


When His Glory Becomes Familiar

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February 5, 2018



I have a question for you that I have had to ask myself as of late, and that question is, “Is the glory of God in your life a place of familiarity or a place of intimacy with Christ?” The Holy Spirit has been speaking to me lately and putting His finger on things that many of us do not like addressing, but in order for us to advance into the deepest places of God, we must be willing to ask the hard questions and to answer them in Spirit and in truth.

The thought of familiarity hit me one morning while spending time with the Lord and taking care of my home. I was taking out the trash and cleaning my house while the Holy Spirit preached a mini message to me about familiarity in His glory. He took me to Numbers 20:2-13, and He showed me something I had not noticed until now. A simple statement was about to make all the difference in my understanding of how familiarity with His glory comes at a cost that is not meant to be paid. God desires intimacy over familiarity.

Instruction in the glory

The people of Israel found themselves murmuring and complaining once again in the wilderness, and they found themselves without water. After quarreling with the people over this matter, we are told that Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting. They fell on their faces, and the Word says, “And the glory of the Lord appeared to them, and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle.” (Numbers 20:7-9)

We know that after this, Moses took his staff, gathered the congregation before the rock, and instead of doing as he was instructed by the Lord, he struck the rock. I find it interesting that water came from the rock despite Moses' disobedience. God was not honoring disobedience, but He was honoring His own holiness. As I read this account, a simple statement hit me with a sobering truth. Moses received the instruction of the Lord in the glory of the Lord, and yet he disobeyed. This man whom the Lord knew face to face had come out of the glory of the Lord with divine instruction, and he disobeyed. It was in that moment that I realized even the most spiritual people can get so familiar with His glory that they miss it, and the cost is the promised land.

Moses is one of my most favorite people in the Bible. I enjoy gleaning from his relationship with God, and this instance was no different. I found myself wondering if Moses had merely heard God without listening in this moment. Maybe he assumed that he had this under control since he had been down this path before with bringing water from a rock. Regardless, I could not get away from the simple statement of Moses being before the glory of the Lord and disobeying the instruction of the Lord. I believe God wants us to learn something in this account even in our day.

Familiarity is a thief to the promise

Even the most anointed of us can fall into the trap of treating the glory of God as familiar and common. It is like an old married couple who knows each other's preferences and vernacular. Natural relationships can become so familiar that intimacy is nowhere to be found. We have that individual all figured out, and soon a few lukewarm embers of comfort become acceptable. Listen, when you have God all figured out, He is no longer God. Jesus is not looking to be familiar with you and me. He is looking for white hot intimacy and fellowship. A laid down lover, an obedient bride is one who has been in the glory, hears the voice of her Beloved, and follows His leading at all costs. She emanates her Bridegroom.

When the glory becomes familiar, the problem is not in His glory, but in each of us. When intimacy is exchanged for common encounters, we forfeit the promised land. The price Moses paid for disobedience was entrance into the Promised Land. God in His goodness and personal relationship with Moses, showed the land to Moses, and then after Moses died, He buried him. He was the closest thing to glory that the Israelites would dare endure, and He removed a way for Moses to remain that point of contact for familiarity and idolatry. If we were honest with ourselves, each of us at one time or another have treated the Presence of God, the glory of the Lord in a familiar manner.

The glory of the Lord is a place of deep intimacy and fellowship. It is a reverent place where our anticipation for Christ is enriched. The moment His Presence becomes familiar to us, we will devalue His instruction and His leading. We will hear, but not listen, and when we do not listen, His instruction is dismissed, and our way is prioritized. When instruction is not followed, the fullness of His good and perfect gifts cannot fully manifest in our midst.

I want to encourage you and challenge you today with this word. You were made for intimacy with Christ, more than you realize or comprehend. You were not made for familiarity, but for glorious intimacy. The glory of God is to be honored with our passion to not only hear His voice, but to listen and to follow through with His divine instruction so that we can walk in greater understanding of His ways and into His promises that are yes and amen.

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