

St Martins C3 – March 2, 2025

Dipping Your Torch Into the Sun - Encounter

Sermon Notes:

In this series, we have been looking at the second half of the book of Exodus, at the encounters Moses and the nation of Israel had with God.

Today, we want to focus on what a life that has its torch dipped into the sun looks like, focussing on what happens *through* us, inspiring us to desire an encounter with God.

To do this we will look at three key characters in Exodus.

1 – Moses

Principle: Time in God's presence leads you to show God to those around you.

Read Exodus 34:29-35

Moses discovered that when he spoke with God he changed. He brought something of God to others. Israel recognised God in Moses and treated Moses like God.

When we encounter God, we begin to become like Him and we bring something of God to others.

2 - The Tabernacle

Principle: Time in God's presence leads to easy obedience.

The Tabernacle's creation teaches us a lot about what happens when we prioritise God's presence.

The important thing in the creation of the tabernacle was their obedience. In the actual building of the Tabernacle, we read the same phrase or something like it seventeen times *The people of Israel did everything as the Lord commanded.* (Exodus 39:1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31, 32, 42-43, Exodus 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32)

This highlights Israel's faithfulness and obedience after their failure with the Golden Calf (Exodus 32–34). Many people want to know God's will and how to do it. This is the answer. When you spend time with God you are more likely to do all the good things that God has for you to do.

3 – _____ (The third most mentioned Israelite in Exodus)
Principle: Time spent in God's presence makes everything we do for God.

The final character is possibly the most famous person you've never heard of. He doesn't have a glowing face, but he is filled with the Spirit of God. What does that look like? Good work.

Read Exodus 35:30-35

God's Spirit in us may seem ordinary, but it transforms all we do to for His glory.

Sometimes dipping your torch into the fire will bring dramatic results. You will bring God's presence to other people, you will obey him and see him touch other people in dramatic ways. Most of the time it will look like going to work and doing it to the best of your ability.

Questions for Connect Groups:

Key Point

Deeper encounters with God are worthwhile because when we have them God does more through us.

Questions

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

What caused Moses face to shine? Why was this scary to others?

What might it look like for our faces to "shine"? How would it benefit others?

What is the significance for us of Moses not being aware that his face was shining?

Why was it so important to show Israel was obedient in the creation of The Tabernacle?

How would focusing on God make obedience to Him easier?

Discuss whether Bezalel was only filled with God's Spirit to build the tabernacle or if God can fill others to work?

What would doing your work to the glory of God look like?

How has this series challenged you to encounter God more?

What would that look like for you? How can we support you?

Monday Devotion: Encountering Who?

Read Exodus 34:1-8

In this series, we have talked a lot about Encountering God. But who is God? This passage tells us. It is so significant that verse six is the most quoted verse in the Bible. This week we will explore what this verse says about God's character.

To help I am taking excerpts from The Bible Projects excellent visual commentary of these verses:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/character-of-god-exodus/>. Check them out if you would rather watch your devotion than read them!

The first word used in this description of God is compassionate, or in Hebrew, *rakhum*. This word also appears as a noun, *rakhamim*, or compassion. And what's really fascinating is that both of these words are related to the Hebrew word for womb, *rekhem*.

So compassion in the Hebrew Bible is centered in a person's core, and the word invites us to imagine a mother's tender feelings for her vulnerable infant.

Rakhum is a word that conveys intense emotion but it also involves action. The word is used most often to describe God's actions motivated by his emotions. This all points forward to a time when Jesus comes on the scene. He is Yahweh's deep compassion become human. When you encounter God, you will find that He feels and is motivated to action for you and what you are going through. Come to Him today and discover His compassion for you.

Tuesday Devotion: God is Gracious

Read Exodus 34:6-7; Ephesians 2:8-9

We're going to look at the second key word in this statement, "gracious." The Hebrew word is *khanun*, which is related to the Hebrew noun *khen*. *Khen* is often the word used to describe a gift given with delight or favour. It is grace.

Khen requires a generous spirit, which people sometimes have. But in the Bible, the one who shows more *khen* than anyone else is God. Like when God rescued the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and they quickly betray Him by giving their allegiance to a golden idol as their god. But then Moses steps in and asks God to consider giving a gift that they don't deserve. And God says yes by showing the ultimate act of *khen*—forgiveness and a promise to be with these people.

