Sermon for October 11, 2026
"Exodus: God"

Exodus 33:12-23

When we last left the Israelites they were at the foot of Mount Sinai. God had just given them the Ten Commandments. Shortly after that God called Moses back up the mountain. This conference was to carve the Ten Commandments into stone.

But Moses was gone for at least 47 days; a month and a half. The people waited, and waited, and waited, and they wondered as they looked at the clouds and lightning and fire on the mountain: "Is Moses still alive?" "Has God destroyed him and abandoned us?" "Did Moses get scared and split?" They got impatient.

So they went to Aaron, Moses' right hand man, and said, "We don't know what has happened to this Moses, so make gods for us to worship so that we will have purpose and direction." Aaron obliged them and made a golden calf and he proclaimed that the next day would be a feast day to sacrifice and worship that Idol. The people ate and drank and did many other sinful things in devotion to that golden calf. God saw all of it and said, "I will destroy them!" Yet, Moses pleaded, and God was merciful.

In the aftermath of that event God told the children of Israel to leave Mount Sini. God said, "Go, and leave this place." It sounded like God was saying "Get out of my sight." So Moses pleaded with God not to abandon them. He begged God to stay with them. In the end God says, "I will also do this thing that you have asked, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

In response Moses exclaims, "Show me your glory!" Moses is so overwhelmed by gratitude and amazement at the graciousness of God that he is overjoyed." God had said to him, "I know you by name." So, Moses wanted to know God in an even deeper way.

God knew that Moses could not see the full Divine glory and live. So, God says, "I will shelter you in this crevice and I will cover you with my hand and pass over you. Then I will take away my hand and you can see my departing glory." Then Moses witnessed the most Divine glory that a human can withstand. In that action God said, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

This event was the culmination of all that God and Moses had been

through. God had come to Moses in the wilderness in a burning bush. The glory of God revealed in Moses' call to be a deliverer. What had Moses done to deserve being called by God? He had grown up in the lap of luxury and then murdered an Egyptian. When God found him he was a failure. He was tending his father-in-laws flocks.

Yet, God called him and equipped him and sent him to Pharaoh to say, "Let my people go!" Moses saw the plagues that God brought on Egypt. He witnessed the Passover and the parting of the Red Sea. He saw the pillar of fire and smoke. He met with God in the tent of meeting regularly. He ate the manna and quail and drank from the rock.

Then in the aftermath of the golden calf, he experienced the forgiveness and grace of God. God forgave the Israelites and instead of creating another nation, God went with them. This was the greatness of the Glory of God. Not in the plagues or the parting of seas, but in an act of forgiveness and redemption. The greatest Glory of God is in God's graciousness!

How do we see the glory of God? You might see it in nature. In the majesty of a redwood or the beauty of a flower. In the vastness of space, or the quantum realms of the sub atomic world. In the community of love and faith or in silence and solitude.

Yet, ultimately we see it in Jesus. He is the Word of God made flesh: Emmanuel – God with us. John's gospel says of Jesus, "we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" and, "The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." In Jesus humanity can look God in the face.

What did Jesus do? He was born in a stable, lived as a common laborer, then healed and taught and loved. He washed his disciples' feet. Then he died for the sin of the world and asked God to forgive the very people that were killing him. That life is grace and truth made manifest.

Moses, after all he went through, saw the glory of God from the crevice of a rock. In Jesus we see God in the flesh. In his life, his death, his resurrection, we see the glory of God, and Jesus calls us. Maybe not with a burning bush, but with the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit that warmed John Wesley's heart.

In Jesus, God said once and for all "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." That is how God works. God is a God of grace and mercy. Yes, God made worlds and all that is in them, but God's love and forgiveness is the greatest divine glory.

Look to Jesus. In him we see God. Call on God's mercy. Rest in God's

love.