

# “His Presence is in His Name”

## // *The Name*, Exodus 33–34 //

### Message #1

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#### NDC Greeting:

This is the start of a **new season** at The Summit Church... A lot of great things happening in our church right now. Let me give a **special greeting to our NDC**, who has moved in this weekend to Riverside High School, a nice auditorium with nearly twice the seating capacity they had at their old facility.

This is actually a return to Riverside High School for the Summit Church... for those of you new around here, let me give you a **quick Summit history lesson**...

- Our church **began in 1961** as the Homestead Heights Baptist Mission in North Durham.
- In **2005, we outgrew that property** In ND that we had met at for 40 years, and so we transferred to Riverside High School...
- During that season **God gave us a vision to reach all of the Triangle** with the gospel, so became a multisite church
- When we 1<sup>st</sup> went to Riverside High School, we were **just 1 campus**. Today, **just 8 years later**, 1 of our 8 campuses returns back to that place where, not long ago, we met as an entire church!
- Our **goal today remains the same as it as been**—reach more people in the Triangle with the gospel.
- **Sam James, our founding pastor**, who left shortly after he founded our church and spent most of his career as a missionary in Vietnam, recently told me: *“North Durham has always had a special place in my heart. Seeing your continued ministry there is the fulfillment of a dream God planted in my heart years ago.”*

- Amen! God is faithful!

So, Summit Church, let’s put our hands together and welcome NDC at their new facility.

#### Introduction:

We’re also starting a **NEW SERIES today**... which should carry us for about **5 weeks**. It’s called ***The Name***, and it’s about the name of God.

**God has a name.** And it’s important... Just think about **how important your name** is to you. Imagine if your spouse or someone important to you called you by different names... Jeff! Beatrice! Or, even worse, only by characteristics... Female. Human. But that’s how we often are with God. We call him by a classification or a description.

**But God has a name**, and knowing that is extremely important, because it is how we know *him*.

For **a lot of people God is a mystery**... they believe in a deity, but they wonder, “What is he really like?”

- **Maybe that is you.** Or maybe **you ask**, “Does he even exist?”
- Or a lot of people say, *“God, I get... but what’s the big deal about Jesus?”*

**There are others of you**, like me, who believe in God, but have **struggled really to feel** any relationship with him. I was like that—for many years I **struggled really to love God**. I **wanted to**; I knew that I should... but I just couldn’t **work up the emotions**. I’d see other people cry when they talked about God and I’d be like, “Nothing.” I knew how to play the game... raise my hands at the right times... put on my spiritual face and grunt appropriately when people were talking... but I’d look inside and wonder, “Where is the emotion?”

I think this series could be a **game-changer** for many of you. During it, some of you may find **true faith** for the first time; others of you, like me, will discover that **path to really knowing and loving** God.

- This could be a **great series to bring friends** to...

I really can't overestimate the **importance of the next 5 weeks...** In college I read a statement by **A.W. Tozer** in a book called *Knowledge of the Holy* that has stuck with me for these past 7 years: "**What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God... The most (determining) fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like.**" – A. W. Tozer<sup>1</sup>

- **What comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you**, because it determines everything else in your life.
- Many—if not most—of our emotional problems are connected to our view of God. **For example**,
  - If you think of God as **capricious or untrustworthy**, you'll feel anxiety about life
  - If you think of him as a **judgmental tyrant**, it will turn you into a fearful, insecure person
  - If you think of God as **aloof or distant**, you'll feel insignificant
  - If you think of God as an **angry warlord**, it will turn you into an intolerant bigot.
  - If you think of God as a **warm, tingly, sentimental but powerless love force** who looks down on us because we are not as enlightened as she is, it will turn you into a UNC-Chapel Hill professor
- *What comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you.*

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<sup>1</sup> *The Knowledge of the Holy*, 1

- Over the years, I've given you statements like, "You **show me your friends**, and I'll show you your future." Or, "You **become like the books** you read." Well, the most important statement is, "Your view of God determines everything else about you."<sup>2</sup>

**Our text for the next few weeks** is going to be one of the most important passages in the Bible, where God **declares his NAME to Moses: Exodus 34:6-7**

- The Jews called this passage the "**13 Midote**," or "13 attributes," because it established, they believed, the 13 most important characteristics of God.
- **And did you know** that Exodus 34:6–7 is the verse in the Bible **most quoted by the Bible?**
- **Ex 34:6-7 was like their John 3:16.** (You could always find the Jews in the Coliseum because they were holding up signs: Ex 34:6-7. Samson had it painted on his eyelids when he went to battle.

## Exodus 33–34

Here's what has been happening:

- The nation of **Israel has just left Egypt and they are on their way to the Promised Land.**
- They **stop at Mt. Sinai** and Moses goes up into the mountain to get instructions from God.
- He is **gone a little longer** than he was supposed to.
- So the **people get scared** and take off their jewelry and melt it down to make a golden calf, which they start worshipping. It's a horrible betrayal of God—(like taking a 2<sup>nd</sup> job...)

