

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – July 23, 2017
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church

Pastor Charles Heup

Exodus 33:12-23 (NIV)

Moses said to the LORD, "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 found favor with me.' 13) 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." 14) The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." 15) Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 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?" 17) And 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." 18) **Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."** 19) And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20) But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." 21) Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 22) When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23) Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Dear Friends in Christ,

"**Now show me your glory,**" we heard Moses ask in our text. Inspired by our Old Testament lesson for today let's also ask

Theme: Lord Show Us Your Glory

1. As you answer our prayers
2. As you proclaim your name

A bit of background information will help us to put Moses' request and ours into perspective. So let's go back to the days of Moses shortly after the Lord's people rebelled against the Lord by making and worshipping the golden calf. As you might recall at the time the people were making this calf Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving God's commands for his people. The Lord's anger burned against his chosen people. He informed Moses that he was going to wipe them out and that he would make a new and great nation from Moses.

Moses would not hear of this. He interceded for the Lord's people and sought the favor of the Lord his God. He reminded the Lord that he had claimed these people as his own. He explained that if the Lord would destroy these people that the Egyptians would accuse him of being evil toward his people. He reminded the Lord of the covenant of grace he had made with Jacob and his ancestors. The Lord relented and agreed not to destroy the people.

Moses then went back down to confront the Lord's rebellious people. Ultimately, the people acknowledged their sins and repented of them. Once again, Moses felt an obligation to speak to the Lord on behalf of his people. The Lord had told Moses that he should lead the people to Canaan. He also indicated that he would not lead them and go with them as he had done when they left Egypt. He planned to send an angel to guide them.

Our text is one of many conversations that Moses had with the Lord as he sought the Lord's blessings for the nation of Israel. **Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me.**

Moses spoke to the Lord as you and I might speak to one of friends. He reminded the Lord of their previous conversations. He is politely asking the Lord to go with him as he had done before. He wants the Lord to return to fellowship with the Israelites. He based his request on a promise the Lord had made to him. **You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.'** The Lord knew Moses personally and had called him to be the leader of his people. This was an act of God's grace as Moses acknowledged when he said you have found favor with me. This grace formed the basis for Moses prayers.

God also knows each of us by name. He has poured his grace and favor on us with the waters of baptism – calling us into his family. As his favored ones, we can come to him in prayer with the expectation that he will reveal his glory to us as he answers our prayers.

Moses was confident of the Lord's answer to his prayers because the Lord had dealt with him graciously in the past. **If (since) 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."** Lord, what is it you want me to do? What is it Lord that you have in mind for your people? You have told me that you are a God of grace and that you love me. Now Lord, don't forget about the people that you have called as your own.

Just as Moses based his prayers of the nation of Israel on the Lord's promises and on his goodness, we also can offer our prayers for ourselves and others to the Lord because he is good and his mercy endures forever. We can pray to the Lord to be faithful to his word and to bless us and others in keeping with the promises he has made in his word.

Moses prayed to the Lord boldly and the Lord revealed his glory to Moses by showing that he was a God who is true to his word. He is gracious and forgiving. **The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."**

The Lord gave Moses what he asked for! I will go with you! I will give you rest. I will keep the promise I made to you and my people. I will lead you to your journey's end. I will bring you joy and happiness. The Lord would bring them to the land he had promised.

The Lord Jesus has made these promises to us. He has invited us, come unto me and I will give you rest – rest for your souls. He has promised, "I will be with you always." The forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation are ours through faith in Christ. The Lord has revealed his glory to us in Christ.

Moses responded to the Lord's promise of his abiding presence and rest for his people by restating just how important it was for the Lord to be with his people. **Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 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?"**

Previously the Lord had shown his presence to his people by leading them with a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. When the Lord would once again go before his people in this way, they would be assured of his forgiveness for their sin of idolatry. It would assure them that he was indeed being faithful to the covenant he had made with them. It would also be a testimony to others that the Lord is a God who is real and powerful. In this way the Lord would draw others to trust in and rely on his grace and power too.

Once again, the Lord responds to Moses and assures him of his grace and favor. **And 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."** The Lord looked on Moses with his grace – he was pleased with him. He knew Moses as the one whom who had graciously chosen to lead his people. He would continue to deal with him in love and grace.

Each and every time we gather in the Lord's house for worship or receive the Lord's Supper we are reminded of those very same facts. The Lord wants us to be assured of the fact that he is looking on us in grace and that he is pleased with us. We are the objects of his love and grace. Therefore we can approach the Lord in prayer with confidence that he will hear us and that he will show us his glory by providing the best answer to all of our requests.

In some ways, we might say that Moses had already been privileged to see God's glory. He certainly saw his powerful deeds. He had spoken directly to the Lord. He had seen the pillar of fire and the cloud the Lord used to reveal his presence to his people. And yet, Moses understood that God was even more glorious than this. Since the Lord had been so gracious to him, Moses desired to see his heavenly glory and splendor.

While we can say, we have seen the glory of the Lord as he has answered our prayer, we too long to see with our own eyes the glory of the Lord. But the closest that we can come to seeing that glory in this sinful world is to hear the name of the Lord and to behold his saving grace.

And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20) But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

Moses had brought another bold request to the Lord. And the Lord responded to that request in the way which was best for Moses. The Lord said, "No." No sinful human being could see his face and live. But yet, the Lord wanted Moses and us to see his glory as he reveals his name to us. He revealed his goodness to Moses by introducing himself, if you will. He proclaimed his name, the Lord. He explained to Moses who and what he his. He is the source of mercy – he has a deep sense of compassion for those who are suffering, weak or in need. He is also the God who shows undeserved love and grace. God is also a just God who judges and punishes sin. That's something that needs to be emphasized – but it is true that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they would turn from their ways and live (cf. Ezekiel 33:11)

The word that God used to reveal his name to Moses became a special word in the Hebrew language. It had four letters and was regarded as so special that no one ever spoke it. Instead, they would say, "Adonai" whenever they saw it. Today our Bible translations use small capitals to spell this word: LORD. When you see this word in your Bibles, think of the God of free and faithful grace, the Savior of sinners, the God of mercy and compassion.

The Lord reveals his glory to us by assuring us of his love and forgiveness as he proclaims his saving name to us in the Scriptures.

After the Lord revealed his name to Moses, **the Lord said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 22) When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23) Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."**

It is a bit difficult for us to know and understand exactly what the Lord showed to Moses. It seems as if Moses was able to see a passing reflection of God's glory. That is a reminder to us that God wants us to focus our attention on the proclamation of his name through the Gospel rather than on visions.

What a privilege we have had today – we have seen the glory of the Lord! As Moses stood on the rock while the glory of the Lord passed by, he had a momentary glimpse of that glory. You and I are privilege to behold that glory as the Lord answers our prayers and as he proclaims his name to us. May we regularly make us of those opportunities to behold the glory of the Lord. Amen.