

God of Wonder: Giving Up Control

John 6 / Exodus 19

Introduction - God of Wonder

- Wonder: to be filled with admiration, amazement, or awe; to marvel
- Our God is a WONDER-FUL God
- As humans, we CATEGORIZE and PROCESS our experiences and environment to try and UNDERSTAND it

We Like CONTROL

- We have an INCREDIBLE piece of hardware - it is how we survive, thrive, and grow
 - We want to UNDERSTAND, to MASTER, and to CONTROL
 - We don't like being out of control!
- God's Hobby: BLOWING OUR MINDS
 - He gave us this amazing equipment to EXPERIENCE HIM
 - Not to UNDERSTAND or CONTROL Him!!

Exodus 19

- Exodus 19:16-19

16 On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. 17 Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, 19 and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.

10 “Commandments”

- No other gods before Me
 - No idols
 - Don't misuse My name
 - Remember the Sabbath
 - Honor your parents
 - Don't Murder
 - Don't Commit Adultery
 - Don't Steal
 - Don't Lie
 - Don't Covet what your neighbor has
- **NOT RULES but GOD's RELATIONAL PARADIGM**

Israelites Reject God's Voice

- Exodus 20:18-21

18 When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance 19 and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die." 20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning." 21 The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

God's Big Reveal

- Up to this point, the Israelites have seen God's hand move, but they have yet to meet Him directly
- Unlike the "Burning Bush" experience with Moses - God choose to come in Power and Majesty shaking the foundations of the World
- Moses tries to comfort them, saying that God has come to "Test" them to "keep them from sinning"

Two Approaches to God

- Moses “KNOWS” God, and interprets His actions through the filter of RELATIONSHIP
- The people try to UNDERSTAND God, and because they can’t reject a direct relationship asking Moses to be their mediator

The People Reject God

- Exodus 32:1-5

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.” 2 Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” 3 So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” 5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.”

God vs Golden Calf

GOD

- Powerful, Scary, Unpredictable
- Uncomfortable
- Desires a relationship based solely upon HIS terms
- Asks for sacrifices that demonstrate the heart
- Full of Wonder
- Is CLEARLY in Control

GOLDEN CALF

- Weak, Safe, Tame
- Comfortable
- Offers relationship based solely upon MAN'S terms
- Receives sacrifices that validate a transaction
- Understandable
- Is CLEARLY Controlled

3 Risks of Losing Our Wonder

#1 We Become Impatient With God

- Ex 32:1 “When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming”
- God’s timing is not ours!
- He LOVES to wait until the LAST MINUTE to come through

#2 We Start Serving Other Gods

- Ex 32:1...5 “Come, make us gods who will go before us...a festival to the Lord.”
- Work, Relationships, Money, Success, Even Ministry!

#3 We Shift from Relational to Transactional Interactions with God

- Intro John 6
 - John 6:1-15: Feeding of the 5,000
 - John 6:16-24: Disciples Cross the Sea of Galilee; Walking on Water
 - John 6:25-59: Crowd looking for bread, Jesus offends the crowd telling them He is the “Bread of Life”
 - 53 “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.”
- John 6:66-69

66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. 67 “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

3 Keys to Walking In Wonder

#1 Embrace RELATIONSHIP

- Everything about God and our interactions with Him is about RELATIONSHIP
- John 17:20,21 Jesus Prays for Us
20 “My prayer is not for them (the disciples) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.”
- Growing a Relationship: Time, Energy, Focus
- The more we KNOW Him, the more we see his WONDER

#2 Focus on the JOURNEY not the DESTINATION

- If we're not careful, our interactions with God can be limited to our life circumstances:
 - In Trouble we look to Him / In good times, we look to ourselves
- Psalm 23:1-4

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- His WONDER is found in all parts of our journey

#3 Give God CONTROL

- This does not mean we abdicate RESPONSIBILITY - quite the opposite
 - We TAKE RESPONSIBILITY to seek His Will; and
 - Act even when we DON'T UNDERSTAND or DESIRE to do so
- Jesus in garden, “Not my will, but your’s be done.”
- Life with God is a bit like riding a Roller Coaster: You can choose to get on or get off, but there’s nothing to do in the middle but enjoy it!

Conclusion

- To Encounter God, to Embrace Him, is to learn to abide in WONDER
- As we give up trying to CONTROL and instead focus on growing our RELATIONSHIP, we find the precious reward of real joy, peace, and love.
- Pray for those who have lost their WONDER

Prayer

Father, today I confess that you are truly WONDER-FUL! Show me your wonder. I ask for greater faith and greater capacity to experience you. I commit to give you my time, energy and focus, and I commit to search for you in every situation I encounter. I give you control of my life. AMEN