**Exodus 33:1**, The LORD said to Moses, "Depart; go up from here... [2] I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the

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<sup>2</sup> Theologian Gregory Beale, "What people revere, they resemble, either for ruin or for restoration."

Canaanites... [3] Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.”

- Now, most people—particularly Americans, would consider this to be a **dream offer**: God will give you **all the success** you desire—economic, military, political—and with **no real obligation** to him. No tabernacle to maintain; no religious duties. Just blessing.

[15] But Moses said to him, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. [16] For how shall it be known that (we) have found favor in your sight? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct from every other people on the face of the earth?”

“God, **you can keep all that success if it comes without you...** If you don’t go with us, I don’t want to go!”

Let me ask you: *If God offered to give you everything you dreamed—money, health—legacy, family—just not his presence in your life, would you take it?*

Moses said, “Not me! Not today”

I think Moses says this for 2 reasons:

### 1. He saw God as beautiful, not just useful.

- Philosophers say that when something is beautiful to you, you take **pleasure in it without regard for its purpose**
  - When you want to be around someone just because of that person, that’s because you’re enjoying their *beauty*...
  - **Say you were engaged to be married...** the week before your wedding, you found out that your rich parents have made some really bad financial decisions and lost everything... and your fiancée breaks up with you. You’d feel used. You, just you, is not enough for them.
  - Don’t you see that we all approach God like this? “God, I

need this, I need that.”<sup>3</sup> My relationship to you is dependent on you providing those things...

- Many of you are mad at God...
- But Moses had come to see God as beautiful in himself.
- **Do you see him that way?** Do you see God as the ultimate prize, the ultimate reward... not as a means to any other end, but the end itself?
- **If tonight you have to choose**—Everything without him; nothing with him, what would be your choice?

### 2. He saw that without God, everything else was useless.

- Without God, all those other things fade.
  - Today you’re on the **top of your field**, but tomorrow, you’re the old guy fighting for relevance and respect.
  - Today, you have a **strong family**; tomorrow, you’re all gathered around a graveside or trying to put back together the shattered pieces of a family left by a divorce.
  - Today, **you’re beautiful**. Tomorrow, things sag and droop and ache, and no amount of eating right or working out or Oil of Olay or Botox can stop it.
- Furthermore, not only do those things fade, **without God they fade you**. They rot your soul.
  - Give your life for success and it consumes you until you become petty, jealous, and fearful.
  - Don’t you know somebody who has the kind of success we all dream about but they are a shell of a person? (Democrat: you just thought of Donald Trump; Republican: Hillary Clinton). We’re no different from them. What you see in them is a reflection of us all.

**So Moses says to God,** “*You can keep your Olympic gold medals, your million dollar a year salary, your loving happy families, your healthy body. If we don’t have your presence, we have nothing.*”

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<sup>3</sup> Tim Keller, “The Prayer for God’s Glory” (Ex 33).

Think about it: Moses **had had all those things!** (He had been the Prince of Egypt... He had lived in the palace of the most economically prosperous military power of his time! And then he'd had it all taken away... where he'd had nothing *but* God.

- **Let me tell you something:** People who have experienced *everything without God and nothing with God* will always take *nothing with God* every time.
- **I think here of Noah Spivey...** Cancer sucks, Christ is better.

**Let me ask you:** is this how you think about God? What does it profit you to gain everything else if you lose God?

- **Dad to me:** Prioritize your family—no one on their death bed looked back and wished they'd worked more.../health—what good is success if you can't enjoy/the most important is God—because what does it profit you to gain everything and be miserable and then lose your own soul?
- **Not a heroic statement... true spirituality is less heroic statements and more a recognition...**

[17] And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

So, Moses, like a good negotiator, sees his opening and asks for more:

**18 (Then) Moses said, "Please show me your glory."** In other words, "God, if I'm going to make you my sole possession... Don't **just give me a little bit** of you. I **don't just want you nearby**. I want all of you."

- I've told you guys, **if you're going to follow Jesus, follow him 100%**.
- The **most miserable people in the world** are half-committed Christians, who are just enough into God to be miserable in the world; but just enough into the world to be miserable with God.
- Let me tell you something, **straight from your pastor:**
  - **Church is a terrible hobby.** You have to get up each weekend, come to a **crowded place** where you go through the difficulty of **parking and then coming into** a big

auditorium and sit in a **big room** filled with people where they are always pressuring you to **volunteer**, making you **feel guilty**, and then you have some guy get up and **yell at you** for 45 minutes? That's miserable.

