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Sermon preached at "Ebenezer", Richmond by Mr.J.Delves
on Tuesday evening 18.7.51

Hymns:643, 132, 505 Reading: Exodus 33 Text: Exodus 33.18

"He said I beseech Thee show my Thy glory"

Moses was one of many instruments God raised up to fulfil His purposes among men, and particularly among His ancient people here and his leadership was attended with unparalleled difficulties and with obstacles and mountains which appeared impassable and difficulties which in the nature of them were well nigh overwhelming; but no difficulty is too hard for God, no mountain too high. Hence He endued Moses with grace and strength to bring His people forth out of Egypt, with all that attended that, into the wilderness; the wilderness of discipline and of many sharp trials and deliverances to the borders of the promised land. Here, and in the chapter before, we have a record of the base idolatry of the children of Israel when Moses was away from them, in the making of a golden calf and worshipping that and thus in their impatience and rebellion provoking the wrath of God against them, whereby they were visited with judgments resulting in the death of many people; and one of the most solemn things attending this was the indication that God would not go up with them, that He would send an angel before them to drive out their enemies but that He would not go up in the midst of them because they were a stiff necked people, lest He should consume them in the way. That evidently solemnly affected the people more than anything else did because when they heard these evil tidings they mourned and no man did put on him his ornaments. God had said unto them, "Put off thy ornaments from thee that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb". They had taken off their golden ear rings before in their rebellion to indulge in their idolatrous practices but now they took off their ornaments to mourn and repent in dust and ashes.

Who can visualise the issues of sin when people depart from God and serve other gods? Moses was enabled to plead with the Lord concerning them wherein in some particulars he may stand as a type of the Lord Jesus in his intercession. He pleads not because of any redeeming features in the people but upon the ground of the Lord's own promises; and in his pleading he pleads for three things.

Particularly he pleads for guidance, "If I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way", that is direct me in the way that I have to go and make that way known to me, "that I may know thee" that I may know Thee to be my covenant God in vouchsafing that guidance and in directing me in the way that I should go. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence", and what a confirming promise the Lord gave him. He said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." This may be very confirming to some under extreme conditions, under particular burdens or some weighty exercise where they may feel to have special need of a word from the Lord thus to guide and direct them. Moreover Moses says that the Lord's presence with the people was that confirming witness that they were a people separated from all other people upon the face of the earth. "Wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth".

Here are two points for some consideration. First, if the Lord departed from the people, that is if His presence was not with them, no more solemn judgment could befall them. This brought a great mourning among the godly, who stripped themselves of their ornaments and humbled themselves before the Lord. There can be no clearer witness with respect to a people that they are the people of God than if the Lord be with them in confirming tokens of His grace and presence. What an amazing thing it is that the infinite God should condescend to presence Himself with a people, a community, an assembly, a congregation, a church, and is not this according to His promise concerning His people? For He has said "In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." I believe it is Owen who said that the life of a church consists in the presence of the Lord in it. I feel I can believe that, for nothing can take its place, nothing can take its place. There is in it a power, an unction, an influence, a sacredness, a beauty, a majesty that can never be defined in words but is only known as it is felt in the gracious experience of it. And is it not a great thing when there is such an inward witness, even in a sanctuary, so as to cause one and another to feel that the Lord is in this place? "He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Nothing would give such rest as that. We may be careful and troubled about many things, burdened, under weighty temptations, anxious;

but when the Lord comes in a particular experience His presence in the heart brings such rest with it. I should like to be able to describe it but I know what it is, He brings His own rest and when He fills your heart nothing can disturb you. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." "And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name". Then Moses, having obtained favour of the Lord in that degree, proceeds to ask for even greater things. "And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory". There is something very speaking about the way this is put before the Lord, "I beseech Thee", in the form of an earnest entreaty, as though it is of more importance to him than all beside. Whatever I may possess, if I possess not Thee I am undone. It seems to express the yearning of the soul for God. "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory". Have you ever come in here in your soul's feelings? It is like a venture of faith, to ask another favour of the Lord, under a consciousness of His approbation. "I beseech Thee". You may have been favoured with some tokens of His mercy and yet feel you lack something in your soul that you cannot describe and yet for which you yearn. Thus getting some hold of the Lord in prayer you entreat Him as though your very soul moves in earnest longing for that sweet blessing; "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory".

