**BCM Bible Study: March 3/4, 2021**

**Exodus 34:29-35; 40:34-38: Shining Face and God’s Presence**

Introduction: Today we finish Exodus! Before jumping in, follow up on last week’s challenge: “This week, be honest with yourself or an accountability partner abouts ways that you continue to walk in disobedience to God. Instead of stewing in shame and self-contempt, bring these requests to God and praise him for his mercy. **Read Psalm 51** out loud as a prayer. Do this multiple times if you can!”

Moses’ Shining Face: **Read Exodus 34:29-32**

* Take a look back at Exodus 33:11. Look ahead at **Deuteronomy 34:9-12**. What do these verses say about Moses and his relationship with God?
	+ Knowing these things, what does it indicate that Moses’ face is glowing?
		- “Moses is in some sense imbued with a “dose of God.” He reflects God’s glory to the people because he himself has beheld God’s glory.” (Enns) The people’s fear also indicates that this is true.

**Read Exodus 34:33-35**

* Why did Moses operate this way with the veil? What does it indicate that he would remove it when he was with God?
* The apostle Paul directly applies Moses’ veil to our lives in 2 Corinthians. Let’s take a look at that passage: **Read 2 Corinthians 3:7-11**.
	+ What are these verses saying?
		- The “ministry of death” is the old covenant, Moses’ ministry through the law. It is described this way by Paul, not because the law is bad or irrelevant, but because it did not solve the problem of hearts inclined to sin. Because of this, it is called the “ministry of condemnation” – people now had a law that could condemn their action, but they would not obey that law. Take a look at Galatians 3:15-22 to learn more about the law as it relates to the gospel. The point of these verses is that if there was such glory that came from a covenant that was temporary, how much more glorious is the new covenant in Christ through the Spirit. (summary of ESV study Bible notes)

**Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-18**

* How would you summarize the message of these verses?
	+ We can be bold because we have a lasting covenant that does not fade. This is why Moses covered his face – the glowing was fading, as was the old covenant. But the hearts of Israel were hardened to God’s purpose, as are those who reject the gospel. When one accepts the gospel, the veil is removed and we can have intimate relationship with God. The hardened heart is healed and made new by the Spirit and we can know God. In the Spirit, we have freedom from sin and death. Just as Moses’ face was changed and radiated God’s glory after seeing the face of God, we too behold the glory of the Lord and are being transformed. But unlike Moses, whose transformation was partial and fading, our is continuous and ever-increasing. We have not only seen the unveiled image of God in Christ, the Spirit of God lives in us. (summary of ESV study Bible notes)
* What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit?
	+ **Read Romans 8:9-17** and **John 16:12-15**. How have you experienced the ministry of the Spirit in your life? How can you relate to the things described in these verses?
* These verses in 2 Corinthians say that Christians reflect the glory of God to others. What does this mean? How would others see God’s glory through you?
	+ **Read 1 Peter 2:9-12**. What does the life described here look like?
	+ Do you ever feel stuck or unable to grow or live as you want? How so? What does it look like to let the Spirit work in your heart?

God With Us: After the tabernacle is built, the book of Exodus ends as follows: **Read Exodus 40:34-38.**

* The people’s movements were totally dependent on God. They only moved if he did. What would it mean to act this way in your own life? How can you identify God’s activity in the world?
	+ The implication of following God’s movement is that the mission of God’s people is *his mission*. How does this give us peace about our role in God’s plans on the earth?
	+ The entire lives of the Israelites were integral to the mission of God. This is why the law wasn’t just about “spiritual matters”; it was about every facet of life. In the same way, all of our lives ought to reflect the glory of God.
		- How does this shape the way you think about your plans for the future?
		- How can God be glorified in a “secular” (non-ministry) job?
* I can’t think of a more fitting end to Exodus than the presence of God dwelling with his people. In fact, that Moses cannot enter the tabernacle due to the thickness of the cloud suggests that there is a heightening of God’s presence. After the golden calf, this is amazing! This has been the point all along: “The presence of the Lord with his people is not simply the means of the mission, but is itself the mission.” (Blackburn)
	+ In Jesus, we see that God came to dwell with us in a new way: **Read John 1:14, Hebrews 1:3**. What do these verses say about Jesus? How is Jesus a fulfillment of what God started in Exodus?
	+ One of the great benefits of Jesus’ humanity is stated in Hebrews: **Read Hebrews 4:14-16**. How is Jesus different than the ancient high priests we have seen in Exodus?
		- How do you usually handle temptation?
		- What does it mean to draw near to the throne of grace? How can we do that? Why might that help in times of temptation?

Conclusion and Challenge: As we close our study of Exodus, we can put ourselves in the position of the Israelites. Hebrews 3-4 talks about how we, like them, are traveling toward the promised rest. (Ex. 33:14, Heb. 4:11) But the way to rest is through the desert, and along the way, there are many opportunities to fall away. You will be disappointed, hurt, or left wanting; life will not always go your way. You may face unthinkable pain and tragedy. You will encounter theological doubts and wonder if God is there at all. And you may doubt yourself and wonder if his grace could really be enough. These things are what Jesus says will happen; the world is broken by sin. But we run the race with endurance knowing this: **Read 1 Cor. 13:12.**

* This week, consider your doubts and struggles that pull you away from God. Confess them to God or to someone else. Ask him for help. **Read Psalm 3 and 6** to guide your prayers and reflections.

Notes

* The word indicating that Moses’ face was shining is a rare word that is difficult to translate. Usually, it means “horn” but he way it is used in Habakkuk 3:4 indicates that his face had a glow to it, not covered in horns.
* The cloud and fire return to close Exodus. The God that parted the sea will lead them into the Promised Land. They only must move as He moves. The verb for “set out” has appeared at least 8 times from the departure of Egypt to this point, tying the movement of God together.