

Safe Places

Exodus 33:7-23; 34:29-35; Psalm 63

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- The destruction of a tsunami and the need to find a “safe place” to weather the storm
- All of us experience emotional and spiritual tsunamis.
- How do we maintain our spiritual equilibrium and passion when experiencing a spiritual tsunami?
- Moses daily faced a spiritual tsunami, living with and leading a group of complainers.
 - Moses’ first 40 years as the prince of Egypt lived a “sheltered” life.
 - Moses’ middle 40 years as a shepherd in Midian lived a “solitary” life.
 - Moses’ final 40 years as leader of Israel lived a “surrounded” life.
- Moses learned the importance of having a SAFE PLACE where he could get away from the stress, the pressures, the tsunami of life-- a Spiritual Safe Place.

Safe Places

A. To Commune with God and be Transformed by His Glory

- Exodus 33:7-11-- *“Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door. So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.”*
1. Moses’ **“tabernacle or tent of meeting”** was NOT THE tabernacle that would later be built, but it was his personal tent.
 2. God made sure that the tent of meeting was safe.
 - Exodus 33:9-- *“when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle”*
 3. The tent was located outside of the camp, away from all the complainer.
 4. From there, God spoke to Moses as a man speaks to his friend.
 - Exodus 33:11-- *“the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.”*
 5. Spending time with God had a transformational effect on Moses
 - Exodus 34:29-35-- *“Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses’ hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. And whenever the children of*

Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him."

6. Spending time with God should have a transformational effect on us.
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18-- *"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."*
 - a. When one turns to the Lord, the veil of spiritual dullness and ignorance is lifted.
 - 2 Corinthians 3:16-- *"when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."*
 - b. God's transforms us from the inside out.
7. Because the "glow" fades, we need periodic spiritual retreats to recharge the "glow".
 - 2 Corinthians 3:13-- *"so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away."*

B. To Observe God's Presence and be Awed by His Glory

- Exodus 33:12-23-- *"Then Moses said to the LORD, 'See, You say to me, "Bring up this people.'" But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people." And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth." So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." And he said, "Please, show me Your glory." Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."*
1. Moses was concerned over God's presence.
 - a. God had said that He would not accompany them on their journey but would send His angel.
 - Exodus 33:2-- *"I will send an angel before you and drive out "*
 - Exodus 33:3-- *"I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."*
 - b. God promises Moses that His personal presence would go with Moses.
 - Exodus 33:14-- *"My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest!"*
 2. Moses desired to see God's glory or evidence of God's presence with him.
 3. But to see God's glory, Moses needed to be in a "Safe Place"-- the "cleft of the rock"
 4. Now what did Moses see?
 - a. Moses saw a preview of God's goodness.
 - Exodus 33:19-20 -- *"Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."*

- b. Moses was also privy to the proclamation of God's Name.
 - Exodus 34:5-7-- *"Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."*

PARENTHESIS: Where do you find a "safe place"?

- Psalm 63:1-- *"O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water."*
- David is on the run, probably from Absalom
- 2 Samuel 16:14-- *"Now the king and all the people who were with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there."*
- ANY PLACE can be declared a SAFE PLACE.

C. To Remember God's Loyal Love to the Praise of His Glory

- Psalm 63:2-11-- *"So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me. But those who seek my life, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword; They shall be a portion for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall glory; But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped."*
1. David remembers God's love that is "better than life" itself.
 2. This remembrance results in...
 - a. Praise to God
 - b. Restful sleep-- as a "little bird" under mom's wing, or a "little child" in daddy's hand.
 - Psalm 63:6-- *"When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches."*
 - John 10:27-29-- *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."*
 - c. Renewed confidence regarding his future.
 - Psalm 63:9-11-- *"But those who seek my life, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword; They shall be a portion for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall glory; But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped."*