

Presence// #6 – “Power” // Exodus 33:18–34:16

Stand together...this is one of those passages we should read standing up:

Exodus 33:18 Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” **19** And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The Lord.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. **20** But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live... you shall see the trail of my glory, but my face shall not be seen.”

(Chapter 34 is the story of that encounter) **Exodus 34:1** The Lord said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. **2** Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. (Get the picture, Moses standing there with the tablets in his hand)

5 The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. **6** The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, **7** keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty...”

8 And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. **9** And he said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.” **10** And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you... **12** Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst... **14** (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God...).

This passage is like a little microcosm of the whole Bible. All the elements of what it means to really know God are there.

We're going to discuss 3 of them that consolidate our whole series here.

These are the 3 things that make Christianity *real* and potent, and they are the things that most Christians are missing. Especially here in the South.

In the South here, we have a pasteurized and neutered version of Christianity that is just not real... and most people from the outside can see through it. They can see that our Christianity is basically just a moral code that keeps us behaving and some fairy tales that keep us warm at night.

- Listen, I am a Southerner, and I love the South. I know the South is not a direction; it's a way of life, but I can see a lot of times why atheists who live here think that religion is just made up.

These 3 things make the difference in Christianity that is convincing and real and that which is just sterile religiosity, form and function with no substance...

These are also the things that make Christianity thrilling. For some of you, you are missing these 3 things and that's what makes your Christianity such a drudgery!

I'll guarantee you that if these 3 things we're going to see today in this passage are not present in your walk with Christ, then Christianity is not exciting to you; and I'll bet that you have a very bland and lukewarm commitment to Christ that is full of compromise and inconsistency and that just feels like a drag!

ELEMENT 1//PRESENCE//34:9

If you recall when we studied chapter 33 a few weeks ago, God had offered to send Israel up into the land He'd promised, just not go with them. After the incident with the Golden Calf, God had said to Moses, "Go on with the people. I'll give them the land; I'll vanquish all of their enemies; I'll make them prosperous; I'll take care of them... but my Presence is not going to go with them, because if I went with them, I'd probably end up killing them."

Moses' response is, "God, if your presence is not going to go with us, then we don't want to go." So Moses prays here, in vs. **34:9**, "O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us... and take us for your inheritance." See the 2 phrases? "*goin the*

midst of us" (fill us); and "take us for your inheritance." You fill us, let us be possessed by you; this is an intimate connection.

The point of all that God had done for them, and of all that Jesus has done for us, was so that He could fill us with His presence.

Look how Paul says this in the NT (this is so good): **Galatians 3:13–14**: *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us... so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.*

- The purpose of all that Jesus did was so that you could possess the Spirit of God inside of you.

So here is my 1st question for you as we end this series: ***Is the presence of God a reality in your life? Not theoretically, not as a doctrine, but a reality?***

John 16:7 Jesus is talking to His disciples, who are sad because He was leaving (understandable... how would you feel if you'd had Jesus Christ Himself walking around with you for 3 years and He was leaving for the rest of your life?) Jesus says this to them: *"I tell you the truth: did He need to say that? There's a reason He qualifies it: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you."*

- Did you hear that? **Jesus said, "You are better off with the Holy Spirit in you than you were with Me beside You."** That's why He told them He wasn't lying! he knows this is so unbelievable he wants to tell them this is not made up)
- Would you get out of droning sermon mode for a minute and think about that? *How cool would it be to have Jesus living physically with you?*
 - Got a question... ask Jesus.
 - You get a headache, and you're like, "Jesus could you take care of that?" No problem, zap.
 - Your dog gets run over and you say, "Jesus...dog, mashed." "No problem" and raises him up from the dead.
 - Your cat gets run over and you and Jesus helps you dig the hole (he hates cat, too)
 - You're throwing a party and you realize you don't have enough sandwiches and you're out of Cheetos. "Jesus..." "No problem!" And He multiplies your Cheetos so that there's 12 bags left over.
- You say, you're being ridiculous... yes, of course. But Jesus meant *something* here... So, it's a fair question: are there any dimensions to the presence of God in your life that would make you say, "Yes, Jesus was right. The God I have inside me is better and more beneficial than if He were right here beside Me"? Do you really think He wasn't exaggerating or lying?

