

Beholding God's Glory

Sunday School Lesson

Exodus 34:29-35

January 23, 2021

--- Let us sing our call to study the Scripture. Let us begin by singing *Shine, Jesus, Shine:*

***Lord, the light of your love is shining,
In the midst of the darkness, shining.
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us.
Set us free by the truth you now bring us.
Shine on me, shine on me.***

***Shine, Jesus, shine,
Fill this land with the Father's glory!
Blaze, Spirit, blaze,
Set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
Flood the nations with grace and mercy.
Send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light.***

Let us pray

O Holy God,

We often go through our daily routines without paying attention to what is going on around us. Help us to be more sensitive so we can see your presence and hear your call even among the mundane chores of every day life. Amen.

Our Purpose Statement:

To strengthen our resolve to make listening to God a priority.

Glory

A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word, 'darkness' on the walls of his cell.

C. S. Lewis

Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected.

Jonathan Edwards

Our ultimate aim in life is not to be healthy, wealthy, prosperous, or problem free. Our ultimate aim in life is to bring glory to God.

Anne Graham Lotz

The glory of God always comes at the sacrifice of self.

Aiden Wilson Tozer

What is the glory of God? It is who God is. It is the essence of His nature; the weight of His importance; the radiance of His splendor; the demonstration of His power; the atmosphere of His presence.

Rick Warren

Glory is one of those words that we lack the language to describe because it is more than we know. None of us can comprehend God's holiness and glory because it is the essence of

God's very being. It can be thought of as extreme light so powerful that it reflects off everything around it, changing it forever. It so frightened the Israelites in the wilderness that they insisted that God not speak to them directly but only through Moses. Even then, Moses had to wear a veil over his face after he had been in the presence of God.

How would you describe the glory of God?

Read Exodus 34:29-35

Israelites and the Wilderness

You almost have to feel sorry for the Israelites in the wilderness. They were far from the Patriarchs that originally came to Egypt to avoid famine. They had the oral history that was passed down from generation to generation but let's face reality – slavery does something to the soul. You are not your own and after a while, you forget you can have a life that is more than hard labor and getting by. They were worn out and beaten down. Yes, they had escaped but to what? At least they had homes and plenty of food in Egypt.

So when Moses disappeared, they did what they knew – returned to idol worship and the rituals of Egypt. It did not matter that they had witnessed the plagues first hand or they had seen the miracle of the parting of the sea. These were short sighted people with no faith in anything but basic comforts and in the wilderness, those were gone as well. I doubt that they fully comprehended Moses' anger.

So why was Moses different? He wasn't at first, remember? He kept making excuses at the burning bush. Moses had lived a very different life from the other Israelites. He grew up in the palace. He was educated. He had confidence although you might not see that at the burning bush. It was there. It just needed encouragement and God not only provided the push; God also made the promise that God would be with Moses. This was something Moses witnessed firsthand every day.

When the tablets were destroyed the first time, Moses had to return to the mountain. This time when he came down, his face glowed and that was a bit scary for these downtrodden people so Moses began wearing a veil. For Moses, this was an affirmation but for the people, they were more than overwhelmed. They would have to learn faith. They would have to start over with what they knew and experienced with God.

Responding to Glory

Responding to God's glory is the same as responding to God's holiness. When we come into the presence of God's, we should become keenly aware that God is God and we are not. In fact, we fall way short. This is not only exposed by also revealed. As Isaiah immediately sees he is a man of unclean lips, we do as well. God's holiness exposes our sin, our selfishness, and our absolute lack of grace and mercy. This is not a bad thing!!! How are we going to grow in our faith unless we are willing to be vulnerable before God? God is offering us grace, not to cover up our sins but to expose them, ask forgiveness, and move forward. We often try to hide the realities of our own failures from even ourselves but it does not mean they are not there and they do not need God's healing touch.

Name one area in your life at present that is in need to God's light and forgiveness?

What do we do now?

The author of this lesson provides a great suggestion. Go to the psalms and pick one each day or go to the hymnal and pick a hymn each day. Here are a few psalms you may wish to read aloud:

Psalm 130
Psalm 6
Psalm 38
Psalm 10
Psalm 42-43
Psalm 51
Psalm 22

These are call psalms of lament and they express a deep pain or longing. You can also try some hymns. If you do not have a hymnal at home, check out the old hymnals in the Welcome Center. You can take one of them home. On page 939, you will find hymns of confession and comfort. On page 940, you find hymns of courage. On page 947, you will find hymns of mercy and on page 951, invitations to prayer. If you are computer savvy, you may look up the story behind various hymns to draw inspiration. Intentional times of prayer leads to a better ability to be sensitive to the presence of God.

Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks, receives. Whoever seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door is opened. ⁹ Who among you will give your children a stone when they ask for bread? ¹⁰ Or give them a snake when they ask for fish? ¹¹ If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him. Matthew 7:7-11

Many people take this passage as an invitation to treat God like Santa Claus by asking for things they want but do not need. I believe it is an invitation to ask for what you truly need in your life and I believe God will answer your prayer.

What is it that you need?

Prayer

O Holy God,

May the deepest desire of our hearts be a willingness to know you for who you are and not what we want you to be. Amen.

January 18, 2022

Prayers for...

The ongoing pandemic and the families suffering with illness and grief

The communities suffering from tornadoes

our church family... Joyce Mann, Sherry & Ron Randolph, Gary Grimes, Wanda Shambley, Dwain & Patsy Stevens, Elizabeth Rowlett, Verna Riley, Vicki Moore, Jerry Rowland, Jay Trawick (1/26), Bruce Coffey (1/26), Carroll Rast (1/19)

hospice... Charlotte Turner, Marion Dorflinger

extended family... Johnetta Green, Mary Jane Speer, Marcia Johnson, Renita Everhart, Jimmy Owens, Angela Piggott, Pat Foster, Nancy Garner, Sandi Parks, Patricia Baker, Robert Parham, Lamar Kelley, Kay Shaw, Wes York, Charles Green

homebound or assisted living... Elizabeth Taylor, Levis Alexander, Virginia Guthrie, Lou Ellis Heard, Carl Turner, Marlene Rhomine, Sarah Shirey, Faye Brown, Kelson Foster, Cledra & Gerald Keith, Juanice Barker, Danny Barnes, Maurice Graves, Bill Morrison, Lou Slaughter, John McMahan

military... Buck Lucas, Christian Lucas, Chris Hagameister, Chase Armstrong

Christian love and sympathy is extended to the Weidmann family in the death of Bob Weidmann, and Tavia's daughter, Melissa Loyd. Services for Bob will be held on Saturday, January 22nd at 2:00pm and Proctor Funeral Home Chapel.

Christian love and sympathy is extended to Greg, Patti, and Hannah Wingfield in the death of Lexis Alexander. Graveside service for Levis will be Friday, January 21st at 11:00am at Old Austin Cemetery in Austin, Arkansas.