

God's Greatest Glory

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Exodus 33:18-19

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I want you to open your Bibles, first of all, to the book of Job, Job chapter 42.

I told my Sunday school class this morning that in things pertaining the Lord's glory and the Lord's instructions for his people and the revelation of our Lord's way and will to his people, I feel more and more like Job when he said this in Job 42, verse one, "Then Job answered the LORD, and said, 'I know that thou canst do every thing. I know that, God. Oh, how I know that. There is none beside the Lord. None can stay his hand or say unto him what doest thou.'"

I know that. Don't you? I wish I knew it in my heart like I know it in my head.

"I know you can do everything."

Don't give me a God that wants to and can't. Don't even talk to me about such a God. Don't even suggest that God would like to do this and he is not able and because men resist him and reject him and refuse him. I don't believe that. I believe he will do what he will, when he will with whom he will. And his arm is not short that I cannot save and his ear is not heavy that it cannot hear. Don't you? He is God. He is God. Beside him there is none else. He is God. I know that.

"No thought can be withholden from thee."

My innermost thoughts are as open to God as the ground before the sun. The eye of the Lord is in every place beholding the evil and the good. Even Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah whom she sinfully gave to her husband to bear him a son to try to fulfill God's purpose, to fulfill God's purpose for a seed for Abraham. Even Hagar, after she had been turned out, turned out, put out on the street with her son, Ishmael, even Hagar sitting out there in the desert, thirsty, watching her boy's lips crack open, parched with thirst. She lifted her eyes and said, "Thou God seest me." She named the place that. "Thou God seest me."

Yeah, he does. Nothing can be withholden from God.

I tell you there is a sense in which that embarrasses me, but there is another sense in which that comforts me. It embarrasses me in that God knows what I am thinking and

that is embarrassing. Isn't it? Humiliating. God knows. God knows every thought. God knows every evil. God knows every thought of pride and every evil motive and God knows my thoughts. And that embarrasses me. That humbles me. That convicts me. It shuts my big mouth. It makes me feel my unworthiness. Just think. He knows. Understand.

But, secondly, it comforts me in this respect, that he knows I love him. And he knows I believe him and he knows I trust him. Now that helps me. You may not know it, but he does. You may suspect it, but he knows it. That is what Peter says. Peter fell back on God's omniscience. He fell back on Christ's complete knowledge in the sense Christ kept asking, "Do you love me?" He said, "You know I love you because you know all things. You know all things."

In verse three, "Who is he that hideth knowledge or counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things much too wonderful for me."

I have had to deal in and speak of and preach things way beyond my understanding. I have uttered things I didn't fully understand, like I told my Sunday school class this morning in 2 Samuel 24 when it says God moved David to number Israel. And that was a sin to number Israel. He ought never to have numbered Israel. He knew better. Joab tried to tell him not to, but he did it anyway. And God moved him to it. I don't understand that. I believe it, but I don't understand it. I don't understand it. Now I have to talk about those things. I had to stand up in front of people and talk about those things I don't understand. I believe them, but I don't understand them.

But one thing, Bruce, I don't need is a God I can understand. Now, I would be in bad shape if I had a God I could understand. Wouldn't I? A God...one thing I don't need is a God I can comprehend. If he is like me he would be in the mess I am in. But he is far above me and I don't understand him. I utter things I don't understand and I preach things too wonderful and what I am dealing with this morning in Exodus 33—now, if you want to go over there—what I am dealing with, I tell you before hand. I don't understand fully and there are things much too wonderful. But I am going to talk this morning about God's greatest glory as if I knew something about it, Charlie. I am going to do my best as if I knew something about it; God's greatest glory.

We know in part and we prophecy in part and we see through a glass dimly, but I'll tell you what I know in part and I will tell you what I see through this glass dimly. I will tell you what I see.

I know, number one, I know this as best I can know it, that God's chief attribute—if such can be said, if anything about God can be said, Tom, to be chief, to be greatest. I speak as a man. I don't know that we can ever isolate any attribute and say this is about the other. But I do say that which seems to be God's greatest attribute, God's greatest attribute, that which reveals him most effectively is his holiness. Don't you think so? His holiness. Because he said this, "Holy and reverend is his name." That is his name: Holy.

Now, I know today...and I am not going to fall over into this pit of speaking more about what is wrong than what is right. But I do know today that the average person, if you ask them, "What is the chief attribute of God," just ask the average person on the street, "What is the chief attribute of God? What describes God the best?" They would say, I don't have any doubt, "God is love." That is what they would say, "God is love. God is love."