This character trait of God is so reliable that over 40 times in the book of Psalms people cry out for God's *khen*—when they're sick, or in danger, or when the Israelites are in exile.

Ultimately, God's grace is seen through Jesus. According to the apostle Paul, we're like the living dead. God has handed humanity over to the destructive consequences of our selfish decisions. But, Paul says, God is rich in mercy, and by His grace He's rescued us. He's talking about how Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are offered to us as a generous gift of life that is more powerful than death. And as with any gift, all one has to do is receive it.

As you spend time with God today, cry out to him for his grace and see him lovingly respond.

Wednesday Devotion: God is Slow to Anger

Read Exodus 34:6-7; Romans 1:18-2:4

We're up to the third phrase, that God is "slow to anger." Now, that might surprise some people. Isn't the God of the Bible mostly angry, striking people down for their sins? Well, it turns out that God's anger in the Bible is way more nuanced.

In Hebrew, the phrase "slow to anger" literally means "long of nose." What does God's patience have to do with a long nose? The common biblical Hebrew way to say that someone is angry: "their nose burned hot." It's describing how your body, especially your face, gets hot when you're filled with anger.

And so in Hebrew, the main words for anger are either "nose" or "heat" or "hot nose." This is why a patient person is called "long of nose." It takes a long time for their nose to get hot.

In the Bible, God gets angry numerous times, but God doesn't have a nose or get hot! These are metaphors, using our experience of hot anger to describe how God feels when He witnesses human evil. God's anger is an expression of His justice and his love for the world. But He's slow to anger, which means He gives people lots of time to change.

In this description of God, we see that there is judgment even to the third or fourth generation, but it is far outweighed by His love to thousands. Let's remember when God is angry and brings justice, it's because He's good. And he's extremely patient, working out his plan to restore people to his love. Ultimately, grace and justice come together on the cross.

Thursday Devotion: God's Loyal Love

Read Exodus 34:6-7; Ruth 3:10-11; Hosea 6:4; Psalm 136

We're going to look at the fourth phrase about God, loyal love. It translates the Hebrew word *khesed*, which is hard to translate into any language because it combines the ideas of love, generosity, and enduring commitment all into one. *Khesed* describes an act of promise-keeping loyalty that is motivated by deep personal care.

A great example is Ruth's loyalty to Naomi. Many times Ruth could have abandoned Naomi but she chooses to stay by her side. Notice that Ruth's *khesed* is not conditional or based on Naomi's worth. Rather, it's an expression of Ruth's character. She just is a generous and loving person who keeps her word.

That is what God is like to His people. He never abandons Abraham, Jacob or Israel in spite of their faults.

In the Bible, God is loyal and loving for no other reason than it's just who God is. Of course, He wants His people to respond with *khesed* in return. But even when they don't, God's *khesed* remains. Like in the celebration of Psalm 136 that opens by saying, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good," and then 26 times repeats, "His *khesed* is forever."

Jesus is the ultimate loyal and loving human. And in his life, death, and resurrection, God opened up a new future for all of us and for all of creation. And God did this because it's just who God is, generous, loving, and eternally loyal to His promises. Now we have experienced that we can let that same loyal love through us to others.

Friday Devotion: God is Faithful

Read Exodus 34:6-8; Romans 15:8-9

The last characteristic of God is the Hebrew word *emet*, which can be translated as “faithfulness,” or even “truth.” It’s related to another word you’ve probably heard, *amen*, which is an untranslated Hebrew expression meaning, “that’s truth!”

When *emet* is used of people, it describes reliable and stable character or trustworthiness. Like when Moses appoints leaders in Israel, they’re to be “people of *emet*,” people who are trustworthy, who won’t take bribes or distort justice.

So to say that God is “full of *emet*” doesn’t just mean that God tells the truth or stands for truth. It means that God is faithful and trustworthy. This is why Moses calls God “a rock,” saying that He is faithful, just, and upright. He’s saying that he can trust God to be consistent to His character.

Jesus came on behalf of God’s faithfulness. He is the faithful king, who invites all people to trust God.

Now, trusting anyone is risky. It’s hard to know if anyone is really “full of *emet*.” But the biblical story portrays a God who has been faithful all along and whose promises were fulfilled in the story of Jesus. We’re invited to trust that God is overflowing with faithfulness.

As you encounter God, may you discover the one who is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, full of loyal love and faithfulness! The like Moses, bow to Him and worship.