

Is God Good?

Exodus 33:1-6; 15-23; 34:5-8

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...

(Exodus 33:19)

We Need God to be Good

Exodus 33:1-6

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ 2 I will send an angel before you and drive out [your enemies]. 3 Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.”

(v.3) Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.”

“Think of how we feel when we see someone we love ravaged by unwise actions or relationships... Real love stands against the deception, the lie, the sin that destroys. The more a father loves his son, the more he hates in him the drunkard, the liar, the traitor.’ The fact is... anger isn’t the opposite of love. Hate is, and the final form of hate is indifference.”

—Becky Pippert, *Hope Has Its Reasons*

“Sat down to eat and drink then got up to play.”
—Exodus 33:6.

We need God to be good because our fallen nature is not.

Psalm 106:19-21

At Horeb they made a calf and worshiped an idol cast from metal. 20 They exchanged their glorious God for an image of a bull, which eats grass. 21 They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

—Romans 1:21-23

‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up [delivered
you] out of Egypt.’
—Exodus 32:6

We tend to idolize the things (or people or systems) that we place our trust in to deliver us from the things we fear. The idolatrous dimension emerges when we place ultimate faith in such things, when we believe all the promises that are made or implied in them, and when we make all the sacrifices that they demand in exchange for what they speciously offer... Ultimately, it seems, we never learn that false gods never fail to fail. That is the only thing about a false god you can depend on. —C.J.H. Wright

GOD'S GOODNESS LEADS TO REPENTANCE

Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.” So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb.
(Exodus 33:5-6)

(v.4) When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments.

The goodness of God leads to repentance

You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things. 2 And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things. 3 Since you judge others for doing these things, why do you think you can avoid God's judgment when you do the same things? 4 Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

(Romans 2:1-4)

In Bishop Bienvenue, Victor Hugo [gave France] a Bishop whose center of gravity was a compassionate God attuned to the sound of suffering, never repelled by deformities of body and soul, who occupied himself by dispensing balm and dressing wounds wherever he found them . . . Bishop Bienvenue conferred dignity with abandon on those whose dignity was robbed by others.”

—Doris Donnelly, Wall Street Journal

GOD'S GOODNESS LEADS TO REPENTANCE...THAT WE
MIGHT REST IN GOD'S PRESENCE

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?”

(Exodus 33:15-16)

1. In God's Presence we discover our true selves (v.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.”

But many of us, because we have not been blessed or do not know our blessing, operate out of a cursed consciousness, one that can only look at the world through the lens of irritation, bitterness, or judgment.
—Ronald Rolheiser, Sacred Fire

“We are blessed when someone sees us in such a way that he or she, in a word or in body language, says: “I am glad you are here! You bring something special into my life! You are not a threat but a delight in my life! We are blessed by being seen, and we bless others by seeing them.”

—Ronald Rolheiser, *Sacred Fire*

2. In the presence of God we discover the true God (v.18-23)

Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." 19 And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness (Heb. "tub"=blessing) 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. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." 21 Then the Lord said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Exodus 34:5-8

Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord.

Exodus 34:6-7

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

John 1:14, 16-18

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

3. In God's Presence we discover our true purpose (Ex
34:8-9)

Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. 9 “Lord,” he said, “if I have found favor in your eyes, then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance.”

Psalm 106:21-23

They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt, 22 miracles in the land of Ham and awesome deeds by the Red Sea. 23 So he said he would destroy them — had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.

God's Goodness leads to repentance so you can enjoy His
presence