’s army caught up to them, they were trapped by the sea on one side and Pharaoh’s army on the other. Just when it seemed they would be slaughtered, God opened up a path through the Red Sea, causing the waters to separate and stand up like two walls. And the Scriptures tell us that they walked through the Red Sea on dry ground.

When Pharaoh’s army tried to chase them through the sea, God caused the walls to collapse drowning Pharaoh’s army. So over and over we’re told that God stretched out his mighty arm to save his people. After the Red Sea, God led the people through the wilderness to Mt. Sinai. And there God would establish a new covenant with his people and give them the 10 Commandments.

God called Moses up to the top of the Mountain. Listen to this description from Exodus 24:

Exodus 24:15-18 Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 16 The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. 18 Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Because Moses was on top of the mountain for so long, the people got restless and they assumed something happened to Moses and he wasn’t coming back. So guess what they did? They got Aaron and told him to make them gods to go before them. So Aaron took some of their gold jewelry and melted it and out of the molten gold, Aaron fashioned a golden calf. And the people made sacrifices to the golden calf. And they made of day of celebration to worship their new god. This is so striking, isn’t it? How soon the people turned away from the true and living God who, by his hands, miraculously delivered them from Egypt, to worship a false god they had made with their own hands???

So here’s Moses, up on the mountain with God, and God tells Moses that he’s going to destroy the people and make out of Moses a great nation. But Moses intercedes for the people. He pleads with God that God would forgive them. Moses pled with God on the basis of God’s character and on the basis of his promises. So God relented. God would keep his promise to bring the people to the promised land. But God, himself, would not go with them. God would send an angel to lead them but his presence would not go in the midst of them because they were a stiff-necked people.

And this is where we pick up with our passage. We are going to see that Moses continues to plead with God. And here’s what Moses is going to plead. And the things that Moses begs God for are the things that I want us to ask God for in the coming year. Moses is going to ask God not to lead them to the promised land if God will not go with them.

Read passage:

There are three things we want to see from this passage before draw out some implications for The Road.

1. What Moses Asked, 2. What God Did, and 3. How Moses changed

### **1. What Moses Asked**

a) v. 13 Show me your ways (what does that mean?)

Moses wasn't interested in the ways of the world, not the ways of other churches, not our own ways

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?"

What was Moses' reason for asking God to show him his ways?

That I may know you...

Philippians 3:8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

b) v. 15 If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here...

The reason why this is such a big deal is because God had already promised that he would lead them to the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and land with houses already built. And God said he would give them an angel to go with them. So Moses and the people would have all the things of this world they would ever need. Protections, safety, wealth, an easy life. They would have everything except... God. Moses would rather stay in a wilderness with God than have every natural comfort this world could offer without him.

This is a good test for you and me. Could you honestly be happy in your life with all the comforts of this world without God? Let's ask that in a different way. What do you have that if it was taken away from you, you could not longer be happy with God? That's a risky question because if you find something that you couldn't be happy with God without it, then you've found you're true God.

c) v. 18 Please, show me your glory

The reason this request is so amazing is because of all the things he had seen of God

1. The burning bush
2. The plagues in Egypt
3. The parting of the Red sea
4. Manna in the wilderness
5. He had already seen a degree of God's glory on Mt. Sinai

But Moses is not content, he's hungry for God's presence, he's hungry to know God more deeply, and he's hungry to see more of God's glory.

How would God respond to Moses' request?

### **2 What God Did**

I will make all my goodness pass before you

I will proclaim my name

You can not see my face and live...

There is a place beside me

The cleft of the rock

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

Only in Christ can we see the glory of God, only in Christ is it safe.

Exodus 34:5-9 God shows up and shows off

### **3. How Moses Changed**

Ex. 34:29-30

#### **Practical implications**

In the coming year, I believe that a Moses-like hunger for God's glory needs to be the banner that flies over The Road. What we need to see is that all our growth, ministry, work, evangelism will grow out of this kind of experience with God.

