

THE MORNING TIME
Exodus 34

Intro: The most important part of any believer's life is his personal fellowship with God.

The fact that such a thing is possible should never cease to amaze us! And the fact that it is God who has taken the initiative in this, should amaze us even more!

And yet, when you talk to the people of God, pastors and missionaries included, you find that this is neglected to the point of being non-existent in many cases.

Why?

There are undoubtedly many reasons. Let me mention a few:

- 1) Our busyness -- which brings on weariness.
- 2) Some have not had this privilege and necessity pointed out to them.
- 3) Discouragement. This comes through trials, unanswered prayer, etc.
- 4) Crowded conditions in our homes. There may be no place at home where we can get away by ourselves. The same applies to schools where we live with roommates.
- 5) The fact that we try to do this in our own strength instead of consciously depending upon the Lord to make us and keep us faithful. This is a spiritual work!

If you are not meeting with the Lord, you may have another reason. Give this some thought and determine what it is that is hindering you if you are not meeting daily with the Lord. Then, with God's wisdom and blessing, deal with it!

God had to deal with Moses about this. See Exodus 18:13-27. Note especially v. 19.

TONIGHT . . . I want us to think of this in terms of the morning time. There is no doubt but that there is a special emphasis in the Word of God upon what we do with our mornings. Note:

- 1) Abraham in Gen. 18:16 ff.; 19:27.
- 2) The gathering of the manna in Exodus 16 with the rich lessons it has for the spiritual life.
- 3) David's statement in Psa. 5:3 -- and many other passages in the Psalms.
- 4) The example of our Lord: Mark 1:35.

The importance of the morning can be seen in the following:

- 1) It is at the beginning of the day -- when the day can be given to the Lord.
- 2) Our minds are the freshest.
- 3) It is the most distracted time.

Let us see how this is illustrated in Exodus 34.

This was undoubtedly the most critical time up to this point in Moses' ministry. The Lord was ready to destroy the whole nation. See Exodus 32:10. There were 3,000 who died (Ex. 32:28). Although God had said He would spare them, He also said that He would not go up to the land with them. See Ex. 33:3. And we see Moses as intercessor more so than at any preceding time in his life.

And then we come to Exodus 34.

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will give us real insight into our need as we consider what the Lord did with Moses on this occasion.

I. THE IDEA -- WHO HAD IT? See Exodus 34:1a.

Perhaps the strongest thing that can be said about our time with the Lord is that the whole idea originated with God. It is His desire to have fellowship with us.

Cf. how Mark speaks of the calling of the 12: Mark 3:14, "And he ordained (or appointed) twelve, that they should be with Him . . ."

Our Lord was continually calling children and adults to Himself.

Note also how our Lord spoke of heaven in John 14:3 and 17:24.

Does this mean anything to you?

II. MOSES' PART. See Exodus 34:2, 3.

A. The preparation: "Be ready in the morning." Verse 1 tells us what he had to do to get ready.

B. The place: "Come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai."

C. The purpose: "Present thyself there to me in the top of the mount."

The Lord has the right to tell us when and where we are to meet with Him.

D. The privacy: "And no man shall come up with thee" (v. 3).

There are times when we can pray with others, but we need to be with the Lord alone -- at His request.

Not even animals were to distract him.

Note: Moses' obedience in Ex. 34:4.

III. THE LORD'S PART. See Ex. 34:5-27.

A. He came down and stood with Moses (v. 5a).

B. He revealed Himself to Moses (vv. 5b-7).

This is the most important part of our time with the Lord -- what He teaches us about Himself.

And it runs the whole gamut from grace to judgment! God does not leave us with mistaken thoughts about Himself in either area of truth.

C. He listened to Moses (vv. 8, 9).

MOSES LISTENED MORE THAN HE PRAYED. SO WITHOUT OUR READING.

True praying comes as our response to what God has said to us. This is why we need to read the Word first before we spend time in prayer.

D. He made a great promise to Moses (v. 10).

Nothing like this was ever given to anyone else. The same can be said for all of God's promises -- there is nothing like them anyplace else. And they are all true!

E. He told Moses what He wanted Moses to do (vv. 11-26).

1. He wanted Moses to remember and to believe one thing (v. 11).

God would do the work, not Moses.

2. He wanted Moses to beware of one person: "Take heed to thyself" (v. 12a). This emphasis goes down through v. 22.

Moses was to be concerned about three things:

- 1) Idolatry -- the negative side, vv. 12-17.
- 2) Worship -- the positive side, vv. 18-20, 22.
- 3) Rest, v. 21.

3. He gave Moses a ministry (vv. 23-27).

This comes last. It was a spoken ministry and a ministry of writing.

IV. THE LENGTH OF TIME THEY WERE TOGETHER (Ex. 34:28): "forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water" -- probably not because he planned it that way, but because he did not even think of it, so wonderful was it to

be with the Lord!

Do you believe that your fellowship with the Lord could ever reach that level?

Concl: A book every Christian should read frequently is E. M. Bounds' Power Through Prayer. Probably nothing you will ever read apart from the Bible will do more to move your heart to pray. He sets the standard high, but it needs to be set high.

Bounds records for us the experiences in prayer of various men and women of God. One of these is the Marquis DeRenty. Bounds describes him as one "to whom Christ was most precious.

On one occasion the Marquis ordered his servants to call him from his devotions at the end of half an hour. At the end of that time his servant came to call him, but there was such a look of holiness on his face as the servant looked in through the door that the servant could not bring himself to interrupt the Marquis. The Marquis' lips were moving, but he was perfectly silent.

Finally, after an hour and a half, the servant called him. As he arose from his knees, the Marquis commented on how short a half hour was when he was communing with Christ!

Have you had times of prayer when you were shocked to look at the clock to see that more time had passed than you thought?

At the last meeting of our missionary conference, Mr. Philip Armstrong set before us the question that the Lord asked of James and John,

"What would ye that I should do for you?"
He asked us how we would answer that question.

How would you?

I have many things I am praying about -- things that are personal, things that have to do with my family, and things that have to do with the Church.

This is what I would ask for the Church: "Lord, give me people who meet with Thee daily -- and who know how to listen and to pray!"

We have been considering Moses' experience. Take Exodus 34 and ask the Lord to make it your own -- by His grace and for His glory!