But God's love, my friend, is a holy love. God's chief attribute is his holiness. Will you hear me? Will you hear me?

The Lord is in his what? Loving temple? His holy temple. This book is called the holy Bible. His angels are called the holy angels. Holy and reverend is his name.

Isaiah said, "I saw the Lord high and lifted up. His train filled the temple." The seraphim about the throne cried what? That's right, not, "God is love." "Holy, holy, holy." I wish I could emphasize that.

His dwelling is called the holy place. The tabernacle was called the holy of holies. God is holy.

To Moses he said, "Moses, put off your shoes." Even Moses, even my servant Moses, even a man with whom God talked as with a friend face to face, "Moses, put off your shoes. You are on holy ground."

Let's don't get too familiar here. Is that right? Holy.

And am I scared for my generation. I am flat scared for the religious leaders of this day that are too familiar with God. There is too much familiarity with God. I'm scared for any of you who exercise that over familiarity with God.

If he said to Moses, "Stand back and take your shoes off," where do you reckon we stand?

Holy. God is holy.

You see, God's holiness presents us with the cause of our problem. God's holiness, not God's love, but God's holiness presents us with the cause of our problem. If God is like us we have no problem. But God being so infinitely above us and beyond us in his holiness and us in our sins, that presents us with this problem: Your sins have separated you and your God. That is what caused the division, your sins. You see, he is holy and you are sinful.

He said in Psalm 50, "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself." If he is, then we have no problem. He can be our copilot. He can be our business partner. He can be the man upstairs. He can be the good Lord. He can be somebody up there who likes me if he is like us. But if he is infinitely above us and infinitely, immaculately

unchangeably holy and we are given over to sin, then that's...there is where the problem comes in.

Turn to 1 Timothy chapter six. I want you to read this in 1 Timothy chapter six. Here this is what presents us with the problem is God's holiness. It is not God's love that presents us with a problem. It is God's holiness. It is God's holiness. You see, God's holiness makes necessary all the obedient suffering and sacrifice of Christ. It is God's holiness that sent Christ to the cross. It is God's holiness that sent Christ to the cross. It is God's holiness, God's righteousness that made Christ walk this earth and suffer, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. That is why. It is God's holiness. It wasn't God's love, it was God's holiness. It's God's love that gave him. It is God's holiness that forced him to do what he had to do or obligated him.

In 1 Timothy 6:15, 1 Timothy 6:15, "Which in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only potentate." He is the blessed and only potentate, "the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who only hath immortality, who dwells in a light which no man can approach unto." That is the light of his holiness. No man can approach unto God. He told Moses, "No man can see me and live." Do you remember me reading that a while ago? "No man can see me and live."

I hear people say that the Lord came and stood at the foot of their bed.

And you are still alive? Are you still alive? I don't question you saw a vision. But it wasn't him. No man can approach unto him whom no man hath seen nor care to see. There was a time he dwelt on this earth in the flesh that enabled us to look on him. Christ stood on this earth.

Paul said, "I know no man after the flesh. I knew Christ after the flesh. I saw him that way." And Paul did as one born out of due time. "But I don't know him that way anymore."

Somebody asked me on the phone yesterday, long distance. Called and wanted to know if I ever imagined Christ on the cross and tried to see it. I try to stay away from visions. And I recommend you do the same. To whom be honor and power everlasting.

God, you see, God's chief attribute is his holiness, if such can be said, chief attribute is holiness. And his holiness presents us with the cause of our problem. If God were not holy I wouldn't need a savior. I wouldn't need a mediator. If God were not holy we could do business as equals. We could bargain. We could say, "God if you do this, I'll do that. If you'll do this, I'll do that."

But God, he will not speak to nor be spoken to by a human being apart from a mediator because of his holiness. That is the reason. And because of his holiness Christ Jesus became a man and went through the suffering and sacrifice and obedience of death in order that God may be a just God and a Savior.

One other Scripture on this point. Turn to 1 Peter three. 1 Peter chapter three. And I'll tell you. If I can get across these particular points this morning, 1 Peter three, you talk about a fellow being on his way. You talk about a fellow being started in the right direction. Now, he will be started in the right direction here because it is God with whom we have to do. It is God with whom we have to do. And if I can find out who he is, the Son of God hath come and given us an understanding that we may know him that is true. This is the true God. This is eternal life.

In 1 Peter three look at verse 18. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God, this holy God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." See, this holy God had to have a substitute, a sacrifice in order for us to come to him.

