

Learning to live the “with God” life: Part 1

Exodus 33:12-19a

Fourth Sunday of Eastertide – April 25, 2021

Tom Mount – Holy Trinity Chico

Scripture: Exodus 33:12-19a

Introduction

- Eastertide was a weird time for the disciples. Jesus was preparing them to relate to him in an entirely different way: from being physically present to them to being spiritually present to them.
- Eastertide was about teaching them to live “with” him in this “new normal” where his physical presence will now be in heaven with the Father yet he will remain vitally present to them through his very Spirit. This is our “normal”.
- Today and next week I want to talk about learning to live a “with God” life based on the OT text that Adam just read for us: Ex 33:12-19a.

Observations on the text with application to our lives

- **Backdrop**
 - Background is the infamous “Golden calf” incident of Ex 32. We are the image of God (Gen 1:26-28). And Jesus is the perfect image of the Father (Col 1:15; Heb 1:3).

- What they did violated the second of the ten commandments (cf. Exodus 20; 33:5). As a result, God says he's going to send an unnamed angel with them. He's no longer going to go "with them".
- This is devastating news on a couple levels.
 1. National level: All the other nations had angels leading them. Since Gen 11 and the Ziggurat of Babylon the nations had been handed over for a time to the sons of God, members of the divine council (Deut 32:8-9; Ps 82).
 2. Personal level: Moses had experienced God's intimate goodness, and couldn't imagine life without it (Ex 33:11).
- Three observations about this exchange between Yahweh and Moses.

1. Notice Moses' utter obstinance to budge without God

¹⁵“Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.”

- Moses saying: Then don't send us away. We'd rather stay here with you than go to the promised land with some stranger. Moses had tasted and seen that Yahweh is good (Ps 34:8). Nothing else satisfies! Have you found the same to be true for you?
- What did Yahweh think of Moses' obstinance? His response: “This very thing I will do: My presence (face) will go with you and I will give you rest.”

2. Notice Moses' understanding of his relationship with God: v.12b, 17b:

Moses in v. 12b: “You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’

Yahweh in v. 17b: “I am pleased with you and I know you by name”

- Yahweh's/Moses relationship was founded on two things:
 1. God knew Moses "by name." In ANE, to know someone "by name" (*shem* in Heb) was to have unique personal insight into that person's character and essence; to know them truly in the deepest and most intimate sense (cf. Rev 2:17).
 2. Moses brought Yahweh much pleasure. "You have found favor in my sight" – "You bring me delight and I'm really fond of you"
- Does our perception of how God sees us really affect how we relate to God? (cf. Mk 1:11).

3. Notice how Moses uses his position of favor as leverage for a deeper revelation of God's person

v. 13: "If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you."

- "teach me your ways" – way comes from *derek*, and means paths, roads, habits, character, life, loves, desires, loves.
- "so that I may know you" – know, *yada*, is to know another comprehensively through intimate first-hand experience. Used commonly for sex (e.g., Gen 4:1).

v. 18: "Now show me your glory!"

- Glory is *kabod* – the unmediated expression of the divine nature and majesty..
- God's response: "I will cause all my goodness (*tuw*) to pass in front of you and declare my name, Yahweh, in your presence." God fulfills this promise in Ex 34:6-7.

Summary

God created us to live in face-to-face companionship with him. Although humanity's fall into sin complicated this creative plan, God's purpose remained intact: he wants to teach each of us to live "with him" in all the details of our lives in warm companionship and close collaboration. He made this possible by joining his deity to our humanity in the person of Jesus Christ (Christmas), by paying the price for our sins (Good Friday), by restoring humanity to his image (Easter) and by sending his Holy Spirit to indwell us, personally connecting us to himself (Pentecost). The result is that we can live lives of warm, rich intimacy, love and significance if we take him up on his offer and cultivate our relationship with him through regular spiritual practices.

Practical take aways

1. **Get in the habit of calling God by his name**
 - In OT? "the LORD"
 - In NT?
2. **Begin each day by spending face-to-face time with him**
 - Set aside a quiet spot where you can be alone: sit or walk, have coffee/tea
 - A – Ask Abba to meet with you and speak to you
 - B – "Be" - Be fully present: take 3 deep breaths; attend
 - C – Chew on a short passage slowly, prayerfully; take it with you
 - Close with prayer and commit your day to the Lord. Hudson Taylor wanted each day to "get his heart happy in the Lord"

Resources

- ***The Practice of the Presence of God* (Brother Lawrence):**
https://www.amazon.com/Practice-Presence-God-Modern-English/dp/1521299757/ref=sr_1_2?crid=AQ221Q0CAM41&dchild=1&keywords=brother+lawrence+the+practice+of+the+presence+of+god&qid=1619278896&srefix=brother+lawre%2Caps%2C276&sr=8-2
- “The Chosen” video series on YouTube. Season 1, Episodes 1 and 2:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6sHNLmYbAM> (Story starts at 13:25).