

FEBRUARY 12

Exodus 34:1-35:9

Exodus 34

Vs. 1-4 I've never fully understood Moses' anger in breaking the first tablets. Moses' anger gets him in trouble later. But here I find it sort of funny that God tells Moses to cut two more stone tablets for the next morning, and Moses just went out and did it. I wouldn't know where to begin. I suppose today we could run out to Home Depot© and get a couple of patio stones.

Vs. 5-9 Moses asked to see God's glory. Moses sees some of God, hears God say His name and then repeat His name describing His great love on those who receive that love, and His wrath on those who reject His love. This isn't just God declaring some information about Himself; it is God revealing Himself. He does it in such a way that Moses is strengthened to his core and assured of God's nature. God is "feasting" Moses on who He is and why He does what He does. It is like living in a kingdom for years hearing about the king and observing his decrees and laws and works and only knowing him on that basis. Now you are invited to live with him, talk to him at breakfast, informal, fully visible and transparent, like a friend. Your understanding of everything would become exponentially deeper and wiser. Verses 6 & 7 become a refrain mentioned again and again as to the nature of God. Along with the name, "I AM," comes the spiritual insight into His heart.

Notice in the description of God in 6 & 7, how long it takes to get to punishment. The generational aspect is hard for us to swallow until we've read the entire Bible and see what God says to Ezekiel and Jeremiah regarding the sons not being punished for the sins of the fathers. We've already read Abe's talk with the Lord regarding finding a few who were righteous in Sodom. No one who sincerely comes to God in repentance is ever turned away. Everyone who seeks, finds. Yet, there is a kind of sin that becomes deeply inbred in a culture and within generations. When this sin becomes "truth" in that family or culture, God acts against it. This kind of cultural sin gets remembered and visited after God's deep patience wears out. This is what is going to happen to the land of Canaan in about 38 years.

As Moses experiences this intimacy with God, this understanding of God's heart, he pleads with God to dwell in the middle of His people. In fact, the tabernacle will become the center of the camp of Israel. As disciples, this presence is ours because of the Holy Spirit. If we don't experience that closeness, it usually means we are keeping other things closer to us than we are keeping Christ and His mission. Jesus said to His disciples, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." As disciples, we need to let Paul's pursuit of knowing Christ be our model.

Philippians 3:10-15, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

Vs. 10-17 Much of what is written here intensifies the Ten Commandments and the special position of the people as God's own possession. Some of this seems to be a restatement from the last time Moses was on the mountain. What encourages your heart, as a disciple, from this section?

Notice the contrast between v. 10 and vs. 11-17. The covenant and relationship is with God. They would know others and do business with others, but God should have their hearts and full

devotion. They were on earth for a purpose. Verse 10 suggests that as they obeyed God, the blessing of God would draw the attention of all peoples to the possibility of having this kind of relationship to the Creator and only God. Even for us as disciples, it is easy to have our desires and affections drawn away from God and connected to other things. Being in the harvest helps keep our vision clear.

Vs. 18-26 These were all the ways that Israel would refresh their love for the Lord and keep their focus on His love.

Vs. 18-20 This was the Passover and *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, reminding them of God's salvation and redemption.

V. 21 All nations would think they were nuts, but Israel would enjoy a day of rest reflecting on God's love. And why rest on that one day? Because their God, the Creator of the universe and mankind, created in six days and rested on the seventh.

Vs. 22-24 This *Feast of Weeks* and firstfruits is Pentecost in May-June (7 weeks after the Feast of Unleavened Bread) and then the Feast of Tabernacles and ingathering of the harvest (along with the Day of Atonement) in October. All the males in Israel had to show up for these three feasts and stay the entire week for each feast. Imagine how all the nations would think this was crazy. But it would focus the eyes and hearts of the men on the grace of God, and God promised to protect their homes and fields while they were away in Jerusalem.

Vs. 25-26 In sacrificing, the people would always remember the day of the Passover (no leaven). They would remember that God gave them their food in the firstfruits, and they would remember to resist copying the rituals of the surrounding nations (goat and the mother's milk).

Vs. 27-28 Moses was up there another 40 days. This time the people behaved.