All right. Here is the second thing. Now that...we ought to stay there two or three weeks. God's chief attribute is his holiness. Now what is his chief title? Turn to Revelation 19. I read it a while ago. Revelation 19. I read this a while ago in 1 Timothy six, but I won't bother to go over there again. But what is God's chief title? And this literally, this literally will slay the God of present day preaching.

In Revelation 19:16, "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written." And you see these capital letters? KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS. He is the King of Kings. He is the King who seats and unseats kings. He is the Lord of Lords. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and that is his name.

Old Nebuchadnezzar had this to say in Daniel chapter four. Nebuchadnezzar had this to say when his understanding returned to him in Daniel four. He said at the end of the days, verse 34, Daniel 4:34, "At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven and my understanding returned to me. I got my mind back, my senses back. My understanding returned. And I blessed the most high and I praised and honored him that liveth forever whose dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay his hand or say unto him, 'What doest thou?'" He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

I was reading the Bible this past week preparing a message down in Mississippi and I found a Scripture that somehow had escaped me. I don't remember ever, ever, ever reading it before. But I needed it at this particular time. It is found in 1 Kings chapter 20, 1 Kings chapter 20.

Do you know how preachers say, "Well, you know, the Lord is..." You know how they say, "The Lord is in the good things?" They write books like, *Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People*, you know, things like that, you know, as if God had nothing to do with it.

They say, "Well, if you are blessed then God is blessing you, but if you get cancer God didn't want you to. The devil did that." And you know if you...I was one up the road from the preacher's house there was a family had a nice little brick home there and lightning struck it and it burned down and somebody said, "Well, God didn't have anything to do with that. That was the devil. The devil is in the lightning. The devil is in misfortune. The devil is in these things."

You have heard that, haven't you? Is that what...isn't that general opinion? You baby lives then God gave it life. If it dies the devil caused it, you know. The devil did it.

Well, I want you to look at 1 Kings chapter 20, verse 28. 1 Kings 20:28: "And there came a man of God. There came a man of God and spake unto the king of Israel and said, 'Thus saith the Lord, "Because the Syrians have said, 'The Lord is God of the hills, the high country of mountains. He is God up there. But he is not God of the valleys.'"""

Is God not God of my valleys? Is he only the God of the hills, the high points, the peaks? Is he only God up there where the sun always shines above the clouds? Is he not God of the valleys?

Now, I know what the Syrians were saying. They were saying what they said back here in verse 23. You know David said, "I lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." God gave his law from Mount Sinai. He took Moses home from Mount Pisgah. He offered his Son on Mount Calvary. He met with Abraham on Mount Moriah, always on the mount.

Wait a minute, now. And the Syrians said, and the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods are gods of the hills. Therefore they are stronger than we when we are fighting in the hills. But let's get them down in the valley, down in the plain. And there we will whip them because God ain't there."

And that's where we get whipped is when we get blue and low and depressed and troubled and have trouble in the flesh. That's right, trouble in the flesh. Oh, we get along fine up here on this hill of worship and this mountain of joy where God is. But you let us get out there amongst them, you know, out there in the valley where the flesh attacks us and all. We just, I don't know, like brother Kent Clark said, "We put our head in our navel, you know, and just get down."

But he is God of the mountains and he is God of the valleys. He is God of the valleys, in total absolute control. I believe that.

He said, "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" Don't you believe that? "To make of one lump, the same lump, a vessel unto honor and one unto dishonor."

Well, he took on seed of our father Isaac and begat twins in a woman's womb and he said, "One of them I loved and one of them I hated. One of them will bring me glory and the other will be a child of shame." He is able.

All right. Thirdly, now, thirdly. God's chief attribute is his holiness. God's chief title is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. God reigns. What do we mean by sovereign grace? God reigns in grace. That is what we mean.

All right. Thirdly, God's chief glory. Now let's look at Exodus 33, verse 18. Moses says, "Show me your glory."

Here is an interesting man, a man whom God knew. The people of God were in Egypt under bondage in slavery. And the king fearing these people and fearing their God sent out word to kill all the little boys, kill every one of them, kill every boy born under a certain age. Just kill them. Wipe out every male child in Israel. The king of Egypt said that.

There was a little boy born to a woman, an Israelite woman and she saw he was an unusual child. She knew that in here. His name was Moses. And she didn't kill him. She disobeyed the orders of the king. And she took that little boy, she took that little boy and made her a basket and pitched it inside with tar and put that little boy inside that basket and took him down to the river Nile. That is faith, isn't it? That is believing God. And she put him there in the river Nile right there in the bushes. And she told his sister, she said, "Now, you get over there and hide in the weeds and you watch that basket. You watch that basket."

