

16<sup>th</sup> October.2022...Special scriptures to me.....Ex 33v12-23 and Luke 3v3-8

As you all know, Jon has asked us to choose scriptures that mean something to us and speak on them.

And today's are 2 of mine!

I wonder what you would choose? It's quite difficult to pick only 2, but this is what I wanted to share with you.

The Gospel reading is a favourite because it represents the beginning of my love of Bible study.

I did GCE R.E...Yes! It was that long ago, when there were GCEs and CSEs!

Why this one?

Well, all those years ago we had to memorise scripture for our exams so we could quote them in our essays.

And I love this, because to help me remember, I would march around my bedroom reading it out loud with a lot of expression. This was a great passage to read loudly and forcefully!!....YOU BROOD OF VIPERS!

These are harsh words from John the Baptist to those who wanted to escape eternal punishment and were not bothered about their salvation. They wanted a safety net. And he was having none of it.. The hypocrisy was too much for him.

I like that he is not being mild and tolerant but questioning and challenging.

This wasn't an issue of inheritance but about our personal relationship with God.

My RE teacher, Mrs Buttery, was inspiring in her sharing of knowledge. I just loved it.

When I started my Nurse training I joined the Baptists Chinese Christian fellowship..!!  
As you do!

My friend from Hong Kong had invited me, and the teaching that I heard over about a year, was eye opening.

My love of Bible Study reignited after I had Emily and joined a small church study group.

Years later, here in Sunningdale, I was introduced to Beth Moore Bible Studies and my view was expanded. Hugely.

The Exodus reading has always fascinated me, and gives me hope.

This is early in Gods relationship with His people.

Moses messed up as a young man but God hadn't forgotten him.

Moses is the one that will help set God's people free.

And he does.

What precedes this passage is dramatic.

God has written, with his own finger, on tablets of stone, the 10 commandments.

The tablets of Testimony, to help the Israelites to live lives of practical holiness.

So that others could see the nature of God and how to love and care for each other.

It goes horribly wrong, whilst Moses is up the mountain talking and listening to God.

The people got restless and wanted the familiar...idols.

When Moses saw the golden calf, in complete contradiction to Gods laws, he threw the tablets down. Smashing them. He was angry. God was too.

God gives Moses new instructions to fulfil the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But he won't go with them because he is so angry.

Moses meets with God regularly. God 'speaks with Moses as a man speaks with a friend'.  
(v11)

They were friends and Moses relied on God. God knew him.

In chapter 34 v29, when Moses had spent time with God, it showed. He would emerge with a radiant face.

Can others tell you spend time with God?

Our time with God should be evident in our lives

Friendships, relationships need time. Honesty and vulnerability.

How can any of us draw closer to God, recognise his voice and direction, if we do not spend time with him.

Think about the friends and family members who might call and they do not even have to say their name, you recognise their voice....(I am not talking about caller identification!!)

Moses discusses this with him. He is scared, there are many violent tribes to be fearful of.

He doesn't want to go anywhere without God. He wants Gods presence with them.

He knows he needs it.

And we need it too.

It is so easy to get caught up with the busyness and traumas of our lives that we may lose sight of sharing with God what is going on in our lives. He wants us to ask him, share with him, and rely on him. He is not forceful.

Then, Moses asks to see Gods glory....I love this

He wants to see the fullness of Gods beauty and greatness.  
It's an audacious request.

We all long to be in awe, to be taken beyond the normal and mundane.  
To have our minds and hearts expanded.  
And God hears. He knows Moses. He is pleased with Moses.

The beautiful thing about this whole passage is that God, in His kindness and loving care allows him a glimpse.

When you read this passage in the NIV it sounds rude, '**Now** show me your glory' .  
It's actually an entreaty; in other words, *please, it's urgent, I beg you.*

God carefully protects Moses from the full force of His face, which would have killed him, because we are imperfect and finite, but allows him a glimpse of where He has passed by. That is, what He does and how He acts. His back.

Part of me is excited by the chance of seeing some of the awesomeness of God; and we do see these glimpses, in creation, in the care and love shown by others, in scripture, in prayers and the answers we see.

But, mostly it is Gods utter gentleness that stuns me.

He listens. He acts. And He protects with His hand, the frail body of Moses.

It is that demonstration of His tenderness that I hold onto when things get tricky.

When I have been hurt. When the responsibilities feel too much. When I am in a situation that is soooo beyond me.

God is there. His hand is over me.

And that picture in my head helps me know I am not alone.

His glory is not the majesty and power, but His mercy, compassion, faithfulness, forgiveness and justice.

His glory is His goodness.

And we can give glory to God when our characters resemble His.

I hope you all know that God wants you to know Him.  
He wants to hear all that is on your heart.  
Your hopes and dreams.  
The scars that you hide, and the secrets that you hold.  
**He** is faithful, trustworthy and true.

He knows you better than you can comprehend and He is always with you.  
And, if we are prepared to spend time with Him, we shall see more and more the  
glimpses of his glory, and live with the confidence that this is not all there is!

Let us pray

Father, may we see your goodness pass before us,  
flow within us and pour out from us.  
That we may honour you in our lives, in our words and in our actions.  
In the name of Jesus,  
Amen

Gillian Robinson