



# 2026 Weekly Devotions

Week of: June 8<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>

Sermon: June 7<sup>th</sup>



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH  
building community ◊ equipping believers ◊ serving Jesus



June 8

### **Exodus 34:1-5**

This week's devotions constitute the overflow of my study. Understanding that the sanctuary was likely to be quite warm (we pray all parts come in and the air conditioning is fixed before this coming Lord's Day) and knowing that there was no way in the world I could cover the rich glories that God revealed to Moses in any substantial, satisfactory way, I chose to take this week to talk about a subject that is near and dear to my heart... the attributes of God.

The word "attribute" means a quality or trait. When combined with theology (the study of God), the term denotes the traits or qualities that belong to God Himself. I would argue that the church today suffers from an ignorance of God. Many Christians are consumer driven, only wanting to know what God says or promises them. While these promises are valuable, the most precious truths God reveals in His Word may well be His revelation of Himself! After all, we will never have a comprehensive revelation of all of God's particular plans for us in a given circumstance but, if we have a developed understanding of God's character and nature, we have plenty to rely upon in our moments of darkness.

The Sovereignty of God, the impassibility of God (God is incapable of being disturbed), the omniscience and omnipotence of God, the grace of God, the justice of God and the like are all attributes that can minister to our soul throughout life. Stated succinctly, your vision of God, how big He is in your mind, how incomprehensible and glorious He is to you, will directly impact your lifestyle and psyche in this fallen world.

Today's text demonstrates that God knows this well. We see this when we connect the dots a bit in our passage. Recall that Moses is pleading with God to restore fellowship between the sinful people of Israel and the great I AM. Moses knows that God must go with them if they are going to be blessed but there is a tension in the passage as it relates to whether God will in fact go.

Now, chapter 34 records God's ultimate, and glorious, response to Moses' requests. In this text, God speaks and He begins His Words in a rather interesting way. Notice the very first words of the passage, "The LORD...". Now, why is the word "LORD" translated in all capital letters? The answer is that it is rendered this way to denote the very sacred name of God. Recall back in Exodus 3 when God says to Moses, "Tell them (the Israelites) I AM sent you..." That name "I AM" is the same name translated as "LORD" here. The name denotes an absolute being.

God is proclaiming Himself to be eternal and absolute in His being. There was no time that He did not exist, there is nothing that can harm Him in His existence, and there will be no time that He does not exist. Why does this matter for Moses? The answer is that only a God who is absolutely present and immovable can provide balm for the weary soul and assurances of future grace. If there was any equivocation in God, there would be no lasting hope. If God could cease to exist or if He could be acted upon in a way that would necessarily change His character, then the promises that flow from Him are far less valuable. Only the enduring and self-existing God can offer a Word that is guaranteed to last because it is tied to His nature and character.

June 9

### **Exodus 34:6**

Today we will begin to dissect some of the other revealed attributes of the “LORD”. As we do so, I want us to consider how these attributes were so helpful to Moses so we will define the term that God uses of Himself and then we will seek to understand how these attributes helped Moses and Israel in their moment of distress.

Today we read God’s description of Himself as “compassionate”. The word means one who deeply recognizes another person’s suffering and desires to alleviate their angst. In this moment, God reveals to Moses that He is aware of the people’s tribulation and He is bent on helping! Our God is not aloof. He is not far from His people, instead He is near to those who have approached Him by faith. He is intimately aware of their difficulties, and He is always intent on leading them through.

Consider Moses’ heart as He heard these words. He needed a compassionate God! God had every right to be angry and wrathful in that moment. He could have wiped Israel off the map and started over, and no one could have accused Him of wrongdoing! There was no justification for the sins of the people. They had been warned by God not to worship other gods (see Exodus 20), they had been cared for and preserved by their God, and they chose to rebel anyway.

God did not need the people to complete Him. He was justified in taking them out and yet He reveals to Moses that He is compassionate. Isn’t this good news? Do you know this compassionate God? I suppose that Moses was overjoyed and invigorated to stand before the people and command their repentance considering this revelation. After all, God was still desirous of their good!

Man’s nature is to run from God when sin is committed. The tendency to flee His presence is often rooted in fear. Will God harm me in light of what I’ve done? Would He accept me after my failure? These are real questions and they need an answer. Thankfully, the Lord has revealed to us that He indeed is compassionate. He desires our good and He is ready and waiting to receive the repentant soul, welcoming him or her back into His good graces and walking with them towards restoration and blessing.

Dear friend, God is compassionate. Do you believe this today? Some of you need to pause for a moment and resolve to stop running from the God who has revealed Himself to be concerned with you. He has every right to be angry with your sin but, by His very nature, He is kind to those who humbly acknowledge their sin and return to Him for forgiveness and restoration.