There is a glory that cannot be seen, as we read in this particular chapter, "No man shall see Me and live". There is a glory that cannot be seen by any creature in this mortal state, as pertaining to God. Yet there is a glory that can be seen, not with a mortal eye, (though there is a glory that can be seen even with a mortal eye); but there is a glory to be seen by faith that is altogether peculiar to those to whom the particular revelation is made, and it must be said here, I believe, that we see in this aspect more of the glory of His mercy than of His majesty for we could not bear very much of that; and so it appears to have been here, it was a felt glory that Moses saw. "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." It is a remarkable manifestation of God's sovereignty that was made to Moses here and which is referred to by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans where he says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.... it is not of him that willeth nor of him

that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy". How free and yet how sovereign is that mercy and we shall never see the glory of God in an acceptable way, in a gracious way, unless we see mercy mingled with that glory. If we were to see that glory without the mingling of mercy with it we should be utterly consumed. God is a glorious Being, who dwelleth in the light, to whom no man can approach. The Lord said to Moses, "Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen". The Majesty of God could not be borne by a creature and yet you see He blessed Moses, even to see the glory of His back part, He put him where he had a firm standing; so it must be with a child of God, to see this glory, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Rock of Ages and this is the foundation of the church, and the only standing ground where they can firmly stand to witness the veiled glory of God, and the cleft of the rock may indicate the wounded, bruised, dying Substitute who by His substitution afforded a shelter, a cleft in the rock, a hiding place where the glory of God may be bearable.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me;
Let me hide myself in Thee."

There is a glory to be seen in God that is effective according to the measure of it upon the subject who is favoured with it. "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory". For instance, is there not a glory in the presence of the glorious Godhead? I cannot bring it before you but I believe I have had a moment or two in my life when I have felt melted in my soul under a view of the blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost spoken of by John in his epistle, where he says "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one". Have we ever seen this glory? Have you had a few moments in your spiritual life when the veil has, as it were, been a little lifted from your heart and you have seen the beauty and majesty of the blessed Trinity, three glorious, co-eternal Persons, each possessing the fulness of deity inherent in this one God and yet distinct in their personality; each essential to the salvation of the church and her ultimate glory in Him? Sometimes in prayer there is just a little opening of the wonder and majesty and glory of the Trinity. You may understand me; it has a wonderful liberating power

in your heart when you get it. You can pray then. That is to say your heart seems drawn to the mercy seat to plead for Christ's sake and to venture into the presence of the Father through the merit of His precious blood; through the Holy Spirit as Paul has it, "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father". O but it is just a faint glimpse but wonderful to see and most confirming to believe. Not only so, is there not a glory in the perfections of the Godhead in the attributes that essentially pertain to Him and which constitute Him so, so that we can plead what He is? I have no need to name them particularly but all those attributes pertain to His power, His omnipotence and His immutability, His justice, His grace and His mercy, all blend one with the other in a glorious harmony so that no attribute clashes with another in the Godhead. Is there not a glory here? Perhaps you say but all that is a long way away from me; I do not know anything about it. But you may know something about it and you will know something about it, because in the dealings of the Godhead with your soul at times there will be what I might term a solemn awe upon your heart and a little opening perhaps of His immutability, His faithfulness, His holiness, His justice, His mercy, His grace. "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory".

There is a peculiar glory in the Person of Emmanuel that is at times just seen, though but slightly, in the eye of a believer. There is a glory there. His Person is essentially glorious in its complex constitution as very God and very Man. None can compare with Him, He is fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into His lips. Is there any difference between you and me and the world? In the prophecy we read that to some He is a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness and no beauty that we should desire Him. Is that what He is to you? Is there nothing more than that? Or is there in Him something which draws the affections of your soul towards Him at times in holy worship? As we read in the Canticles, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood so is my Beloved amongst the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste." Has He ever been made precious to you in this aspect as being so eminently suited to your case? Show me Thy glory. O does not this describe the longing of a living soul? You would not want to see the glory of Christ unless you were one of His. He is not a root out of a dry ground, is He? No, say you, O but perhaps you say, I would love Him if I could, but I am such a poor, dry, withered stick. He can

soon turn your wilderness into a standing water. The Holy Ghost alone can reveal Him. "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." That religion will take you to heaven. I do not believe that you will ever really feel the Lord to be precious in your soul and eventually drop into the bottomless pit. No, not if that preciousness is real; it binds you to Him. "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory". O say you, but I have never seen it. Well, if you feel you have never seen it, can you come in with the prayer of Moses, "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory"? Is there a vacancy in your heart that only the Lord can fill? Do you really long for Him to come and form Himself in your heart the hope of glory? "Show me Thy glory". There is something to be seen and perhaps you say, but I do not see it; no, and yet is there not in your very soul the secret longing to see Jesus?

"Show me Thy glory". Is there not a glory in His incarnation? There must be a glory in that because that glory was seen by His disciples. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." We beheld His glory; and this is the point with the Lord's children, what was the glory that John saw? It was the glory of His divine Sonship, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.

"Show me Thy glory". Is there not a glory too in His substitution? The view of that and the knowledge of it filled the Apostle to the exclusion of everything else, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." How absorbing and confirming it is when it is given that you see Him. You lose sight of everything else. And the glory of the cross is that glory that poor sinners long to see because that is the remedy for all their guilt, this is the Lord's provision, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Has the Spirit of God ever discovered the glory of His Christ? Have you felt at times a ray of hope in your soul as you have got just a glimpse by faith of a once crucified Man?

"Here it is I find my heaven,
While upon the Lamb I gaze".

"Show me Thy glory". Does not this also follow in relation to His exalted divinity and majesty at the right hand of God, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" There

is a glory that His people at times are favoured to see in a living Jesus, living representatively as the first fruits of the glorious harvest. Show me this glory. Perhaps sometimes some of you read in the Scriptures of the Lord Jesus and have to say, Show me the glory there is in this. Lord open my poor blind eyes and let me see something, open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. When the Lord reveals Himself in these particulars in some measure the glory of His grace and of His mercy to you; when He makes it known and gives you to feel it and brings into your heart a taste of forgiveness; what effect has that? One effect is worship, it will always produce worship. It will not make the things of God and eternity light but it will produce in your heart a sacred awe that words cannot describe and which yet is very blessed to feel. It produces worship. You fall before Him and it is a sweet falling,

"The more thy glories strike my eyes
The humbler I shall lie."

That is true, is it not? and that is real humility when it is really felt. Jesus Christ, said Goodwin, is most glorified in secret. How those tokens of grace will flow together in your heart and all to lift Him up in your affections.

"Sinners are high in His esteem,
And sinners highly value Him."

It will produce repentance. It was so with Job after all he passed through; nothing really brought him down but a view of God. His three friends could not do it; they did not understand him; neither did Elihu, although he had a very quieting effect upon his spirit but it was the view he had of God that brought him down into deep repentance. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." O this is where His glory is seen and this is where it will be above all the ignorance and confusion of face that can be felt. How glorious He is in the eye of faith at such a time. None can compare with Him.

"Show me Thy glory". Another effect is conformity. A sight of His glory in these particulars will conform you in some measure to His suffering image and produce a willingness to bear your cross for Christ's sake. "Show me Thy glory". Another effect is love; when He reveals Himself love flows out toward Him because it is His love entering into your heart. "We love Him because He first loved us." But there is a glory that can be seen by a believer even with

their mortal eyes and that is the glory of His works both in grace and in providence. If we look up even to the visible heavens we see the glory of God, that is if we have open eyes to see it. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth forth His handiwork", and there is something very real about this when the Lord blesses your soul and brings pardon and peace and sets your soul at liberty. You will see His glory in the leaf of a tree, everything will speak it, it is as it were so many voices speaking the glory of God and if we may be favoured to feel that this God is really our God is there not a glory in the sense of that relationship? "Let Thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." Have we ever seen the glory of God in a faint measure, had a glimpse, a blink of His glory? It is the glory of His mercy and the glory of His sovereignty and the glory of His goodness. That was what He proclaimed to Moses and that is what He will proclaim in your heart. When He reveals this glory He will bring His goodness to you, poor, unworthy sinners that you may feel to be, His goodness in His blessed Gospel, and He will proclaim His name before you and give you to know who He is and what He is. He will give you to see the glory of His sovereignty and He will make it known in your soul that you are to speak of His sovereign mercy. I "will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy". I think it may be said that as to our knowledge of divine things here, even if we are graciously taught, it is more of the glory of His mercy that we see than the glory of His Majesty. Yet you cannot see the glory of His mercy without seeing His Majesty in it. O have there not been moments when His mercy and His majesty, His justice and His grace, have mingled in your feelings so as to enable you to say

"Compared with Christ, in all beside
No comeliness I see;
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,
Is to be one with thee."

Amen

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