I explained to you that when it comes to the “presence of God” there are 2 extremes, both of which are corrected here in these verses in Exodus 34:

- On the one hand, you have a lot of very sincere Christians who have no concept of it at all (**not hypocrites, but seminary trained Christians**); these Christians treat God as if He were someone way up in heaven we’ll see and experience one day; for now He’s basically just left us a book to study about Him and some stuff to do while He’s on vacation...
 - These people equate growth in godliness with learning more theology and keeping more commands. They relate to God more like a theory or a philosophy than they do a person.
 - Moses says here, “There’s something more. I want to see your glory; I want your presence with me.” I want to see your face: face (panim) in Hebrew is the place of relationship (**illus my kids come in at 5:30 am on a Sat and get in bed...** they play a game. Actually not a game for me. I try to keep them from seeing my face; they try to see it, because then I have to acknowledge them. They **crawl over me trying to see it.**)
 - Guys, this whole thing is about more than just knowledge or obedience. Think about if you asked me how my relationship with Veronica was going and I said... “Great, I just took a class on ‘Veronica-ology’ and I learned a ton.” Great... but that’s not really the point! Are we enjoying spending time together? Are we growing in our love for each other? What is our sexual intimacy like? These are better barometers about where our relationship is than simply our knowledge.
- Now, I hope you know me well enough to know I’m not poopooing theology or deep knowledge of God: Need I point out again I pursued a Ph.D. in theology? Not bragging, *I love knowledge and I am well acquainted with my inner nerd*. What I’m saying is that what God wants from us is not less than theology but much more.
 - That’s on one hand. On the other, you have people who want to be in God’s presence but they think of it some strange, weird, spine-tingling, hair-raising experience. They think they drum it up, by yelling or dancing or stamping their feet and screaming for it or repeating lyrics over and over...
 - These people are always blaming whatever goes wrong in the service on the absence of the HS. The microphone goes out and you see someone coming forward to anoint it with holy oil and cast demons out of the sound system; not sure if that’s going to work...
 - These verses show you that God’s presence is experienced as a new, soul-felt understanding of His name.
 - A revelation to your spirit about the immensity of God. ⁵ The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there (talk about presence, that is as much as it gets) , and proclaimed the name of the Lord.
 - **God’s presence is an experiential sense of His name.**

- **Romans 8:** the Spirit bears witness to our spirit, “You are the child of God! I know your depravity and your sin but I love you and receive you... you are my daughter/son whom I have chosen”
- **I gave you this illustration: Picking up Kharis:** she knew I was her daddy before, but she senses it now in a real way.
- That’s what happens to Moses here... Moses is overcome with awe in the presence of God...
 - **First, he’s in awe of God’s size.** Mountain is covered in fire and smoke
 - **Second, he’s in awe of God’s mercy...**
 - He’s just seen Israel commit a horrible act of betrayal, and instead of God wiping them out, as He had every right to, He has mercy.
 - It’s also significant that Moses is holding the 10 commandments. I showed you two weeks ago that none of us, thinking soberly, could ever suppose that we have come anywhere close to keeping God’s laws. How would you like to be standing before God holding in your hands a record of all the ways you fall short with the understanding that having one sin will cause you to be incinerated on the spot by the fire of God’s holiness?
 - He hears God say “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
- Presence is the point of Christianity; a sense of awe; a tangible sense of His size and the largeness of His mercy and His love for you
- If I could speak prophetically for just a minute: This sense of awe is what is most missing from American Christianity.
 - Most Americans have a very small, domesticated, safe, seeker sensitive, positive and encouraging God; a “chummy” Jesus (buddy Jesus; Jesus is my Homeboy)...
 - I suppose we do that to make God seem more friendly, more seeker sensitive:
 - But it is the size and the majesty of God that makes the fact that He lives inside of us so special to us: **This God, who holds the universe in the palm of His hand, who knit together the molecular structure, and who is so pure and holy that no one with sin can even look on His face... lives inside of Me?**
 - **His majesty over me makes His intimacy with me overwhelming to me.**
- The greatest experience, the greatest quest of all your life, is to see God in this way and stand in awe of Him
 - To have God sweep you up in His spirit, open your eyes... where you suddenly feel your smallness and His size; your unworthiness but sense His lavish grace and goodness toward you... to hear Him whisper in your heart: YOU are my child, and I delight in you. (The Spirit bears witness to our spirit... which means God calls us by name in

our soul and makes His immediacy known to us)