June 10

**Exodus 34:6**

Today's devotion is dedicated to the counterpart of compassion which is grace. You will notice that the two terms fall together in our verse for the day and this is indicative of a larger pattern in Scripture. In fact, there are many places where God is described as "merciful" and "gracious" (2 Chronicles 30:9; Psalm 86:15; Psalm 111:4). Evidently, there is a great connection between being merciful and gracious... what is it?

God's mercy is defined as that which moves Him to concern and an earnest desire to alleviate our guilty, grace is the very act of forgiving us of our sin. In other words, because God is merciful, He is gracious! If He were not merciful, there would be no motivation for His grace. If God was unconcerned, uncaring and disinterested, the act of extending grace would be unappealing. However, because God is concerned, caring and interested in us and desirous of restoring us, He has moved to extend forgiveness to us which allows the suffering that results from sin to be alleviated.

Consider, for a moment, how welcome this knowledge of God would have been to Moses. Here is a man who knows that his people have screwed up... royally! He is aware that they have transgressed against a holy God and yet God says that He desires to give them mercy. What a welcome revelation indeed! If God were not merciful, they would be without hope but because God is merciful, there was reason for joy.

God's right to extend mercy is grounded in His being. Our God is the "LORD". He is self-existent and the originator of all things which means He answers to no one but Himself. If He desires to extend grace to someone, He is able and no higher authority can thwart His plan. Paul teaches us that God has mercy on whomever He desires (Romans 9:18) and this means that the only prerequisite to our forgiveness is God's decree!

Sometimes we can struggle with the idea that we have been forgiven by God because others refuse to forgive us or we have a hard time forgiving ourselves. This being the case, let us recall that there is One who is Higher than our contemporaries and He is God. If He has forgiven us, no other grudge will stand in His eternal decree.

Thankfully, we have more evidence of God's mercy and grace than Moses possessed. Now, we can see that God's mercy and grace caused Him to send His own Son. His mercy drove Him to devise a plan to alleviate our suffering (amongst other things) and His grace is now extended to all who would simply believe in Him. God has always been merciful and gracious and this is the motivation behind our worship of our great and Sovereign LORD.

June 11

**Exodus 34:7**

My mom had a few phrases that we were on guard for as children. One of her favorites was “my patience is wearing thin”. Whenever this little sentence was uttered, we knew that a warning shot had been fired. Mom was getting ready to blow hot and we needed to adjust accordingly!

Some of us think that God’s patience wears thin. To be fair, there is a sense in which His patience does run out for those who reject Him. There is no doubt that people who disobey the Lord and never repent will see God’s grace and mercy, which is currently extended to them, deplete and ultimately expire. Nevertheless, we need to recall that God is speaking here to Moses, a member of His covenant family.

God was talking about a people that He had promised His presence and blessing to. They had most certainly screwed up but their actions were not the final determiner of God’s actions. Instead, the Lord reveals Himself here as one who is known by His “steadfast love”.

Interestingly enough the term “steadfast love”, which is obviously two words in English, translates one term in Hebrew. In fact, there are times in which the word is simply rendered “steadfast” in our English translations. Steadfast means to be immovable, unyielding. When combined with the term love, we get a beautiful picture of God’s commitment to His people.

Israel had waivered. They had abandoned their God for false idols, but the Lord’s grace and mercy never moved. He was steadfast in His commitment to them. Nothing they had done would change His affections and His promises given to them. Over the years, they would test this attribute! They would abandon Him and whore after other gods. They would go through the motions in their worship. They would doubt His goodness and neglect His Word, yet God remained steadfast in His love for them.

This beautiful truth endures today. God’s steadfast love remains for His children. Recall, He is the “LORD” the great “I AM” who cannot change and will not be moved. He is the same God who spoke to Moses which means His love for us is the same love that was extended to Israel. Perhaps you have been guilty of sin lately, if so recall that God is steadfast in His love for you. Your sin is worse than you think but His love for you is greater than you can imagine.

June 12

**Exodus 34:7**

I'm going to do something in this devotion that is, admittedly, a bit dangerous. Today's attribute deals with forgiveness. The relationship between God's steadfast love and our sin is tied together through forgiveness. God forgives us, and He does so liberally and consistently.

Now, that's obviously not conjecture. It is as clear as day that God is a gracious and merciful God and that moves Him to forgiveness. What I want to do today, however, is to try to answer a question that some of you may have had. It's a question that has drawn my attention more than once and it is rooted in the words that God uses in verse 7.

Notice in the text that God is said to forgive "iniquity and transgression and sin". If you are like me, you might be tempted to wonder, what is the difference? Is there a categorical distinction between iniquity, transgression and sin? They are certainly different words, but they are so synonymous that it seems rather redundant to utilize all three when naming sin.