I know that for many of you here, you have put your blood, sweat, and tears into the Road for nearly 2 years now. And if you're like me, you really want to know that it's been worth it. Inside we really want confirmation that God is with us and blessing us. But the problem is that sometimes we often have this idea in our minds of what success as a church and God's blessing looks like. And the truth is that the picture in our minds isn't always the same as the picture in God's mind.

How did Moses define God's blessing? V. 33:16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?

Now, here's what I want us to be careful about. I want us to be careful about manufacturing the appearance of God's presence with us without the reality of having it. Imagine that you have an apple tree and the apple tree isn't producing apples. Well, if you want apples, there's a couple of things you could do. One thing you could do is drive down to Walmart and buy every apple they have. And when you get home, you take all your shiny apples and you proceed to tie them all over your tree. But let me ask you a question... Would you have fixed your apple tree? The answer is, of course not! Eventually all you're going to have is rotten fruit hanging on your tree.

If you want good fruit, you're going to have to prune your tree. You're going to have to make sure it's getting enough sun light and water. You're going to have to fertilize it. And that's how a church is. There are a lot of easy ways we can tie fruit onto our tree. But those aren't really the results we're looking for. Often churches approach this by finding new ways to attract goats with the hopes that somehow when the goats get there they're going to suddenly and magically become sheep. But what they find is that when you attract goats, you're going to have to keep goats attracted and entertained with goat things.

What we need at The Road, and I'm asking you to buy into this... I'm asking you to give your life to this... What we need at The Road is this pursuing Christ and his glory like Moses did. That we as a church would be committed to focusing our energy on our spiritual growth. And when we focus on spiritual growth we can allow numerical growth and the growth of various ministries to spring from our spiritual growth.

Now here's what's going to happen, from time to time people will come in here and peek at our life together as a church and they won't even give us a second look because we don't have big wonderful flashy programs. But do you realize why that is? It's because most people don't give a rip about the things Moses begged God for. They are not moved by God's glory. They are not hungry for God's Word. They don't really want to follow in God's ways.

Will you allow me to say this? What you and I need most... What our families need most... What our children need most are not lots of fancy programs. What we all need most is to see the beauty and glory of Jesus in all its splendor. We need to see God as he truly is. And we need to be transformed by him. And that radical transformation in our lives needs to become contagious so that others around us will come to see it too.

There's a lot of discussion in Church growth strategies about being outward focused vs. being inward focused. If your focus is inward, you're going to focus on yourself and you're never going to reach those outside the Church... So the strategists say that we need to be outward focused (focusing on the needs of those outside the church). Now hear me clearly on this, the spiritual needs of those inside and outside the church are important. But I'd like to suggest an alternate and more important focus. Instead of an outward or inward focus... Our focus needs to be upward. The focus of the bride ought to be on the bridegroom. The Church's attention needs to be fixed on Christ.

Then we will be like a person, imagine this. Imagine a person standing on a busy sidewalk with lots of people bustling by. Picture this person standing still in the middle of the sidewalk staring intently at something up in the sky. Here's what's going to happen... The people walking by him are going to see him staring up and they're going to wonder, "What is he looking at?" And then they will stop and they will look up, because they just can't help but know what it is that's gripped his attention.

Friends, if our gaze is fixed upward toward the beauty of Christ and his glory, and if we are gripped by it, eventually people will take notice. And eventually some of them will see it too. And it will change them like it's changed us. And then, the magnetic drawing power of our growth will be the beauty of Christ and the glory of his gospel.

Now here's the thing... If you and I look up and we're just sort of ho-hum about it. Or if we're just pretending to look up and we're not moved, we're not going to have an impact on anyone! Or if we do it won't be a good impact.

So what do we do now? I believe we need to begin

1. By humbling ourselves before our God
2. By examining ourselves in the light of God's character and his word (are we stiff-necked?)
3. By committing ourselves to his ways as he has shown them to us in the Scriptures
4. By pleading with him and not giving up until he has answered us.