- When that happens, you quit asking stupid questions like, “Can God make me happy?” or “Will religion benefit my life?”
- That’s kind of like a little kid saying “if a nuclear bomb goes off next to you, will you get hot? Would you need to take off your jacket?” Your answer is, “Yes... you’ll get hot.” But the experience is so much more than that. Nuclear bomb goes off beside you and you’re living in an experience that makes your personal temperature a tad irrelevant.
- **Olympic athlete:** athlete who competes for the Olympics and trains and trains and wins the gold medal. He stands up on that platform and they begin to play the anthem, and the athlete breaks down and begins to weep. A little kid comes up and asks “is this fun?” In one sense you say “well yes, it is fun, but it’s so much more of an experience than that, ‘fun’ is really a wrong way to conceive of it. Fun is swallowed up in this experience. So it’s there, but I don’t think of what I do in terms of having fun. Fun is a part of a much greater experience.”
- Again: Do you experience His presence in your life? Does God the Holy Spirit move in your heart and soul? Is He as real and as intimate to you as if Jesus Himself were standing beside you? Does He comfort you, and guide you, and convict you? Do you KNOW Him? Not know about Him, but do you KNOW and LOVE Him?

ELEMENT 2//PASSION//34:14

Notice, 34:14, (...for you shall worship no other god, for **the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God...**) **God is jealous for our affection—so much so that He says *His name is Jealous***

Sin is not so much breaking a law code as it is betraying a lover.

- Exodus 32, the incident with the golden calf we studied last week showed you that. We think of sin as breaking a law code and God as like a policeman... **Sin is a spiritual adultery...** we look for in false gods what we really should be finding in the one true God.

God is jealous to be our greatest joy and delight. The first and most important commandment is that **we love**, passionately, God with all our heart, soul and mind. He wants us to crave knowing Him more than we crave anything else; He wants us to trust in and desire and seek after Him more than anything else. He wants our eyes light up more when we talk about Him than anything else!

So here's my 2nd question for you as we end this series: ***Do you love and delight in God more than everything else?***

Many of us define how we're doing spiritually by how little we are sinning or how busy we are for Jesus. *But that's not the point.*

Let me give you 3 questions to ask yourself that I think would determine if, and how much, you love God.

- ***Do you crave to spend time with Him?***
 - If you love someone you crave to spend time with them. Do you spend time with Him as some kind of Christian chore, or do you think, "Can I squeeze out some more time with Him..." Most of us look at our watch... have I done enough to get along with my day... what if you did that to someone you were dating... "OK, that's an hour... got to go home! TV shows..." When you love someone you crave spending time with them... how can you say you love and crave God?
 - **Bro Lawrence:** *"I find myself attached to God with greater sweetness and delight than an infant at his mother's breast... (my observation of my babies: looking for the mother's breast everywhere) I have at times such delicious thoughts on God that I am ashamed to mention them."*
 - I will tell you, this has been missing from my life (*even while I've been pastor here*) and God has really gone to work on this in me. Sometimes it is just to walk outside and marvel that the God that created the sun, moon and stars loves and cherishes me more than I cherish my own daughters!
- ***Are you constantly joyful?***
 - If God is our delight, we will be constantly joyful, because no matter what is going on in our lives, we have as a constant the approval of God, which never changes.
 - Paul, in the book of Philippians, says "Rejoice always!" We read that and we think, "How could he say that? Does Paul not know my pain?" Uhh... well...
 - Paul wrote that command from a prison where he had been beaten and was held unjustly;
 - Scholars believe Paul had a chronic illness of the eyes that was a great source of discomfort to him and grossed everyone out.
 - Most scholars believe that Paul had, at one point, been married (they say that because to have been part of the Sanhedrin, which Paul was, you had to be married). Evidently, they say, his wife had left him when he became a Christian, or maybe she died.
 - He had been abandoned by some close friends and betrayed by others;