Why would God repeat Himself? My answer (and again take this for what its worth) is for emphasis. Sometimes we use synonyms to drive home the point we are making. We can say that a person is "kind, generous, benevolent" and the like in order to show that they are truly loving towards others. My assumption here is that God is making a point about the extent of His grace towards us. He is so forgiving that he names sin (or at least words that describe sin) three times in order to show us just how serious He is about forgiving our transgressions.

Whether my interpretation is true or not, the point that I am making stands. God is more forgiving than we could imagine. God forgives us constantly. Sometimes He forgives us and it is obvious; many times, His forgiveness extends to sins and blind spots we don't even know we have. His grace covers the iniquities of my youth, the transgressions of my present and the sins I didn't even know I committed. His grace extends to my worst offenses and things that might seem minor. His grace is inexhaustible and unquestionable with no qualifications offered!

This is the great God that we serve, and it is part and parcel of His very nature. God doesn't forgive on a whim; God forgives because the great I AM is gracious and merciful in His Being. When you approach the throne of grace, you can do so with confidence because the One who sits on the throne is more gracious than you could imagine. This was good news for Moses because his people needed that grace and its good news for you because you need it as well.

June 13

**Exodus 34:7**

We arrive at a clause that might seem like a contradiction in light of what we have considered to this point. The Lord has given Moses some glorious insight into His kindness and grace but now He tells Moses that he will not clear the guilty.

How does this work? Doesn't forgiveness imply guilt? After all, you can't be truly forgiven for a sin you didn't commit. What in the world is going on here? The answer, of course, is that God does not clear the guilty, He exacts punishment to atone for them... there is a difference.

God's grace that He offers us is not free or "cheap" to use the phraseology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer defined cheap grace this way, "Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate." In other words, grace has a terminus and that is the cross of Christ.

The way that God could offer grace is not by simply moving on. God does not "forgive and forget" in the way that you and I may think. Instead, because God is also just, He must excise a payment for our sins. This means that there is such a thing as guilt and there is such a thing as punishment. God does not "clear the guilty" in the sense that He allows the guilty to walk without any restitution.

How does this work? The Gospel answer is that God exacts payment for our sins from Another. Specifically, God saw to it, in His Infinite Wisdom, to combine His grace, mercy and steadfast love with His righteousness. In this way, His love shines through by exalting both His mercy and wrath towards sin. God's grace is not cheap grace because grace cost Him His very life.

Jesus came to die in our place. He is evidence that God does not clear the guilty. Instead of clearing the guilty, God took the place of the guilty, atoning for their sins by laying down His very life and offering us His righteousness instead. This is the very pinnacle of compassion (being moved to alleviate the suffering of others), it is the definition of love (sacrificing for the well-being of others) and the height of mercy (offering the guilty what they don't deserve).

The Cross of Christ is the place where we see the attributes of God most clearly. His love and kindness shines through as His wrath is endured by His very Son who would die so that we could live. What a mighty and wonderful God we serve.

June 14

**Exodus 34:8**

Well, we are completing our journey through some theological reflections on the character and attributes of God. My hope is that this has not been too dusty for you! Years ago, when I first encountered solid, and dense, theology, the effect on my soul wasn't fossilization, it was worship! I have learned that the more I see God, the more I hear His Word and understand His revelation, the more I worship.

Verse 8 tells me that I'm not alone. Notice that the effect of God's declaration of Himself was Moses' worship. He heard all that God said about Himself and immediately glorified His Lord. This is the right, and necessary, response. The Bible demonstrates what history teaches... all men will worship something. As John Calvin famously said, "the human heart is an idol making factory". We all seek to worship something! The question is not will we worship; the question is what will we worship?

Today we should be reminded that only One Being in the universe deserves our worship and that is God. He gives us many reasons to pause and thank Him in Exodus 34. We should praise God because He is God and we are not. He is self-existent, immovable and therefore trustworthy and righteous in His character. We can KNOW that God exists, and we can KNOW that He is good.

We should praise God that He is gracious and compassionate and we should praise Him because His compassion and grace compel Him to forgiveness. We should praise God because He is just and wrathful towards sin. He is not going to condone that which is evil which makes Him good and holy and worthy of our adoration.

We should praise God because He sent Jesus to die in our place. He unveiled the mystery of His plan of redemption on that hill at Calvary and the world has never been the same. Just as the first disciples worshipped upon encountering the risen Christ, so we should worship today because He is still alive and His sacrifice is still sufficient. Oh, dear brother and sister, God is good.

Today, you and I have the privilege and joy of bowing our heads in worship together. We can gather with God's people to exalt the God who has revealed Himself in His Word. What better utilization of a day? Just as Moses praised the Lord, so we prepare our hearts to praise Him today. He is the same, after all, therefore He is still very worthy of the adoration we will ascribe to Him. Won't you come to glorify Him?