

God's Presence, Moses Desire and Our Journey (Exodus 33:12-19)

Key Verse: Exodus 33:14-15 *"The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us from here?"*

Introduction

Life is a journey.

Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, a French philosopher and Jesuit priest – characterized our life journey this way. He said,



In our life journey, there are big life events and small ones. For those who are Christians, we rest in the assurance that all our experiences – big and small - matter to God. Sometimes along the way we go through good times and other times are more difficult. These times also matter to God.

So what is true for us today was also true for Moses thousands of years ago.

The Bible tells us Moses was a humble man who constantly interacted with God and sought His Presence every step of the way. While there is only one Moses (and he was a great yet imperfect man), I believe his trust and obedience in many cases provides a good "example to follow" . Throughout the Old Testament, we see he was in constant communication with God – "The Lord said...and Moses replied". He always wanted to be in God's presence.

Let's read together now today's scripture from Exodus 33:12-19 and see what we can learn and apply to our lives – following Moses example.

Exodus 33:12-19 New International Version (NIV) - Moses and the Glory of the LORD

¹²Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' ¹³If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

¹⁴**The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."**

¹⁵ Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶ How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

¹⁸ Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

¹⁹ And the LORD said, “**I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you**, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. **I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.**”

3 Questions

Today, I would like to ask 3 questions as we examine this passage together. Some of you know that I am a business professor, so the three questions I typically ask my students each class will be the 3 questions we will use to share a message from God’s word today. These questions focus on – What, Why and How.

In other words, I would like to unpack this scripture using those 3 questions.

Q1 – What?

What are we
talking about?



What are we talking about? In particular, what does God want to communicate to us through His Holy word today? That is, what does he want us to understand more deeply and apply to our lives?

In our life journey, stuff happens. And, just like the great leader and follower of God Moses, we often have concerns. Moses honestly expressed his concerns to God. God graciously responded to Moses because He was pleased with Moses. Honestly, Moses plea to God and God’s response to Moses should be what we want also. From the scripture we read together, I want to focus on 3 things.

1. God’s presence (v.14) - **The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”**
2. God’s goodness (v. 19) - **“I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you,**
3. God’s mercy and compassion (v.19) - **I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.**

God’s presence, God’s goodness and God’s mercy and compassion is all “Good Stuff” in our life journey. And, while a lot of stuff happens in our lives, the aim of today’s message is to focus primarily on the

Good stuff (and not the bad stuff). I also want to focus on the BIG stuff and the small stuff as we consider why this passage is important and how it applies to our lives.

So, for the “what” question, we are focusing on God’s presence, goodness, mercy and compassion.

<u>Stuff</u>	Good Stuff (*Today’s Message Focus)	Bad Stuff (Not Today’s Focus Message)
(What Q – What are we talking about today?)	God’s Presence (v.14) God’s Goodness (v. 19) God’s Mercy/Compassion (v.19)	God’s Absence God’s Badness God’s Lack of Forgiveness

Q2 - Why?



Why is this so important? That is, why does God’s presence, His goodness, mercy and compassion really matter? Stated differently, why should you pay attention for the next 20-25 minutes?

This is why.

In our life journey, as you well know, everybody goes through stuff. Sometimes it’s the BIG stuff – both good and bad. And, during these times, we may ask some big questions particularly when it is hard...like why me or how are you going to work this out God? Yet, in Romans 8:28, Paul proclaims,

“²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”. That is, all things work together for good to those who trust in the Lord.”

With that in mind, let’s examine today’s scripture based on what Moses knew and what we should know.

1. **God’s presence (V.14)** is big and reflects His gracious response to Moses leadership concern and deepest desire in v. 12. In v.12, Moses said to the Lord, you have been telling me, ‘Lead these people’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, I know you by name and you have found favor with me...God’s presence goes with those He has found favor with. God honors those that honor Him. Moses deepest desire was to honor and glorify God. His desire should be our desire...always – in the good as well challenging stuff that life presents us. For Moses,

nothing was bigger than God’s presence. He cried out, be present with me oh Lord. That’s big. Moses desire for God’s presence to go with Him wherever He took him should be ours too.

