

“In the Cracks of Creation”
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Exodus 33:13-14, 20-25
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In Exodus 33, we find Moses begging God for revelation. Reveal your ways, God, Moses says. Reveal yourself, God, Moses says. Moses has been leading the Israelites through the wilderness, and the people are getting restless. They’re beginning to lose faith in Moses, whom God chose to lead.

Moses bargains with God. He says, “See, You say to me, ‘Lead this people forward,’ but You have not made known to me whom You will send with me.” In other words, Moses feels frustrated. The Israelites have been complaining to him and questioning his position of authority. God has told Moses to lead and represent the faith, but what is he representing? Who is he representing, really?

“Reveal your ways and yourself to me,” Moses says. (And, I’m paraphrasing here.) “And, the people will be satisfied, and I will prove to them that You are who You say You are. I will prove to them that I am their leader.”

But, you can’t really bargain with God, can you? Or, if you try, you might get a different result than you had anticipated.

God cannot reveal God’s true Presence to Moses—not because God doesn’t want to, per se, but because Moses, a mere mortal, will surely perish if he sees God’s true Presence.

“Stand on this rock,” God tells Moses. “With my divine hand, I will shield you and move you to the cleft, the crack, in the rock’s foundation. There, in this tiny sliver, you will see the back of me.”

Immediately following this scene in the next chapter of Exodus, we, Moses, and God's people receive yet a deeper understanding of God's true nature. Moses fashions two tablets—like the ones you're thinking of, but, no, not the Commandments this time—and climbs Mt. Sinai. God, called The Eternal in the original Hebrew, commissions Moses to carve these Words into the tablets (Exodus 34:6-7):

GOD! GOD! a Deity compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin....

It's not a coincidence that these two moments between Moses and God are back-to-back (no pun intended).

In the cleft, the crack, of Creation where God has gently placed Moses, our faith leader sees a glimpse of the vast glory and goodness of The Eternal. This blink-and-you'll-miss-it glimpse provides an opening to the incontrovertible truth of our spiritual home: God is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness and mercy and forgiveness, not only for the generation of Moses and the wandering Israelites, no, but for a thousand generations after and a thousand more to come.

This particular instance of God's revelation to Moses is not intellectual. It is not written across a tall building or buried in the pages of an ancient, inscrutable text. God's revelation does not belong to the limitations of the human mind or human structures. God's revelation takes its roots, naturally, in God's Creation - the revelation of Creation.

This Sunday, as we experience the glory of Creation, the connection between non-human animals and humans, and sit beside neighbor, friend, and stranger, God invites us to revelation. What does the wind whisper as it moves beside you? What

does the sun say as it guards the sky and dips in and out between clouds? What do the animal companions here today communicate with their eyes, their posture, their proximity, their energy and excitement? What does your own body, which came from the earth and will one day return to the earth, tell you today? What insights, both simple and deep, both common and divine, can you learn closely paying attention to the revelation of Creation?

With patience and openness, could we allow God to hold us and position us to see even a glimmer of the Sacred in our natural world? In the cracks of Creation, God is there. In the crafty clefts that we may rather avoid or ignore, God is there. May we learn to pay attention. May we graciously and gratefully ask God to reveal Godself in our natural world. May the rocks, the sea, the mountains, the fields, the trees, and all the creatures above and below us sing the joyful song of worship to our Creator. Amen.

“The love of our dogs and cats is the closest most of us will come to knowing the direct love of God on this side of eternity.” - Anne Lamott, *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope*