

Monday Morning Rewind – March 23, 2009

Good morning! Welcome to Spring Break. The glory of spring—nature’s rebirth following the cold sleep of winter—reminds me of resurrection morning when the long winter of sin will finally be over. Hallelujah!

Speaking of glory, on Sabbath we continued our series on praying in the end times by focusing on Moses’ audacious request to see God’s glory (Exodus 33:18). This was actually the last of three bold requests Moses made of God following the golden calf rebellion. Moses and the people of God were soon to leave Sinai and enter Canaan, but Moses refused to journey onward without certain assurances. Our study revealed that what Moses prayed for on the brink of the promised land, we too need to pray for on the brink of the second coming.

Rewind to Exodus 33:1-3. God was angry at his people because they had made a golden calf. As they waited on God, and on their leader Moses, the people grew impatient and took matters into their own hands. Sometimes we do the same. When God seems to be slow in answering our prayers, we impatiently create our own plan—a “golden calf”—and put our trust in that plan. God’s ways at times seem to be mysterious and slow to develop. And rather than waiting on His timing, we fabricate a solution that we can control, often with disastrous results.

So God tells Moses to go up to the land of milk and honey, but He wasn’t going with them. It is here we see Moses in prayer, interceding for the people. He asks for three things of God before they enter the promised land—to know God; to walk with God; to behold God.

1. Those praying in the end times will pray for an intimacy with God that comes by knowing God Himself.

Moses didn’t beg for leadership skills and success in taking the Israelites to Canaan. Instead He asks God to teach him His ways, that he may know and please Him. In Hebrew thought, to know someone was to have deep and intimate association. The *Amplified Bible* says it this way, “that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with You, perceiving and recognizing and understanding more strongly and clearly” (Ex. 33:13).

With Moses, just getting to the promised land wasn’t enough. Knowing God was better than receiving gifts from God.

To this, God replies: “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” (33:14) “Presence” means “face turned in acceptance” as opposed to face turned in anger. God’s face is His favor (acceptance).

Notice, too, that God’s presence gives us “rest.” The word “rest” = a dwelling place in which to settle down, be comforted and remain. No more wandering. You can unpack your bags--let them fall from your shoulders. Take your shoes off and sit down.

Without the presence of God in our lives we are weary, burdened, unsettled, and wandering like nomads with no place to call home. This is the plight of the legalist. They can never do enough, obey enough, sacrifice enough, or know enough. Consequently, they don’t feel fit for heaven or earth, so they become the spiritually homeless, ever looking for a resting place but never finding it, because they seek perfection in themselves instead of salvation in Him.

Moses understood this and pressed for his next request. “Then Moses said to him, ‘If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?’” (33:15, 16)

2. Those praying in the end times will pray for an intimacy with God that comes by walking in God’s presence.

What set Israel apart from others was God’s presence among them. God blessed all the nations with harvest and rain and life. But only among his people did He choose to dwell.

It was always God’s plan for His people to stand out and be different. (See Lev. 20:26.) But Israel always wanted to be just like everybody else. Are we in danger of following in Israel’s footsteps? Even as the Sabbath is set apart from the other days of the week by God’s blessing, God’s people are set apart from the world by the blessing of His presence. The church in the last days is not to blend in with the world, but to be a clone of Christ. This cloning process is accomplished by walking with God. God reveals

Himself to us not simply in the transfer of ideas from His mind to ours (not salvation by information), but as He walks alongside us. To know God is to walk in His presence.

Too many Christians are trying to find shortcuts to God's glory. And when this happens, we usually end up seeking the presence of God in our own way. We build our own golden calf, which is simply man-made worship. Synthetic praise.

God's presence is vital to His people. Worship is central to covenant and faith, but these things must be sought and done in *God's own way*.

Again, God grants Moses' request. "And the LORD said to Moses, 'I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.' Then Moses said, 'Now show me your glory.' (33:17, 18)

3. Those praying in the end-times will have influence with God and pray for a return of God's glory.

God's kingdom advances on the prayers of His people. The Lord responds to Moses' request because it reflects His own heart of mercy. Here is the power of intercessory prayer—we behold God's glory best when we care more about others than we do ourselves! Why? Because this is when we are most Christ-like.

Intercessors have influence with God. He tells us to "open wide your mouth and I will fill it." (Psalm 81:10) And this is what Moses did. Having secured the blessing for the people, he goes for the jugular and asks for a revelation of God for himself. "Show me your glory."

God responds by telling Moses that He will let all of His goodness pass in front of him as He declares His name (verses 19, 20). From this we learn that God's goodness is his glory; and he will have us to know him by the glory of his mercy, more than by the glory of his majesty.

Rewind to Exodus 34:5-9. The glory of God is that he shows mercy to, forgives, and abides with sinners. That's us! And as we behold Him and intercede for others, we become reflectors of His glory.

Moses' face was radiant because he had been with God. The same thing happens to us: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

This is the goal of every Christian, and the prayer of those living in the end times—to be like Him! This week, let's pray: 1) "Teach us your ways so we can know you"; 2) "Walk with us and set us apart by your presence"; 3) "Bring back the glory of your character into my life." –Pastor Randy