

## Sermon

- Moses had received the 10 commandments, and when he came down the mountain and saw the people worshipping a golden calf, Moses broke the stone tablets in anger.
- After several encounters with God and with the Israelites, Moses has a change of heart.
- In Exodus 33 we see Moses' heart for God and his desire for God's presence to stay with the Israelite people, so Moses intercedes for them on their behalf, entreating God to forgive their sins and remain present with them.
- In response to his prayer, God declares favour on Moses, but Moses wants more:

<sup>18</sup> "Moses said, "Show me your glory, I pray." <sup>19</sup> And God said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, 'The Lord'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. <sup>20</sup> But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live." <sup>21</sup> And the Lord continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; <sup>22</sup> and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; <sup>23</sup> then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen." (Exodus 33:18-23)

- Moses wanted to know God more. He wanted a greater revelation of God, and up until this point of time, Moses knew God better than anyone else recorded in scripture (other than Adam and Eve), the burning bush, the miracles of the 10 plagues in Egypt, parting the Red Sea, pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, provision of manna and quail, water, the 10 commandments... but he wanted to know God more.
- But God knew that Moses would not be able to comprehend or fathom the fullness of God.
- God is incomprehensibly infinite – beyond our human capacity to know and understand, Moses would not have been able to live with such overwhelming knowledge/insight/understanding.
- Our bodies, our minds, our being can only contain so much. God is infinitely beyond our finite capacity to behold.
- What you and I know of God is profound – we could each write a book about it, but it is nothing in comparison to who God truly is. God is so much more than what all of humanity put together could possibly know.
- John the disciple of Jesus said,

*"But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."* (John 21:25)

- What we know of God is miniscule compared to who God is.

- The heavens cannot contain Him, the earth is His footstool, if we could count one star/second it would take us thousands of years to count the stars in our galaxy alone, and our galaxy cannot contain God.
- Moses would not survive if he saw God.
- As an act of mercy, God shielded/covered/protected Moses from His immeasurable, unbounded self.
- Much like the blood of the Passover lamb protected the Israelites from the limitless power of God as God swept through Egypt bringing deliverance.
- And much like the blood of Jesus that covers/shields/protects us from the absolute intensity and limitless power of God.
- In all the fullness of who Moses knew God to be, Moses wanted to know God more.
- Herein lies **our first invitation: to know God more.**
- The extent to which you already know God's love, power, provision, healing, peace, hope, joy, forgiveness...there is still so much more of God than either you or I could ever imagine.
- Are you content with your experience of God? Or do you want to know God more? Is there a hunger within you? A yearning to know and experience God? If not ask God to give you a hunger for more.
- Ask God to show you His glory, love, power, character, nature etc. Allow the depths of your being to cry out to God.
- Paul reminds the church of this:

*"No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9)*

- There is so much more to God than we could possibly conceive.
- And God in His mercy allowed Moses to experience as much as he could contain:

*"The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed,*

*"The Lord, Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger,  
and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,*

*<sup>7</sup> keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation,*

*forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,*

*yet by no means clearing the guilty,*

*but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children*

*and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."*

*<sup>8</sup> And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped." (Exodus 34:6-8)*

- The text does not record what Moses *saw* of God, but it does tell us the words he *heard*.
- The very first description/revelation of God that Moses heard was: 'A God merciful and gracious'!
- The word used to describe the mercy of God, Hesed is almost incomprehensible itself: **God is Hesed: unfailing, loyal, devoted love, and kindness.**
- This is the very definition God uses to describe Himself.
- Hesed is the heartbeat of God. It is so much more than what we understand the English word, 'mercy' to be – 'I'll give you another chance to prove yourself'.
- God's Hesed flows out of a deeply rooted, firmly established desire for relationship.
- It is the core/essence of God – unfailing, loyal, devoted love and kindness is God. It's not something God does or has, it is the essence and core of God – God is!
- God was and is and is to come!
- Hesed is GOD! And GOD is Hesed!
- And because God is Hesed, God passionately wants relationship, therefore, through unfailing, loyal, devoted love and kindness God invites all of creation into relationship.
- That is why Jesus came to complete God's Hesed, and to usher all of creation into Hesed.
- Every man, every woman, every child, every created being has been formed/fashioned/conceived for this relationship and are invited into this relationship.
- So the person you are annoyed with, the people who deny the very existence of God, the most wealthy, or the most broken, the drug addict, the criminal serving a life sentence, those with an acquired brain injury, or disability, those who are unable to communicate verbally, people of every race, religion, age, sexual orientation. The people ministered to by Susan Hawke and the team from Flagstone Community Centre; the people ministered by Peter Gee and the team from lifeline; the families ministered to by Dennis Camenzuli and the team at Hummingbird House – absolutely every created being is invited into Hesed → the unfailing, loyal, devoted love and kindness of God.
- Herein lies **our second invitation: how does this knowledge affect your missional heartbeat?**
- When we know that God is Hesed – unfailing, loyal, devoted love and kindness, and that every created being is created for relationship with God, and through Christ we are all ushered into this relationship, how does this affect your missional heartbeat?
- Does it beat a little stronger, a little louder, a little faster? Does the knowledge of this send a shot of adrenaline through your body that energizes and enlivens and inspires and ignites a fire of passion for those who don't yet know the Hesed of God? It does for me!
- Moses' response to this revelation of God, was to bow in worship.

*"And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped." (Exodus 34:8)*

- The meaning of the word translated as worship is to be humbled and brought down so as to bow. As one would do before such greatness.
- Perhaps if one met the Queen one would bow before her; or in some cultures it is respectable to bow before an older person to honour them.
- In this context Moses was so humbled by the greatness and majesty and awesomeness of God that he was immediately compelled to bow in worship.

*“When Moses came down from the mountain, he did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.” (Exodus 24:29)*

- Herein lies **our third invitation: to allow people to see that you have been in the presence of God!**
- Do you spend quality, unhindered time in God’s presence, getting to know and experience the Hesed of God?
- More than just reading a few verses, or a daily devotional – as helpful and important as that is.
- Do you know what strikes me the most about this story? Moses did all of this when life was at its most chaotic, unpredictable, unfulfilling, frustrating, disappointing, and hard.
- Moses didn’t cry out to God when life and leadership was going well for him, he did it when life and leadership seemed to be spiralling out of control.

Personal experience – waterless waterfall.

- We may not all feel like we’re stuck in a waterless waterfall, but we all have times of uncertainty, loneliness, frustration, unfulfilling...
- This is the time to press into God, seek after God, cry out to God – climb the (metaphorical) mountain and allow God to meet with you and show you His glory/heart/nature/Hesed, unfailing, loyal, devoted love and kindness.
- When things were challenging for Moses he departed from the camp, he cried out to God, he climbed the mountain, he did everything he could to know God more.
- Church, let me ask you, are you currently in a season of challenge? Don’t be overwhelmed by it, but allow it to fuel your passion and hunger to seek, know and experience the presence of God?
- Let this story of Moses encourage, inspire and challenge you to seek first the Kingdom of God and allow God’s kingdom presence to captivate you, empower you, restore you so that you humbly bow in worship before our eternal and sovereign God.

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