2. **God’s goodness (V.19)** – Sometimes the places we go are not easy but if God is present, His goodness is present also. Is there anything more good (or better) than God? Chocolate? Baseball? I don’t think so. Goodness reflects God’s nature, his unchanging character. He is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. And that is good for Bible believing Christians. In fact, to seek His presence and bask in His goodness is the best. It is the most we could ask for. In v. 19, the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you”. He calls us to move forward in our life journey with Him and to enjoy the goodness that only comes from being in His presence.
3. **God’s mercy/compassion (V.19)** – God continues in v. 19. He says, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and compassion on whom I will have compassion” God is good and if you have confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and are growing in relationship with Him, you know his mercy and compassion and have even experienced His goodness and presence. Yet, if you are a believer but don’t sense His presence, I encourage you to seek Him first and if need be repent and know that he is merciful and good and God. If you have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, what’s stopping you from asking for full forgiveness and receiving his mercy so that you can know Him more deeply and walk in His presence and goodness always?

OK, but why is this important? I believe the end of verse 14 answers this question simply and well.

“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest”

<u>Stuff</u>	<u>Good Stuff</u> (*Today’s Message Focus)	<u>Bad Stuff</u> (<u>Not</u> Today’s Focus Message)
(What Q – What are we talking about today?)	God’s Presence (v.14) God’s Goodness (v. 19) God’s Mercy/Compassion (v.19)	God’s Absence God’s Badness God’s Lack of Forgiveness
<u>BIG Stuff</u> (Why Q – Why is it important?)	God’s Presence + God’s Goodness + God’s Mercy and Compassion = Rest	Without His Presence, Without His Goodness, Without His Mercy and Compassion = No Rest

Q3 - How?

HOW DOES IT WORK?



So, with His presence, with His goodness and with His mercy and compassion...we can all find what? Rest. Don't we all want and need rest? Yes, we do.

But how? How can we find the rest we so deeply desire?

There are several ways but I would like to share 3 thoughts.

1. **In His Word (My Dad)** – God is communicating with us through His word. I think we start to find rest when we take some time daily in God's word.



Find Rest in His Word

This is my Dad and me. This is the last picture I have of us together before He went home to be with our Heavenly Father. Before he died, I asked him if I could have his Bibles. He graciously left them for me and my time reading through his Bible is a great blessing to me. It has been good to see Dad's notes, observations etc. at different stages during his life journey. Actually, I am not moving very fast through the Bible - basically, I am reading 1 chapter a day. And, at this rate it will probably take me 3 years to get through the whole Bible. But that's ok. The longest chapter in the Bible is reportedly Psalm 119 and in Psalm 119:105, God's word says,

¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

If you have a Bible and you want to be transformed for the better, I encourage you to read a little – even 1 chapter a day. (If you don't want to be transformed for the better and find rest then we can talk about that later...) Anyway, the Bible gives us God's voice. It is relevant and useful to every part of our life – being a good parent, starting or running a business, making career decisions etc. Since God has spoken through the Bible, it is important for us to listen. It will be like a lamp for your feet and a light unto our path as we journey on. Again, He is communicating with us through His word. When you are in His word, He is present In short, find rest in your time spent in God's word...

2. **In Prayer (My Friend Senyo)** – This brings me to my second point – Prayer. I think we also find more rest when we communicate regularly with our heavenly father. When we pray. In Psalm 136:1, God’s word says

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever.

The Bible says God is good. I have a good friend and his name is Senyo.

He is a visiting professor at my small school in Kyoto and whenever he visits Japan it always seems to come at the right time for me – when I need some guidance and encouragement the most. In many ways, Senyo is God’s goodness and grace to me. Maybe some of you saw Senyo with me at church a few weeks ago. Anyway, Senyo rises early every morning to pray – normally about 4:00 am and goes to work by 5:30 after a morning devotional and a walk. Senyo is a great man of prayer and he is in the process of building a Christian school in Ghana devoted to developing honest, compassionate, forgiving leaders on the African continent. He submits his big dream daily to God – early in the morning and throughout the day. Well, his name literally translates from Ghanaian to English as “God is good” and we were able to celebrate His 62nd birthday together at KIU this January.