Vs. 29-35 When Moses returned, the Lord gave Moses a visible sign or symbol of what happens while standing in the presence of God. Everyone examined Moses and they were afraid. This continued those 40 years, and Moses got "re-charged" every time he went into the tent of meeting to speak with God.

V. 35 Notice that when Moses spoke with the people he wouldn't replace the veil until he was done.

So, what do you get from this? There are a couple good discipleship principles here. None of us "glow" literally, but isn't there something that happens if we live closely in His presence in the harvest?

There's a story about a pastor who visited someone who used to be working hard in the harvest, but had become distant and isolated from the church. After they talked for a while, the conversation died and they both sat silent in front of the fireplace.

Finally the pastor got up without saying a word, grabbed the tongs, removed a burning log off the fire and stood it on its end in the fireplace, but away from the other burning logs. He took his seat and neither man spoke. As they watched, the log he had removed stopped burning and began smoldering. The log was almost completely out when the pastor rose again and placed the log on top of the other burning logs. After a short time, the log began to burn again.

As the story goes, the pastor rose without saying a word, showed himself to the door and left. The next Sunday the man was in church.

Exodus 35:1-9

Vs. 1-3 At this point, it is time for God to restate the covenant He and the people have entered into. The sign of this covenant is the Sabbath. This restating of the Sabbath might seem hard, but there are two things that stand out to me. First, God has just shown them incredible mercy and grace in light of their falling away and idolatry. Second, the Sabbath was rest, not punishment. It

was a time to reflect on their blessings and mission as a nation, resting in the privilege and provision of an awesome God. I'm willing to bet that the kindling of fire was ok if it meant keeping warm or tending to the sick. Since the Sabbath wasn't a day of fasting, meal preparation was allowed; but if you used the day to get ahead in cooking or washing, it was wrong.

Vs. 4-9 Now it's time to begin working on the tabernacle, the center of their worship of God. We'll see how the people respond.

Matthew 27:15-31

Vs. 15-25 Pilate was playing a losing game with the Jews, thinking he would win at setting Jesus free. The word he received from his wife only intensified the eerie irrationality the other Gospels say Pilate was experiencing. Pilate was working frantically to let Jesus go, but caved in to the Jews when they pulled their trump card. If you put all of the gospels together, Jesus was actually beaten twice. Pilate had Him beaten before presenting Him on the balcony, thinking that everyone would pity Him, and that that humiliation would be enough and he could let Him go.

Notice in vs. 22 and 23 that "all" of the people were shouting this. The shout was only one word, "Crucify."

The statement in v. 25 is one of the most ironic statements in the Bible. Wayne Watson has a song called, "The Hunger," where this statement is seen first, from the guilt of demanding Jesus' blood, to the cry for salvation that comes from that blood. Interesting song.

That generation of men and women would pay for this. In 70 A.D. the Romans would destroy Jerusalem and the temple. It is interesting to me that God is so slow to punish. Many of these same people would hear Peter's message in about 50 days and be cut to the heart, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus. Others would resist the grace of God and be massacred by the Romans in about 40 years.

Vs. 26-31 This was the pre-crucifixion beating. Just think, Jesus endured this willingly because He had to go through this to get to the cross for us.

A disciple is no better than his master. Saved by His blood, are we willing to pay this price to see the lost saved? The irony here is that Jesus was selected to die, over a murderer.

Psalm 33:12-22

Read v. 12 and then Exodus 34:10. Cool, huh?

Vs. 13-17 Israel is God's nation and all the other nations are distant from Him. These verses seem to say that although Israel is God's heritage and instrument to reach the other nations, the Lord is still sovereign over **all** nations, watching and directing them as necessary.

Vs. 18 & 19 are great. This is what gives you confidence as a disciple to live dangerously in the hands of God.

Vs. 20-22 I can imagine this being Moses' prayer from yesterday, for God's presence and glory and help. Notice again, the waiting on the Lord. It is as if to say, "Let others do what they will and seek help where they will. Our souls wait on the Lord."

What a great declaration of confidence in the glory of God.

Proverbs 9:1-6

This is interesting, because this appeal of "lady" wisdom seems similar to the appeal of the wild adulteress to the simple, young fool in Proverbs 7:6-27. Apparently there is hope, even for the simple, if he makes the right decision.