

Our venerable leader has asked us to choose a meaningful passage of scripture, or our favourite, to preach on.

My decision was immediate. The reading from Exodus.

I love the Old Testament and this is my favourite.

My first draft of the talk was drivel... well, more Bible study than personal!

But I do love Bible study!!

To explain why I like this passage so much I do need to share with you what I have learnt, and then try to articulate why I love it so much.    Bear with...!

Our Creator God, the God of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom He had promised so much....A people, A land, favour and protection; had led His people out of Egypt where they were slaves, into the desert. A reluctant Moses had led them through the Red Sea. God miraculously supplied food and water in the desert for the Israelites. In the desert of Sin He provided manna. At Rephidim he provided water from a rock. Finally God brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai (also known as Horeb), where he gave them his Holy Laws.

Moses met with God regularly on this mountain. This is where he had encountered the burning bush from which God called him by name.

Moses had been up the mountain 40 days and 40 nights. Receiving the law and the 10 commandments on tablets of stone, written by God's hand..

The Israelites started moaning, again , and were bored waiting for Moses to return. They wanted to worship something, so they melted their gold and made idols.

God was angry.

Moses went down and saw the golden calf and the dancing. He was furious. In his rage he threw down the tablets of stone and broke them to pieces.

This time God was ready to destroy them. They had disgraced themselves and Him.

In the tent of meeting, outside the camp, Moses met with God. 'The Lord would speak with Moses face to face as a man speaks to a friend'. V11.

The Lord has asked Moses to lead the people but Moses is reluctant to do so without God. He knows that there are scary, violent tribes waiting for them. .

The intimacy they shared is obvious in the way in which Moses questions and challenges God. He asks for more than the offer of an accompanying angel. He wants God with him. He wants to go deeper with God and their personal relationship. To know God not just about Him.

I find it very touching that God regards Moses. In verse 17 he says'...I know you by name.'

In Isaiah 43 v 1, 'I have summoned you by name, you are mine.',  
and Isaiah 49 v 16, 'See I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.'

God knows our names. He knows us. We are important to Him.

We were created to be in relationship with our God. Relationship requires time. Time in communication and sharing.

In verse 18 it sounds like Moses is being rude...'Now, show me your glory.'

In other translations this is an urgent 'Please, show me...'. .

Why did Moses want to see God's glory? He had quite few glimpses.

The burning bush. His meetings with God, 'Face to face.' meaning a direct intimate encounter.

**He**, wanted to see the fullness of God's greatness and beauty. His character. His nature.

Paul Tripp says that we are all glory junkies. Whether we like it or not, we're addicted to glory.

He wrote, 'Human beings are hard wired by God for glory, for awe, to have our minds blown, our hearts expanded, to be taken beyond the normal, the mundane, to be absorbed into what is wonderful and beautiful and satisfying.'

We search for this, often in the wrong places

God's glory is the only one that will satisfy our hearts.

God grants Moses' request in part. He would get a glance of God. If Moses saw the full glory of God, it would destroy him as the glory of God is too much for any human to bear.

God places him in the cleft of a rock, where he will be sheltered from the dazzling light and devouring fire of God's glory.

(Elijah sought sanctuary in this cleft when he was running from Jezebel)

We can go to a cleft and be protected and secure. It's Jesus. He is our place of safety. He is the cleft in the rock.

To see the back of God means we can only see where God has passed by. We can only know him by what he does and how he acts. We cannot comprehend God as he really is, apart from Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 13 v 12, 'Now we see but a poor reflection, as in a mirror, then we shall see face to face.' We don't have all the answers now, but one day we will. One day we will see Christ in person and be able to see with God's perspective.

God did not give Moses a vision of His power and majesty, but of his love. His mercy and grace. He tenderly protects and cares for Moses by covering him with his hand.

What a lovely picture.

Our Creator, all powerful God, hands on. Not using an angel, but his own hand.

I take this to confirm His unceasing desire to care for us. To know us and be with us. A personal relationship.

The crisis led Moses to seek God. Ask Him. Plead with Him.

This is all on the foundation of the deep, intimate relationship they shared.

It challenges me to work at my relationship with God. To spend time with Him and to be open and honest. To show my trust in Him.

Then, when the crisis happens and situations are distressing, my first thought needs to be talking with my closest friend. Jesus. Not, trying to sort it out myself, on my own.

This passage thrills me. I find it almost overwhelming the tender love that God has for us.

His yearning to be close and in communication.

He is intentional with us... This awesome, majestic, powerful God of the Universe is passionate about us.

In our brokenness and sin He still loves and forgives.

When you are in the midst of struggles and darkness, God will place you carefully and tenderly in a cleft of the rock. He will cover you with His hand and his glory is closer than you may think - even if you can't hear it, or see it, or feel it.

He is present in your pain. He has promised to never leave you. To always be with you.

He knows you by name and you are His beloved.

If you remember very little of this talk, I pray it is the utter grace and mercy of the King of creation.

That He is faithful and true. That He listens and is overflowing with grace and mercy. That through the death of Jesus, God's own Son, we are friends of God. We have his presence always and in Jesus we have the knowledge of God's glory.

May we all see more and more glimpses of the glory of God. May we expect the unexpected and may we always be in awe of our King.

Let's be glory junkies!

Lord,

May we see your goodness pass before us, flow within us and pour out from us.

That we may honour you in our lives, in our words and in our actions,

In the name of Christ Jesus,

Amen