

¹² 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.’ ¹³ 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.” ¹⁴ And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” ¹⁵ Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ 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.” ¹⁷ 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.” ¹⁸ And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.” ¹⁹ 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.” ²⁰ But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” ²¹ And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. ²² 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. ²³ Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

Text: Exodus 33:12-23 A 1-16-22 Romans 12:6-16 John 2:1-11 Ps. 24 Resp. Ps.: 19
Hymns: 42, 742, 343 (1-2, 4-5, 7), 795

LORD, SHOW US YOUR GLORY!

- 1. We see God’s glory in His grace**
- 2. We see God’s glory in His Word**
- 3. We will see God’s glory in heaven**

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Have you ever wished you could see God? There was a time when Moses wanted to see God.

1

God had chosen Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, where they had been slaves, to the Promised Land. It was a great responsibility which at times was very difficult because of the rebelliousness and ingratitude of many of the people toward God and Moses. Just before our text, while Moses was up on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments from God, the people were worshipping a golden calf. God was very angry with them. Three thousand of them were put to death. The Lord told Moses that He was going to send an angel before the people to lead them to the Promised Land, but God would no longer lead them Himself. The Lord said that He would still be with Moses, though. When the people heard this, they were sincerely sorry for what they had done.

Moses told the Lord, “*You say to me, ‘Bring up this people’*” (to the Promised Land). “*But You have not let me know whom You will send with me.*” Moses’ words are a bit confusing to me,

since God had told him that He would send an angel to lead the people. We can tell from the context that what Moses really wanted was for God to lead them again.

Moses reminded the Lord, *“You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’”* Moses knew that he was a sinner, and that he was God’s child by grace – by God’s love that he didn’t deserve. The same is true for all of us. We aren’t God’s people because we deserve it. We don’t deserve it. We’re sinners. We’re all God’s people by His grace. John exclaims, *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!”* (1 Jn. 3:1a)

Moses told the Lord, *“Now ... 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.”* Twice Moses appealed to God’ grace, asking God to help him and guide him so he could continue to lead God’s people. And Moses knew that in His grace God would give him what he asked for.

“We are worthy of none of the things for which we ask, neither have we deserved them, but we ask that [God] would give them all to us by grace” (Luther’s Catechism, explanation to the Fifth Petition). We too need to ask that God in His grace would help us and guide us so we can follow Him through life, fulfilling the different roles and tasks He gives us. And we know that in His grace God will give us what we pray for.

Moses pleaded with God, *“Consider that this nation is Your people.”* Moses reminded the Lord that He had chosen the children of Israel as His people. They had demonstrated sincere sorrow over worshiping the golden calf. Moses was asking the Lord to forgive them, and to once again be among them and lead them.

God in His grace forgave the people, but He told Moses, *“My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”* In the original text *“you”* is singular, referring only to Moses. God would only lead Moses, not the people

Moses pleaded with the Lord, *“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.”* As the children of Israel traveled to the Promised Land, God made His presence with them known in a pillar of cloud during the day, and a pillar of fire at night. All the nations around them could see it. It was a visible demonstration of God’s grace for His people. If God stopped leading them, the other nations would no longer see the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire – would no longer see the visible demonstration of God’s grace for His people.

The Lord assured 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.”* By God’s grace, Moses believed in Him. As His

believing child, God in His grace heard and answered Moses' prayer, and promised to continue to be among His people and lead them.

When the children of Israel rebelled against God on their way to the Promised Land, as they did a number of times, Moses always interceded for them before God, asking God not to destroy them, but to have mercy on them. In His grace, God had mercy on them.

Moses once told them, *"The LORD your God will raise up a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren"* (Dt. 18:15). In the book of Acts we learn that Moses was referring to Jesus (Ac. 3:22; 7:37). The Bible says, *"Christ ... died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us"* (Ro. 8:34). As Moses interceded for God's people when they sinned, so Jesus intercedes for us when we sin. And because Jesus offered Himself to be punished on the cross for our sins in our place, God in His grace forgives our sins. *"The blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanses us from all sin. ... If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* – 1 John 1:7, 9.

2

Moses told the Lord, *"Please, show me Your glory."* The Bible doesn't tell us why Moses asked to see God's glory. Many times the people complained and rebelled against the Lord and against Moses. It wasn't easy for Moses to keep on loving them and forgiving them and being their leader. I think Moses asked to see God in all His glory to strengthen him to lead God's people. God had spoken to Moses in the burning bush and regularly since that time. But Moses had never seen God Himself. Whether it was to strengthen him or for some other reason, Moses wanted to see God.

God told Moses, *"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."* Instead of letting Moses see Him in all His glory, the Lord spoke to Moses about Himself. God called Himself *"the LORD."* "LORD" here in the original is *"Jehovah,"* the name God uses for Himself that emphasizes that He is the living God (as opposed to all other gods, which don't exist), and the covenant God who sent His Son to save us from our sins. Instead of letting Moses see His glory, the Lord let Moses hear His words.

"We walk by faith, not by sight" – 2 Corinthians 5:7. We believe in God, but not because we can see Him. *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"* – Romans 10:17. We believe in God because, as we've heard and studied God's Word, He has worked faith in our heart. *"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes"* – Romans 1:16. Through His Word God has given us faith to believe and know that He exists, and that we are saved by the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. At this time we can't see God in His glory with our eyes. But in His Word we can see God in His glory as the merciful, loving, forgiving, saving God that He is!

3

The Lord told Moses, *“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.’”* If the Lord let Moses see Him in all His glory while Moses was still in his sinful state on earth, he would die. God did let Moses see some of His glory. And now Moses sees God in all His glory in heaven!

Job said, *“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”* (Job 19:25-27). Job was suffering terribly when he spoke those words. Almost everything in his life that could go wrong had gone wrong. But Job knew that he had salvation in his Redeemer, and that one day he would see his Redeemer face to face in heaven.

“We do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” – 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Life can be hard. At times we get weary and discouraged, anxious and fearful. How nice it will be to be done with this life and home with God in heaven. We’re not there yet, but one day we will be!

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” – 1 John 3:2. As long as we’re here, we’re God’s saved children. One day Jesus will take us to heaven. He’ll make us perfect, and we’ll see Him and live in His presence always.

That would really be something if we could see God in His glory now! We do see God’s glory in His grace – His amazing, undeserved love for us sinners that brought us salvation in Jesus. We see God’s glory in His Word – His Word that tells us all we need to know about Him and gives us faith in Him. We will see God’s glory with our own eyes in heaven. “Thank You, Lord, for showing us Your glory!” Amen.