

I've been preparing for our summer sermon series on the Psalms -- by reading and praying thru the Psalms -- one a day. I take my time with it - carving out 5 min, 15 min, 25 min - whatever I can - to really sit with it and give it my full attention. Because I'm going Psalm by Psalm, one at a time, sometimes there's a *residual* effect, and the progression will surprise me because of what I've just read the day before.

One day, I happened to read Psalm 24 with Mark and we prayed thru it.

Psalm 24 begins: "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof... -- a majestic, expansive sweep.

It continues in the next section, "who may ascend the hill of the Lord?" And it answers the question famously: "he who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false"

Then in the final section, it exclaims, almost as if speaking to the city gates, to the doors of the wall, encircling the city; "Lift up your heads, o gates, be lifted up, o ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in. who is this king of glory? The lord, strong and mighty. The lord, mighty in battle!"

Then it repeats it, almost exactly, "lift up your heads, o gates! And lift them up, o ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in. who is this king of glory? The lord of hosts, he is the king of glory!"

As Mark and I prayed, we saw images related to each section -- images of far away places in the world -- oceans and seas surrounding land... the faces of our elders came to mind (!), as men we've come to know and respect -- they who have clean hands and a pure heart... then Mark saw, shining light, radiance... a golden scepter mounted with flashing jewels. Then we saw, massive wooden doors with studded metal hinges and fasteners, creaking wide open -- and this light -- entering the space -- pushing out the darkness. (suffusing?)

We kept praying and it struck me, "I do not always look at, gaze upon this king of glory -- I do not think of God in this transcendent, radiant, utterly GLORIOUS state... yet this is MY king of glory." It made me want to worship him. And it was SO good that I got to catch a glimpse of him in that moment...

SO -- the next day, when I was reading thru Psalm 25 -- which is so rich-- I got to verse 14 -- and it just hit me between the eyes -- when it said, so nonchalantly: 'the **friendship** of the Lord is for those who fear him -- and he makes known to them his covenant!'

And I got this image of yesterday's King of Glory extending his scepter toward me in FRIENDSHIP?! [much like King Xerxes extended his scepter to his beautiful queen Esther in pardon] And then I thought -- incredulously -- WE can be friends with this king of glory?!

Indeed, God called **specific** people in the scriptures His Friends.

Remember Mark's first sermon on the church? How he brought Avram to life -- with the foreign sounding accent, long description of flax cloth, and quirky personality? :) There are at least 3 places in the scriptures where this **Avram** is called God's FRIEND:

- a) Jehoshaphat prays to God in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and says, "God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land ...and give it forever to the descendants of **Abraham your friend?**"

[and God gave his friend Abraham and his descendants - LAND]

- b) Isaiah 41:8 ESV — But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of **Abraham, my friend;**

[God CHOSE Abraham]

- c) James 2:23 ESV — and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was **called a friend of God.**

[Abraham's BELIEF/TRUST/FAITH in God was credited to him as righteousness!]

Moses too!

- d) Exodus 33:11 ESV —

[quick recap of Ex 33:7-11 - Moses would go to the tent of meeting (outside the camp) and everybody would watch as he'd go inside. Then the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance, and the Lord would speak with Moses. And the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. **Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.**

BUT RIGHT AFTER THAT... Moses and God have this honest conversation...

Exodus 33:12-23 Moses and the Glory of the Lord

¹² Moses said to the Lord, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.'¹³ If you are pleased with me, **teach me your ways** so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

14 The Lord replied, "**My Presence will go with you**, and I will give you rest."

15 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?"

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."

18 Then Moses said, "Now/PLEASE show me your glory."

19 And the Lord said, "I will cause **all my goodness** 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."**

Glory of God = his face?!

You're my friend, we speak face to face... but you can't see my glory, my face... ?!

Then he gives them his covenant -- the 10 Commandments --
THEN there's the Radiant Face of Moses passage:

Exodus 34:29-35 New International Version (NIV)

The Radiant Face of Moses

29 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, **he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord.** 30 **When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him.** 31 But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. 32 Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.

33 When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. 34 But whenever he entered the Lord's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35 they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the Lord.

THIS VEIL BOTHERS ME

I'm struck that there's this sense in which we BEHOLD God's glory -- it PASSES by Moses... but there's this GAP, this DISTANCE... -- but there's this GAP right? Because WE don't own/produce the glory -- we are friends with the King of Glory -- but WE are not HIM. There's this VEIL right? What is that referring to?

