

“Hindsight Is Better Than Foresight”
Exodus 33:12-23

Introduction: What was the summation of Moses’ request?

1. Gideon’s Request Judges 6:17- *“And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.”*
 2. David’s Request
 - a. Psalm 16:11- *“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”*
 - b. Psalm 25:4- *“Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.”*
 - c. Psalm 86:17- *“Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.”*
 3. Moses Request
 - a. Exodus 33:13- *“Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.”*
 - (1) “Moses asked a smaller favor before he requested that greater one.” (Spurgeon)
 - (2) “Look upon your past petitions as the small end of the wedge opening the way for larger ones.” (Spurgeon)
 - (3) “Faith is a mighty grace, and always grows upon that on which it feeds.” (Spurgeon)
 - b. Exodus 33:18- *“And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.”*
 - (1) “I think he must have been sensible that the mind of man can never conceive an adequate idea of the incomprehensible Jehovah. He must, have learned that the God of mount Sinai, the King whose feet glowed like a furnace, and made the mountain smoke, could never be grasped by the sense of a mortal. Yet it is likely, with all this knowledge, that the great lawgiver had a vague and indistinct idea that it might be possible for Divinity to be seen.” (Spurgeon)
 - (2) “These eyes are but, organs to convey to me the knowledge of material substances; they cannot discern spirits; it is not their duty; it is beyond their province. Purer than celestial ether of the most refined nature; subtler than the secret power of electricity; infinitely above the most rarefied forms of matter is the existence we call a spirit. As well might we expect to bind the winds with cords, or smite them with a sword, as to behold spirits with eyes which were only made to see gross solid material.” (Spurgeon)
- “That was a large request for Moses to make. He could not have asked for more: ‘I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.’ Why, it is the greatest petition that

man ever asked of God. It seems to me the greatest stretch of faith that I have either heard or read of.” (Spurgeon)

- “It was great faith which made Abraham go into the plain to offer up intercession for a guilty city like Sodom. It was vast faith which enabled Jacob to grasp the angel; it was mighty faith which made Elijah rend the heavens, and fetch down rain from skies which had been like brass before; but it appears to me that this prayer contains a greater amount of faith than all the others put together.” (Spurgeon)
- “Had he requested a fiery chariot to whirl him up to heaven, had he asked to cleave the water-floods, and drown the chivalry of a nation, had he prayed the Almighty to send fire from heaven to consume whole armies, a parallel to his prayer might possibly have been found; but when he offers this petition, ‘I beseech thee, shew me thy glory,’ he stands alone, a giant amongst giants; a colossus even in those days of mighty men. His request surpasses that of any other man: ‘I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.’ Amongst the lofty peaks and summits of man’s prayer, that rise like mountains to the skies, this is the culminating point; this is the highest elevation that faith ever gained; it is the loftiest place to which the great ambition of faith could climb; it is the topmost pillar of all the towering structures that confidence in God ever piled.” (Spurgeon)

Body: What did Moses actually see?

- I. The Request v. 18- *“And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.”*
- II. The Restrictions vs. 19-20
 - A. God’s Allowance v. 19- *“And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”*
 - B. God’s Actuality v. 20- *“And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”*
- III. The Rock vs. 21-23
 - A. Standing on the Rock v. 21- *“And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock”*
 - B. Shielding of the Rock v. 22- *“And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by”*
 1. It is only when we get in Christ that we can see the goodness of God.
 2. “There was a gracious concealment, and there was as much grace in that concealment as there was in the manifestation. Mark you, beloved, when God does not tell us anything, there is as much grace in his withholding it as there is in any of his revelations.” (Spurgeon)
 - C. Sight from the Rock v. 23- *“And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.”*

1. “Now, what attribute is God about to show to Moses? His petition is, ‘Shew me thy glory.’ Will he shew him his justice? Will he show him his holiness? Will he show him his wrath? Will he show him his power?” (Spurgeon)
2. “The goodness of God is God’s glory [v. 19]. God’s greatest glory is that He is good.” (Spurgeon)

Conclusion: What did God actually reveal to Moses?

1. What God has done in the past (v. 23- “*my back parts*”) reveals His goodness.
2. What God is working on in the future (v. 20- “*my face*”) restricts His glory. II Corinthians 3:18