- Some of his former friends had lied about him and ruined his reputation in those places.
- So yes, Paul knew your pain.
- But Paul also had made God His joy, and God never changes. Paul had a joy that was better than anything else life could give and that death could not take away. So his joy was constant. He could rejoice always in all circumstances because though circumstances change and He was often in pain, God never changes, and God was His greatest possession and delight.
- If you are not constantly joyful, it is because your joy is based more on something else than God.
- PAUSE... do I need to let that sink in for a while? **If you are not constantly joyful... that is a red flag that you do not find your joy in God!**
- ***What are you most passionate about?***
 - What do your eyes light up when you talk about?
 - Here's the thing: ***You are passionate about something.*** All of you are (not just a personality thing). Something stirs your soul: you get most excited talking about sports; a new boyfriend; your grades or your dreams; for some of you, it's a very superficial thing: you get most excited about a new outfit, a new car, a vacation, food. For others, it's something a little more noble, like a cause: politics or some social agenda. ***All of us are moved most by something.*** God wants to be that thing.
 - ***What does the trail of your money say you are most passionate about?*** As I have explained, ***your money flows effortlessly to the thing your heart most loves.*** What does the trail of your money lead back to?
 - Listen, y'all: the point is really not the money—I know you think it is, but it's not; the point is what you love most, and the trail of your money just indicates what. Most of us overspend on our kids; clothes; eating out; or status symbols like cars or homes.
 - Anything wrong with that? No, except when it indicates we love those things more than we love God and His priorities... and so you skimp on your giving to God and lavish yourself with money. Many of you give sufficiently and live abundantly; if you love God you live sufficiently and give abundantly.

God's name is Jealous... He wants to dominate our affections and our dreams. Listen, if you are simply interested in God as a fire escape out of hell or someone to add some balance to your life... God is not interested in that at all. That's not what the cross was for.

Think about what God did for us at the cross. Do you really think all that was so we could give Him half-hearted devotion where we avoid the big sins and go to church on the weekends? Jesus did not go through the horrors of the cross so you

could add Him to your life as a safety net.

- **When I first met Veronica, I was actually interested in another girl:** “I have another girl over here on the side... like to keep that going in case I get bored with you, or if things don’t work out... I just kind of like her too... maybe you’re Tues/Thurs/Fri/weekends... You know, like the *Bachelor* show: I’ll do a rose ceremony later if you can see if I choose you.”
- When you come to God and you say, “God, I want you as a part of my life... and I know I have to clean up my act a little bit... give a little money, obey most of the rules, go to church... but you don’t make Him your supreme passion, and you don’t yield to Him in unconditional obedience, that is what you are doing to Him. And He’s no more interested in it than Veronica would have been with me the playa.
- **And the other thing I’ll tell you is the “halfway committed, use God as a fire escape and moral influence” is a miserable way to live.** The most miserable people in the world are half-committed Christians, who are just enough into God they are miserable in sin; but just enough in sin that they are miserable in God.
- If you’re going to be saved... go all the way. If you’re not, at least go full on sin and enjoy it... for 60 or 70 years... and just realize that hell is going to suck after that.
- Or it’s like the ancient Chinese proverb my dad used to say: he who try to walk down both sides of street will split his pants.

ELEMENT 3// POWER//34:10–12

10 And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you... **First, see, they have a purpose.** *They were God’s demonstration community. God’s work was to be so powerful in them and through them that the people around them marveled.*

12 Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst... **The thing you see from vs. 12 is that the greatest danger to that mission is compromise with the world.**

To be one of God’s people is to have a mission. **The church is God’s demonstration community.** Eph 3:10. “It was in the church God that God chose to display the riches of His grace and His manifold wisdom and power...”

And it wasn't just for a select few super-motivated Varsity level Christians. It was for everybody. It was the whole reason the church was created. "Missional Christian." Christians who have discovered their mission. That's redundant. No such thing as a Christian without a mission. God saved us for a mission; that was His purpose in calling us out. In fact, I'd say it like this: **it's not that He has a mission for His people; He has a people for His mission.**

It's for you. God lives in you. You were to be a marvel to the outside world.

- **In Acts, 37/40 miracles happen outside the church.** 37 out of 40 of the miracles God wants to do happen outside of this place, through you, in the community! You talk to most pastor about where they have seen miracles and they point to the capital campaign of the church. God's work is to happen in the community!