[Then there's 5 chapters of Moses carrying out v specific instructions to build the tabernacle...

Exodus 40:33-35 Then Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. And so Moses finished the work.

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.
35 **Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it,** and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

--> I'm struck by 2 things here -- one, that Moses finished the work. The cloud covered the tent of meeting... And the glory of the Lord FILLED the tabernacle...

Is the glory of the Lord something that we see and perhaps describe better...*after* the work is done?

I THINK so...

Sometimes it's AFTER the work is done... the obstacles have been overcome... the tough years of exertion are OVER... you CAN SEE God's hand at work on your behalf... you can see -- wow, how amazing is this... my life, my struggle... brought glory to God... HE was faithful to me...

But I'm bothered... that even though the glory of the Lord FILLED the tabernacle that Moses had just finished creating... Moses couldn't enter the tent of meeting! Because the cloud had settled on it!!

Again, WHY that disconnect? WHY that distance?

Luke 9:28-34 (ESV)

28 Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. **29** And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. **30** And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, **31** who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, [\[a\]](#) which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. **32** Now Peter and those who were with him were **heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory** and the two men who stood with him. **33** And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. **34** As he was saying these things, **a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.**

Mark 9:1-8 The Transfiguration

2 After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. 3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. 4 And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

5 Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6 **(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)**

7 **Then a cloud appeared and covered them**, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" <<<Father Heart of God>>>

8 Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

This is like the ultimate deja-vu experience. Jesus' closest FRIENDS are with him -- Jesus is talking to God -- just like Moses did -- and his face's appearance is altered -- just like Moses' was.

But suddenly -- Moses and Elijah appear -- IN GLORY it says... !!!

Peter and James and John were sleepy but all of a sudden - become Fully Awake -- and SEE JESUS' GLORY and the two men with him. But they're talking about Jesus' departure -- and they're parting themselves...

And Peter starts talking about TENTS... just like in the OT -- with the Tent of Meeting and the Tabernacle... he's like -- let's do that again -- I remember this happening before -- let's set up tents!

BUT UNLIKE IN THE OT --the "cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud."

THEY ENTER THE CLOUD!!!!

Before -- MOSES *Couldn't* enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it. But now -- these **three special friends of Jesus** ENTERED the cloud.

The cloud COMES TO them and OVERSHADOWS THEM,

The cloud ENVELOPS them -- SURROUNDS them...

THEY EXPERIENCE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE KING OF GLORY... they might not understand it. They might feel kind of fearful -- it says "they were afraid as they entered the cloud" -- they might not fully understand it... But they GET WRAPPED UP IN IT... They are WITH the King of Glory and ENVELOPED in God's presence! [[[last week's sermon where Mike Chan said -- I think I just got bear-hugged by the Father Heart of God]]]

I have to tell you a story from a few weeks ago / North Carolina / Atlantic Ocean.

>>> JELLYFISH STORY --

I first saw the jellyfish on the beach flat on the ground, embedded in the sand, so that its edges came neatly against the sand outline formed just around it. I thought it beautiful, and enjoyed observing it. I had no idea what was coming ahead.

Farther down the beach, I came across another jellyfish that seemed to be the exact same species. However, this one floated sideways in the water and had more mass to it. It looked like it had been squashed or folded in two; you could tell it had once been more round in shape. I realized what I'd seen at first was more of a cross-section, a slice of the jellyfish. Or perhaps it had dried out so much, it lay completely flat.

Then I went another 100 yards, and had to stop again because I was so transfixed with what I saw. Here was another jellyfish, but rendered so differently! It almost spun like a top as it rolled about in the undulating waves. Back and forth, it spun and rolled in the water, and it seemed to almost glow! Its surface was translucent and a slight phosphorescent light emanated from within. Slightly smaller than a bowling ball, but with weight and girth and depth to it! I couldn't believe how perfectly round it was when alive. I hadn't realized quite how dead the first specimen had been.

Who or what is that jelly fish a symbol of?

Our conception of God?

The state of our own lives?

This church?

[How much I appreciate this church] each one a pearl. Each of you has such a story to tell to the nations... I really LIKE you guys...