- It's like having to go through "**Halloween**" every week. You get all dressed up and put on your "Christian facemask" and pretend to be something you're not. When asked, "**How's it going?**" you respond, "**Good, brother, praise the Lord.**" Then you walk away knowing you just lied and feeling bad about yourself.
- *Church is only enjoyable if you go all the way... if you come craving to see God's glory. So go big or go home.*

<sup>19</sup> And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' ... <sup>20</sup> 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... <sup>21</sup> Behold, 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."

So God tells Moses to take the 10 Commandments and carry them in his hands, and then... **34:5** The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and *proclaimed the name of the LORD.* <sup>6</sup> The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD (*Yahweh*), the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> keeping steadfast love for thousands, *forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty...*"

**Now... does that last phrase sound like a contradiction?** "I'm infinitely loving and I want to forgive everyone... AND I'm infinitely just and I can never let sin go unpunished."

It sounds like it, and if the Bible ended with **Exodus 34:7**, we'd be right to call that a contradiction. Moses never really got an answer. He **had to say here**, "Well, I don't get it, but I guess that's how it is."

That's why it says he only saw the backside.

**But the Bible doesn't end in Ex 34.** In **John 1**, the Apostle John introduces Jesus by re-creating Ex 34:6–7, **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- (John is describing Jesus in terms of this Exodus story—glory, the tabernacle, full of grace and truth is the Greek version of graciousness and faithfulness.)

Then John says in vs. **[18]** **No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.**

Not even Moses could see God. Any sinner who sees God will die.

**But Jesus, who never sinned**, absorbed that death in our place. **Christ resolves the contradiction** left by Ex 34. In Christ, God is infinitely loving, forgiving sin; and infinitely just, punishing sin.

- **John 17:6**, Jesus summarized his ministry this way: "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world..." (I revealed it to them—manifested it, made it known—so they could feel it.)
- **(Favorite story in Indonesia... King story)**
- Jesus substituted himself, so that the justice of God was satisfied
- **SUBSTITUTION** was the mystery of the gospel Moses could not see. The righteous dying for the unrighteous so that those underneath the condemnation of death could live, and the unrighteous could be forgiven and behold the mystery of God.

What **Moses couldn't quiet grasp, we see clearly**. Moses could only see the backside of God's glory; we can see his face.

**Moses got put into a rock** and got to see the backside of God's glory; we got **put into Jesus** and now get to behold his face.

So, this passage, as all passages in the OT, finds its meaning in JESUS.

**Today, I want you to walk away with just one BIG idea:**

### **God's presence and power reside in his name**

- *When God passed in front of Moses, it does not say that **Moses saw a brightness...** it says that he heard a declaration. The declaration of a name.*
- **DMLJ says that there is no passage of Scripture** where you see more clearly what it is like to be in the presence of God...
  - Re-buying the wedding ring: legally, not any more my wife. But her sense of it is more real. *That is what it is like to be in the presence of God.* He reminds you of the promises he gave you in the gospel and renews them to you.
    - I know of a pastor who works at a resort in Mexico just doing weddings for people... (How do I get that job?) ... His favorite is the renewal of vows. He says that **at weddings people make promises but don't keep them**. But when you see a renewal, you know it is serious: I know the real you, now; I see all of you... and I gladly take all of you.
    - That's what happens when the Spirit of God takes you into God's presence. You feel the renewal of his vows to you—The Spirit washes over us saying, **"I love you! You are my beloved son or daughter!"**  
// **Romans 8:15**

**If you look throughout Scripture**, all of God's power is bound up in his name.

- It's the name by which we are saved... In the 1<sup>st</sup> sermon preached about Jesus after he died, Peter said, **Acts 2:21**, **"And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."**