Find Rest in
Your Prayer

He is a reminder to me that God is good – all the time. Take time each day, like Senyo and Moses, to pray. (And, remember, at OIC, there are people who will pray with you in the back of the church for you at the “Lift” station at the end of the service. Also, if you would like me to pray for or with you, please let me know.) Find rest in your regular routine through a time of prayer.)

3. **Our Worship (OIC)** – And, that brings us to our third way where we can find rest from the busyness of life - worship and fellowship.



Find Rest in Worship and
in Fellowship

While we all have very different personalities and perhaps religious experiences and traditions, God's word tells us in Mathew 18:20 that

"For where **two or three** have **gathered** together in My name, I am there in their midst."

Our life together is enriched when we gather and when we look for opportunities to connect with other believers. Church is often a good place. If you are able, a small group at another time or even a shared meal or a cup of coffee with a friend who is a believer can be a wonderful, restful blessing. These may be small things, but time spent with another believer during the days, weeks and months is an important part of our journey. Try to take time regularly – to worship, fellowship and pray. Even having just 1 other person can bring you right into God's presence and be a mutual blessing. It can even help you find rest.

In sum, if we want to find rest, we need to be in God's word (daily), pray and talk with God as well as find a way to spend some time regularly at least with some, a few, other believers in His presence.

As I prepare to close, here is a summary of today's message.

<u>Stuff</u>	Good Stuff (*Today's Message Focus)	Bad Stuff (Not Today's Focus Message)
(What Q – What are we talking about today?)	More in God's Presence (v.14) More of God's Goodness (v. 19) More of God's Mercy/Compassion (v.19)	Less Presence Less Goodness Less Mercy, Compassion, Forgiveness
BIG Stuff (Why Q – Why is it important?)	God's Presence + God's Goodness + God's Mercy and Compassion = More Rest	Without His Presence, Without His Goodness, Without His Mercy and Compassion = Less Rest
Small Stuff (How Q – How does it apply to my life?)	More Rest in His Word More Rest in Your Prayer More Rest in Our Worship	Less Rest without His Word Less Rest without Your Prayer Less Rest without Our Worship

Conclusion

Today, we considered our life journey as spiritual beings. In many ways, we are moving from 1 life to the next. Today, we examined God's Presence, Mose's deep desire and tried to connect it to our life. As we close, I would like to share 1 final thought.

When the disciples were asking Jesus what the greatest commandment (Matthew Jesus replied:

“**Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the **first** and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father,

You are good and you are God. Your presence is most welcome in this place.

We confess that like Moses, we make mistakes and fall short. Yet, if we repent of our sins you are merciful, compassionate and quick to forgive. You desire to be close and ever present with us.

Help me and each of us here to desire to be ever present with you. In this life journey, like Moses, we are all leaders and followers – we may lead or follow in our home, at work, at church or even in the Kansai community.

Where ever you send us to lead or follow, may your presence always go with us or, we don't want to go as both leaders and followers. Help each of us to trust and obey your call on each of our lives and throughout our journey.

In Jesus precious name. Amen

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Osaka International Church

Message Outline and Notes

February 1, 2015

<u>Stuff</u>	Good Stuff (Today's Message Focus)	Bad Stuff
(What Q – What are we talking about today?)	God's _____ (v.14) God's _____ (v. 19) God's _____ and _____ (v.19)	(Not Today's Focus Message)
BIG Stuff (Why Q – Why is it important?)	God's _____ + God's _____ + God's _____ and _____ = _____ (No Presence, No Goodness, No Mercy and No Compassion = No Rest)	
Small Stuff (How Q – How does it apply to my life?)	Find More Rest in His _____ Find More Rest in Your _____ Find More Rest in Our _____	

Notes