So, here's my next question: ***Does your life make the unbelieving world marvel?***

- Guys, our lives are so explainable! I think about me sometimes: How many of you think I could sell insurance? I motivate people. I want something unexplainable.
- There's a scene in **1 Kings 18** that really disturbs me...
- Which one am I more like? When people walk away from the church or a conference I speak at saying "Man, that pastor sure was something..." Isn't that more like the prophets of Baal? No way you would talk about Elijah... did you see that guy pray, the energy he used, did you hear the big words and how he strung those phrases together? He followed the ACTS pattern perfectly...! Power of God fell! I don't want people to leave talking not about the sermon or the music or the cool building... but about the unexplainable power of *God* they felt in our midst.
- How about you... Do you have answers to prayer and miracles that you can point to that are inexplicable apart from the power of God?
- **If so, you are not living out the plan of God for your life? Don't mean this to be discouraging...** this is exciting! It is His *intention* for you! Your birthright! He has chosen us and ordained us that we go and bear fruit, and that abundantly... big huge fruit that abounds in your life to the glory of God! **Eph 2:10:** Good works preordained that we go and walk in them.
- Does the fruit of the Spirit in your life defy explanation? ***Do people marvel at the fruits of the spirit in your life?*** Do people **marvel** (that was the word used in vs. 10) at your kindness, our generosity? When is the last time someone was amazed by your kindness, generosity, or self-control? Do you have more kindness than the Mormons that you know; more kindness than the Muslims that you know?

- **Not: *The Office* scene this week: trying to outpolite each other...** it should be just natural from having the HOLY GOD live inside of you.
- Do you see how far off most of us are from this?

Then, I showed you in vs. 12 that the greatest danger to that mission is compromise with the world; we absorb the values and the agendas of the world and so lose our power.

There's a story that puts this really into color in the Old Testament, the story of Samson:

- OT scholars say Samson is a picture of Israel... He is a guy who was given great strength so that he could lead Israel, defend them from their enemies, and demonstrate the power of God! People marveled at his strength.
 - But instead of using his strength and blessing for God's purposes, he used it all for himself!
 - He rips open a lion with his bare hands so because the lion ate a honeycomb that he wants; he uses his great strength to kill a bunch of Philistines that ticked him off because they gave away his girlfriend to someone else.
 - That's great... but what about the purposes God had for his strength?
 - Many of you are anointed by God... you really are. God has given you favor and power and blessing and opportunity...and you've used it all for yourself! Maybe it's time you considered what God is doing in the world: that there are still places in the world where Jesus' name is not known; places where the Gospel has not been heard and churches have not been established and maybe God wants to use you as a part of the process of getting the Gospel there! Maybe he made you good at business not so you could make a 200K a year for yourself and live on a 200K lifestyle but so that you could be a part of what He is doing on earth!
 - The other tragedy from Samson's life was that rather than making people marvel at the power of God inside of him, Samson absorbed the values of the world.
 - He was supposed to live differently than the world. He was to be distinct. This was seen in his hair. But throughout his life you find him absorbing the values of the nations surrounding him.
 - He ends up living with a girl a girl he's not married to... Delilah.
 - Furthermore, he is revengeful, selfish, and materialistic just like the world.
 - Rather than conquering the world for Jesus, he was conquered by the world as he absorbed their values.**You've heard it said that Christians are to be in the world but not of it, Samson was of the world but not in it.**
 - The same is certainly true for us.
 - St. Augustine said in *The City of God*. The citizens of God's Kingdom were to look different from the world primarily in how they treated **money & power**.

- **He said the world is promiscuous with its sex, but selective with its money** because it holds it to be sacred. Christians, he said, were to be the opposite. They were to be promiscuous with their money (give it away because it's not sacred to them), but selective with their sex because they did hold it to be sacred.
- **The world uses power, he said, for personal promotion and acquisition.** Christians use their power, he said, to serve. They yield it not for their own benefit but the benefit of others.

Here's my last question: ***Are you marvelously different from the world in your lifestyle and your goals?***

Dave Phillips: "Years ago, Dave Phillips and his wife, Lynn, had a talk about the callings they felt God was stirring in them. As they discussed what they were most passionate about, they agreed that bringing relief to suffering children and reaching the next generation with the gospel were at the top of the list. The thought of starting a relief agency was considered, but Dave's response was, "But that would mean I have to talk in front of people." By nature, Dave is a very quiet, behind-the-scenes man.

But after much prayer, Dave set aside his fears, and he and Lynn started Children's Hunger Fund out of their garage. Six weeks after CHF was launched, in January of 1992, he received a phone call from the director of a cancer treatment center in Honduras asking if there was any way he could obtain a certain drug for seven children who would die without it. Dave wrote down the name of the drug and told the director that he had no idea how to get this type of drug. They then prayed over the phone and asked God to provide.