- And, btw, I **don't just mean the uttering of some magical syllables**. I mean faith in that name... faith in the character of the God behind the name... When you take it, all the blessings of salvation come to you.
  - I had a friend who was a **man of considerable means**... allowed me access to use of a private jet... I walked in and they have never seen me, looking at me with suspicion... I said his name and suddenly, 'Oh, you must be Mr. Greear. He told us about you... Can we make you comfortable?' "Dr. Greear." It's not my name—it's his!
- You believe on Jesus' name and the rich blessings of God are bestowed upon you.
- ALL THE PROMISES OF GOD...
- **Calling out the name of Jesus is how God raised his Son from the dead.** Do you ever wonder what the Father said to Jesus in the grave? "Arise?" "Get up!"
  - **I can tell you what I'd say to my son** if he were dead for 3 days and it was time for him to get up: "Adon!"
  - **When I utter that name in faith over my sin**, and my condemnation, my chains break; my soul is released.
  - *"Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night...thine eye diffused a quickening ray (when I believed); I rose, the dungeon flamed with light! My chains fell off..."*
- **Jesus' name is the name to which one day the knee of every creature in the universe will bow... Philippians 2:9, Therefore God has... bestowed on him the name that is above every name, (VS. JW'S) [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**
  - (Every **king**; every **cynic**; every **scoffer**; every **doubter**... everyone **past, present** and future... everything that has ever walked or breathed in heaven and earth... The archangel calls out the name "Jesus" across the skies and every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. What a moment that will be!)
- There is a scene right toward the end of Jesus' life... (**John 18:6**) Judas and the Temple guards come to arrest Jesus, and he says, "Who are you looking for?" They say, Jesus of Nazareth." "I am." "They fell backward and fell on the ground."
- **Remember the scene where** the name of Jesus knocked down the people coming to take him? **What does that look like when it happens across the universe?** *That name booms across the skies* and its power drives every living thing to its knees; some in worship, others in fear, but all in recognition.
- His was the name by which the **lame walk**, the **deaf hear**, and the **blind receive** back their sight.
- The **name of Jesus drives out demons**.
- Jesus said people were to be **baptized in his name**. We were to **ask the Father** for help *in his name*.
- **Jesus' name is what the Apostles were willing to suffer and die for: Acts 5:41, The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.**
- Peter said it is **the only name by which we can be saved Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."**
- Do you want to know why Christians believe salvation is only found in Jesus? **There's only one name with that much power.**
  - **Our salvation, you see, was not an easy thing**... the wave of a finger. We needed to be **raised from the dead**. We need to have **crushing guilt removed**. Only one name could do that.
  - A lot of **people seem to begrudge** the fact that the Bible teaches Jesus is the only way to be saved. But what if **you were dying**... one pill. You wouldn't be mad. You'd be desperate for it; be grateful for it, and become a missionary advocate for it. "Are you sick? You have to take this!"

- **Christians find the name of Jesus precious** because it is the only name with power to save.

- WE SING: Lost are saved, find their way at the sound of your great name;

All condemned feel no shame at the sound of your great name

Every fear has no place at the sound of your great name  
The enemy—he has to leave at the sound of your great name

Jesus...

**In the Christian life, the NAME of Jesus is everything.**

- **The Jews would not even write his name**, they had so much fear and reverence for it.
- **If all you know is the name of God...** dread/fear/alienation
- **The name of Jesus has a different effect**
- His name makes me **not cower backwards** in fear, but come closer in worship: it means GOD SAVES.
  - You can tell where you stand with God by how you feel about the name of Jesus: God saves.
  - If you say, “God, ok... but why Jesus?” I don’t mean to offend you... but you don’t know him at all. 1 John 2:23, No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.
- **Just hearing his name fills me with hope!**
- *“Jesus, Jesus, there’s just something about that name! Master, Savior, Jesus! Like the fragrance after the rain!”*

**Last thing: Spiritual growth occurs as you press deeper into the Name**

- God’s presence fills those who hear, in their souls, the name of God, like Moses did.

Paul refers to this encounter in 2 Cor 3, where he shows you what spiritual growth looks like...

**2 Cor 3:18**, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. How are we changed? By beholding. Beholding glory turns us into glory!

- Remember the problem at the beginning... of not loving God?
- This is a problem fixed not by exhortation, but revelation.
- You don’t need me just to command you to love God; you need to have the Holy Spirit reveal the love and beauty of God to you!<sup>4</sup>
  - Because **God is not just after obedience**, you see, but a whole new kind of obedience...

**[4:1]** Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God... we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word,

- I don’t preach in cunning ways... I’m not trying to persuade you with false motives (God will make you rich; if you don’t obey, he’ll send you to hell.)
- I don’t need those pandering, cunning ways...

And... **[5]** For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord,

- **I’m not telling you, “Become like me,” or “become like Moses,”**... the gospel doesn’t tell you to **become anything**... it tells you that **Jesus became** sin for you... so that by believing in his name, given for you, he would make you into his image.

Two ways to change: Metal bar

- **I don’t preach pressured motives**, false motives... or, if you’ll become like this, God will accept you.

<sup>4</sup> Seeing him now changes... one day, when we see him with our eyes, will change into people who stop sinning: **1 John 3:1**, Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, and that we should be called the children of God. And that we are. We are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

- **So week after week, I just want to put before you a vision of Christ...** because that changes the soul.
- As I often tell you, **we aren't changed by being told what to do; we change by reveling in what *he has done*.**
- *Lord, now indeed I find; Thy pow'r, and Thine alone; Can change the leopard's spots; And melt the heart of stone... So I preach that Jesus paid it all...*

***Do you want see God? To love him and sense his glory?***

- **So if you want to know God...** Do what Moses did: Ask for it, and then put yourself in a position to encounter it.
  - **Bible reading.**
  - **Ask Jesus** to show himself to you. Every story is about him.
  - **Be here the next 4 weeks**, as I, with God's help, unpack the name in greater detail.