So the sister got over there in the weeds and it just so happened that Pharaoh's daughter came down there to bathe. And one of her servants found that little baby boy in that basket and picked him up and brought him to Pharaoh's daughter. And God is in charge of this valley, you know. He is God of the valleys. And he caused all this to take place. He brought her down there and he caused the servant to find it. And he caused her heart to reach out to that little boy.

Pharaoh's daughter, the princess, fell in love with that little old boy in that basket. She took him home with her. She told her daddy, she said, "I found me..." He said, "That's a Hebrew kid." She said, "But I want him. I want him." And he said, "All right, you can have him."

And, you know, that little boy...but here is the amazing thing. The little girl, the sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, she said, "Do you want me to get a nurse for that baby to take care of it? You don't want to be taking care of a baby, changing diapers and doing all that stuff and getting its formula."

"Yeah," she said, "You get me a nurse."

So this little girl ran and got Moses' momma and brought her up there to the palace. And Moses' momma acted like she had never seen that kid before.

That took a lot of grace, too.

And this Pharaoh's daughter said, "Will you take care of this baby and teach him and raise him and nurse him?"

And she said, "I'll be glad to."

And that's God's providence. So Moses, he grew up in that palace. Boy he had the best of everything. He had the best clothes, the best food and the best tutors and teachers. But his momma taught him the ways of God. When nobody was looking she was reading the Word to him, I'm sure. She was telling him about God, telling him about Abel's sacrifice and telling him about who they were, telling him who he was, who God is. She was telling him. She was telling him.

And so he grew up and he got to be about 40 years old. He was next in line for the throne is my guess. Schooled in Egypt, trained in Egypt, powerful, rich. Let me show you what it says about him over here in Hebrews, in Hebrews. And, you know, Moses enjoyed sitting at that king's table. Now don't tell me he didn't. You know Moses enjoyed those clothes. Mike, you know he did. I mean, Moses enjoyed walking down the street and everybody said, "There goes Moses." He liked that. You know he liked that, the rings on his finger and the medals on his chest, son of Pharaoh, next ruler of Egypt, a powerful man. Don't you know he enjoyed that? Don't you know that was a pleasure, the fame, the honor, the riches, the comfort, the luxury, the best that everybody had to offer was his, the best the world had.

Hebrews 11:24. "By faith Moses when he came to years refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." "I am not the son of Pharaoh's daughter. I am a son of God." "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." The pleasures, they are pleasures, all this ritual and pride and luxury. "Esteeming the reproach of Christ or reproach for Christ greater riches." Greater riches? "Than the treasures in Egypt. Because he looked beyond Egypt and he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." So by faith he left Egypt.

He left Egypt and he went out there in the desert and he tended sheep for God's priest. That's right, God's priest. He married his daughter. He married the priest's daughter and took care of his sheep.

Now you think of where this man was as far as the world is concerned and what he became. The first 40 years of his life raised in the lap of luxury, power, prestige, pleasure and the next 40 years on the back side of the desert walking alone in a shepherd's robe taking care of another man's sheep. That's right.

But it is not where we are, it is whose we are. It is not what a man has. It is whom does he know. This man knew God and God knew this man. It doesn't matter where you are. It doesn't matter what you are doing if you are taking care of your sheep or somebody else's. It doesn't matter whether you have got a gold ring on your finger or you have got grease under your finger nails. It doesn't matter whether everybody knows you or

nobody knows you as long as God knows you and God knew Moses. And he singled him out and told him, "I am going to send you down there." This is 40...he was 80 years old now. And God sent him down there to deliver those people out of Egypt.

And the Lord didn't tell Moses everything Moses wanted to know. He doesn't have to reveal his will completely to us. Just do what he said. Just do what he said.

I thought I preached last Wednesday one of the best messages I have ever preached down here in Mississippi and Thursday night I struck out just flat struck out. Did you ever just...I wish I hadn't of preached it. I felt bad driving all that night. I left after service and drove to about 12:15 or 12:30 and I just said, "Why didn't you just stay home, you know?"

But do you know what I bet? I bet more comes out of that message than that one Wednesday night. I just be willing to lay odds on that. Of course, I ain't no gambler, but I do want to lay odds on that, that God will get the glory out of my mess. And I get the exaltation out of that one I thought was so good. I probably never hear from it. But I will hear from that other one. I believe that.

The Lord doesn't have to explain things to us. "He has chosen the foolish to confound the wise. He has chosen the base and the things which are despised to bring to naught the things which are so that no flesh should glory in his presence."