I do not think we are that first jellyfish, but I wonder if we may be presently that second one... and I think that God wants us to become that glorious beautiful radiant third jellyfish -- FULLY ALIVE. I want us to not just have the appearance of life -- but be SO ALIVE that people who encounter us would know -- the Lord is in that place. The Lord shows up when they gather together. This church, this community -- is ALIVE. People encounter Jesus in our midst, and they give their lives -- they put their trust in HIM! People grow DEEPER in their knowledge and understanding of him -- they trust him when they encounter trial and go thru tragedy. They are following Jesus and depending on his Holy Spirit as they follow him around on MISSION to this broader area. They are bold witnesses, faithful intentional disciplers. They move about, tumbling this way and that -- and wherever they go -- light emanates from them! God's light!

[next week we'll talk more about this...]

Ephesians 1:12

to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

(by trusting in Christ -- putting our hope in Christ -- we participate in bringing him glory!)

Ephesians 2:21-22 New International Version (NIV)

21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him **you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. <<< LIVING STONES>>>**

Ephesians 3:21

to Him be the glory **in the church** and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

(to HIM be, i.e. belong, IS, ARE... the glory IN the church!)

1 Peter 4:14

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

(if we're reviled/cast off by others/misunderstood -- wow, we're blessed! The spirit of glory and of God rests on us!!)

2 Corinthians 3:7-18 New International Version (NIV)

The Greater Glory of the New Covenant

7 Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? 9 If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! 10 For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. 11 And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces **contemplate**^[a] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into

his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:7-17 New International Version (NIV)

7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 **We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.** 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

13 **It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken."**^[a] Since we have that same spirit of^[b] faith, we also believe and therefore speak,¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself.¹⁵ **All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.**

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 **For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.**

Glory -- the face of God

How do you nurture your friendship with the King of Glory?

SEEK HIS FACE

What would be the implications of this?

- Being summoned to come before the King of Glory MUST take precedence over every other commitment in my life. [LORDSHIP] He is the KING of Glory
- You must let go of your low self-image... as individuals. And as a church. You are a friend of the King of Glory. This is an amazing church. And it's only going to grow in glory.
- (I couldn't continue seeing myself in too lowly of a fashion. I could not either put on false airs or think too highly of myself.) [VIEW OF SELF; humility; dignity]
 - This is a church of amazing people. NO need to maintain a low self-image!
- I wouldn't presume to introduce just anyone to him -- if there was someone I would imagine connecting to him, I would be so thoughtful about how I made/parlayed that introduction. I wouldn't care so much as what They would think about Him -- I'd be so certain that HE is the One absolutely everyone needed to know to have the best life possible [EVANGELISM] But because he is SO amazing, I would be Very Bold...
- I would consider it **a lifelong honor** to be one of his subjects -- and I would make it a daily task to maintain and cultivate our relationship. [DISCIPLESHIP] →I WOULD READ EVERYTHING HE'D EVER WRITTEN... I'D KNOW HIS WORD! THIS DANGEROUS BOOK!
- Whatever he asked me to do, I would do completely and wholeheartedly. [OBEDIENCE]

WE HAVE TO SEEK HIS FACE!!

Glory belongs to him -- we don't produce it... We reflect it -- we are transformed by it -- as we're around him -- seeking his face, we reflect his image -- we reflect his glory.

Jesus himself -- says -- I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business -- Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15) <<<Father Heart of God>>>

This is such a remarkable way to close -- with Jesus' incredible affirmation: that you and I are called friends of God. He is not only our master, the one who rightfully can tell us what to be doing day in and day out. He has chosen to make us his friends. The King of Glory has called you not only his servants, his loyal subjects, his ambassadors, his children -- but also his friends. And the cloud of his presence -- his glory -- wraps you

up in light. (even if you don't understand everything, feel often very afraid... feel like you're in a fog and can't see thru to the other side. TRUST HIM)

“When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:4).

What a promise; what a hope!

Psalm 29 *A psalm of David.*

1Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

2Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
worship the Lord in the splendor of his ^a holiness.

3The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,

the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.

4The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is majestic.

5The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;
the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

6He makes Lebanon leap like a calf,
Sirion ^b like a young wild ox.

7The voice of the Lord strikes
with flashes of lightning.

8The voice of the Lord shakes the desert;
the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh.

9The voice of the Lord twists the oaks ^c
and strips the forests bare.

And in his temple all cry, “Glory!”

10The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
the Lord is enthroned as King forever.

11The Lord gives strength to his people;
the Lord blesses his people with peace.