As Dave hung up the phone, before he even let go of the receiver, the phone rang again. It was a pharmaceutical company in New Jersey asking Dave if he would have any use for 48,000 vials of *that exact drug!* Not only did they offer him eight million dollars worth of this drug, but they told him they would airlift it to anyplace in the world! Dave would later learn that the company was one of only two that manufactured this particular drug in the United States.

Within forty-eight hours, Dave had the drug sent to the treatment center in Honduras and to twenty other locations as well. It was then he believed firmly that God was at work, validating his calling to this ministry.

Year after year, God continues to provide supernaturally. Today they have distributed more than \$950 million in food and other relief to more than ten million kids in seventy countries and thirty-two states. Children's Hunger Fund has distributed more than 150 million pounds of food and 110 million toys.

Forbes.com consistently rates CHF at the top of their list of America's most cost-effective charities."

Church, this was supposed to be normal. It was not supposed to be the exception. *Church, this is your birthright.* The world was to marvel at your selflessness and the power of God. This is yours, if you will take it! You call this radical; the Bible calls it's normal.

Now, I want to commend you: this is what we have been striving for as a church, and I think we are experiencing it!

- You have been willing to do what few churches would do; you've been willing to move locations and sacrifice; do non-traditional things to reach people, and you are incredibly generous... and as a result, look at us. We have grown in 7 years from a congregation of 350 to now somewhere around 4000!
- But here's the question: We experience it as a church... are you experiencing it in your own personal life? **But do you want to know what gets me really fired up?** The thought of 4000 people, in the community, who have made room for God in their lives and seeing unmistakable marks of His presence on their campuses, in workplaces and end their homes. Veronica and I want our kids to see, firsthand, the power of God at work in our home!
- Don't settle to be an upclose observer of God's work; experience it!

Close: Pray over the congregation

- Bowed heads: the journey of a million miles begins with a single step... what area, what sphere of influence, right now do you need to see the power of God in? Commit that to God and ask Him to work in it?
- Amen: CUT CAMERA... CP's take over

Bullpen:

There's this new term that's being thrown around in Christianity called "missional church": it means churches that have adopted a mission... "Missional church" is really a redundancy b/c the church, as you see here, *was formed* for a mission. The church was created by God (as this passage tells us) for a mission... CJH Wright says, **"God doesn't have a mission for His church in the world; but a church for His mission in the world!"**

The secret of his power was in his long hair... that was a symbol of his faithfulness to God (kind of like the ring in Lord of the Rings) and as long as it was long, then he would have power. At the end of his life it is cut off and he is captured by the Philistines where he is tortured and dies in captivity.

To really know God is both heat and light. The light of His knowledge accompanied by the heat of His presence. You can't separate the two. You have to have light (knowledge of His majesty) and heat (a sense of His intimacy).

1. Presence is the point

2. To know God's presence is to live with a sense of His glory; and His glory is most known in His name (34:5-6)

- Glory, name, face, and presence are all the same.
- Heat/light
- To have a sense of His size, His holiness, His love:
- When you sense this, you quit asking questions about can God make you happy, or, will a little religion help your life
- People come to Christianity and say "will this make me happy?" And after you've experienced the presence of God, it's kind of like a little kid saying "if a nuclear bomb goes off next to you, will you get hot? Will you need to take off your jacket?" And you want to say "well I mean, I guess the answer is yes, but the experience is so much more than that, it's hard to just say 'yes, you'll get hot.'" You'll be living in an experience that makes your personal temperature a tad irrelevant.
- Or you have an athlete who competes for the Olympics and trains and trains and wins the gold medal. He stands up on that platform and they begin to play the anthem, and the athlete breaks down and begins to weep. A little kid comes up and asks "is this fun?" In one sense you say "well yes, it is fun, but it's so much more of an experience than that, 'fun' is really a wrong way to conceive of it. Fun is swallowed up in this experience. So it's there, but I don't think of what I do in terms of having fun. Fun is a part of a much greater experience."