So he takes Moses out there and puts him down in Egypt and he led them out. And here he is now in our text. And I am going to give you this and wind her down. And here he is, I guess upwards 90 years old and you know what all his experience. And he is sitting here in this tent praying. And he said, "Lord, show me your way."

Now, you know, this present day presumption bothers me to no end. I get real concerned about people that are saved and sure of it. I get real upset with people that raise their hand all the time and say they are sure for heaven as if they was already there. That bothers me a whole lot especially when I read words like verse 13 of Exodus 33.

Now this is the man I'm talking about. This is the man we have been talking about all this time. God has had his hand on him in such a miraculous way and he knew it. And he says, "Therefore I pray thee, Lord, if I have found grace in thy sight..." If? If. If? If. That's Moses. And yet we are so cock sure. "If anybody makes it, Lord, surely I will." Isn't that right? "I made my decision."

Yeah, but I hope he has made one.

"If I have found grace in thy sight show me thy way that I may know thee. Lord, I want to know God. I want to know God."

Paul wanted to know God. He said, "Oh, that I may know him."

There is nothing wrong with being a seeker, is there? There is nothing wrong with panting after God like a thirsty deer pants for the water brooks. There is nothing wrong with that.

“Show me your ways. Show me your ways. Show me your will. Show me your words. Show me, Lord. Don’t let me alone. Don’t leave me in my refuge of lies. Don’t leave me in my tradition and ceremony. Show me your ways if I have found grace in your sight, if I have, if I have.”

What have you gained? Let me ask you. What have I gained? What have we gained if we successfully defend our experience? What have we gained? What have we gained? What have we profited if we successfully defend our profession of faith?

You say, “Wait. But I was saved back yonder. Don’t shake my foundation.”

I wouldn’t shake yours for the world. Your foundation is not as important as his foundation.

What is wrong with seeking the Lord? What is wrong with crying out to God to show mercy? What is wrong with asking God if I found grace in your sight that I may know thee?

I tell you a lot of people, he said, are going to say at the judgment, “Didn’t we do this, that and the other?”

He will say, “I never knew you.”

Many he said.

“Show me your way.

And then down here in verse 18 he says, “Lord, show me your glory. Show me your glory.”

You see, God’s greatest glory is not making worlds. God’s greatest glory is not working miracles. Moses had seen all that. God’s greatest glory is not in material substance. Moses had played with that. God’s greatest glory is not showing his strength and dividing rivers. Moses had seen that. God’s greatest glory is not raining bread from heaven and water out of a rock. God’s greatest glory is something else and Moses wanted to know what it was. He wanted to see it. So God showed it to him. God showed him his greatest glory.

Verse 19. And here it is. God said, “I will cause my goodness.” God’s greatest glory is his goodness. “I will cause my goodness to pass before you and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious.” Did you know that is God’s greatest glory? Redemptive glory. His greatest glory is seen in Christ Jesus, Christ incarnate, Christ our

righteousness, Christ our sin offering, Christ our buried scapegoat, Christ our risen justifier, Christ our ascended substitute and savior, Christ our reigning mediator, Christ our coming king. That is God's greatest glory is Jesus Christ and his sacrifice.

Turn to Ephesians one. Let me show you this and let you study it later on on your own, Ephesians one. Ephesians chapter one. I want you to look at this and I will let you study it later, Ephesians one, verse six. It says here that whatever he said and done it is to the praise of the glory of his grace. Well, those first six verses talk about the work of the Father in choosing, in predestinating, in accepting. And then verse 12 says that we should be, "to the praise of his glory." And those next few verses before verse 12 talk about the work of Christ in enriching us, enlightening us and redeeming us. And then verse 14, the last line says, "Unto the praise of his glory." And he has been talking about the work of the Holy Spirit in opening our minds and revealing Christ to us and sealing us in Christ.

So everything the Father, Son and Spirit do in redemption is to the praise of his glory. It is for his glory, an expression of his glory, the glory of his grace.

Now, chapter two. Chapter two, verse four. "But God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace you are saved, and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Watch it. "That in the ages to come he might show throughout eternity the exceeding riches of his grace in his goodness, his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

My friends, that is God's greatest glory is the redemption of a soul, the redemption of a sinner by and through Christ Jesus. That is God's greatest glory. Do you want to bring God glory? Bow to Christ. You want to bring God glory? Receive Christ. You want to bring God glory? Submit to Christ. You want to bring God glory? Preach Christ. You want to bring God glory? Rejoice in Christ Jesus. Christ is God's greatest glory. That's right. That's right. Show me your glory.

Well, if he shows you his glory this morning it will be his goodness in Christ. That is God's greatest glory. We are dealing in that.