3. God is jealous for our affection—*His name* is even jealous (34:14)

Ex 32 was not breaking a law code, but betraying a lover

4. God can only be known in holiness

- Blood of Jesus. If you think that God accepts you for any other reason you don't know a) your own sinfulness or b) God's holiness. People who saw God trembled and thought they might die.
- Heb 12:14... you can't tolerate sin and expect Jesus to be a part of your life!
- Most of us have a "chummy" Jesus... It is the transcendence and holiness and size of God that makes His immanence so real and special. GOD with us. (see Kevin DeYoung, *Life of Jesus*)

5. Our knowledge of God's glory begins with our understanding of the mercy He has shown to us

- 34:5. Ps 130:4, "*There is forgiveness with you, that you might be feared.*"
- His election (33:19)
- Still much that I don't understand, but I do know that there are two things make us reject God's ways
- Man is the point, not God
- Man is guilty of the most heinous sin

6. To be one of God's people is to have a mission (34:11)

- This is everybody, not a selected few... (the whole point of the church is demonstrating)
- Not a church for His mission in the world, but a church for His mission in the world
- 39/40 miracles happen outside the church

7. Our greatest danger is becoming indistinguishable from the world (34:12)

- We use it for ourselves, not the mission.
- We absorb the values of the world
- Compromised lives
- Powerless lives
- Samson

8. God is most known in Jesus

Bullpen:

People come to Christianity and say "will this make me happy?" And after you've experienced the presence of God, it's kind of like a little kid saying "if a nuclear bomb goes off next to you, will you get hot?" And you want to say "well I mean, I guess the answer is yes,

but the experience is so much more than that, it's hard to just say 'yes, you'll get hot'"

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- He wants to demonstrate Himself through us to the nations (34:11); (a mission for his church in the world) (the cow falling)
- Our greatest danger will be compromising ourselves and losing our distinction (in the world, not of) (34:12)

God's presence is the point: God's desire is to be with His people

God's glory is the goal

God's point is to demonstrate that He is the only real God

Exodus 40: 40: 1 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **2** "On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. **3** And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. **4** And you shall bring in the table and arrange it, and you shall bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. **5** And you shall put the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. **6** You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, **7** and place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. **8** And you shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court. **9** "Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture, so that it may become holy. **10** You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, so that the altar may become most holy. **11** You shall also anoint the basin and its stand, and consecrate it. **12** Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall wash them with water **13** and put on Aaron the holy garments. And you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. **14** You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, **15** and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests. And their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations." **16** This Moses did; according to all that the Lord commanded him, so he did. **17** In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. **18** Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. **19** And he spread the

tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the Lord had commanded Moses. **20** He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. **21** And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, as the Lord had commanded Moses. **22** He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, **23** and arranged the bread on it before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses. **24** He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, **25** and set up the lamps before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses. **26** He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, **27** and burned fragrant incense on it, as the Lord had commanded Moses. **28** He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. **29** And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the Lord had commanded Moses. **30** He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, **31** with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. **32** When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, as the Lord commanded Moses. **33** And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work. **34** Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. **35** And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. **37** But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. **38** For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.

Ideas:

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Alisdair Macintyre says “how do you tell whether something is good or bad? Or how do you tell whether this watch is good or bad? Well, you have to know what it’s for. This watch is terrible at hammering nails, but it’s good at keeping times. So if it’s for hammering nails it’s bad, but if it’s for keeping time it’s good.” Being the first civilization to not think that the world had a supernatural origin, we’ve lost our ability to say whether or not things are good or bad, because we don’t know what their purpose is for. What makes a human being good or bad is knowing the purpose that the human being exists for

- Just to drive this home, God had said this in 33:19: (**19** And he said,) “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The Lord.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.
- What does that mean, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and show mercy to whom I will show mercy”?
- Showing mercy is entirely God’s prerogative. God doesn’t owe anybody anything.
- Most of us live with the assumption that God pretty much owes us good stuff.
- That’s why we complain that bad stuff happens to us. God, this is not fair; how could you let all this stuff happen?
- Let’s be very clear: What is fair is that all of us be consumed by God’s wrath. The fact that God lets us live another day and breathe His air and feel the warmth of sunshine and gives us another day to repent is all undeserved mercy that God is not obligated to show us, and that He does of His own divine, compassionate prerogative.
- (Almost all of the complaints that people make toward God start with the assumption that this world is worse than we good people deserve; the way the Bible presents it is that this world is better than we bad people deserve.)