

August 3, 2025 Sunday Morning Service Sermon

"Ascending the Mountain of God" Pastor Takaaki Inoue  
Exodus 33:13, 18-25, 34:1-5

**① [Moses, who was adamant that God was with him]**

While Moses was ascending the mountain of God and receiving the Ten Commandments, at the foot of the mountain the Israelites had betrayed the God who had saved them and had made an idol of a golden calf. God is angry and says he will no longer go with this people. I think that's right. I will not go up among you. I will not go up among you, lest I destroy you on the way. You are a stubborn people." (Ex. 33:3) If they were nearby, they might see the unbelief of the people, become angry, and destroy them, so they would not go with them. Similar words were once said by Jesus. When Jesus came down from the mountain and learned that his disciples had failed to heal a child possessed by an evil spirit, he said, "How faithless and wicked are these times! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I be patient with you?" (Matthew 17:17). Jesus is also putting up with the unbelief of His disciples. God cannot bear to dwell among unbelievers. What God delights in is faith. (Heb. 11:6) Not knowledge or power. To approach God without faith is suicide.

● During the American Civil War, when a man saw that the war was developing in favor of the Union, he said to President Lincoln, "We need not be afraid any longer. God is on our side." Lincoln replied, "Yes, he is. Lincoln replied, "That's right. But the most important thing for us now is that we are on God's side. Lincoln said, "Yes, but the most important thing for us right now is that we are on God's side.

When Moses heard this, he persistently asked the Lord to change His will and go with the Israelites. He said, "If you yourself will not go, do not let us go up from here, but let us go up to the land of the living. How can I know that You will show favor to me and to Your people? Is it not by your going with us? Then I and your people will be special and different from all the peoples of the earth. (Ex. 33:15-16) It is God's presence with us that makes us special. Without God with us, we are nothing. To paraphrase Jesus' parable, salt without saltiness will be thrown to the ground. That is why we should say, "God, I desperately need you. Please be with me.

**② [The Rock, Christ, who walks with His people]**

Moses said, "It is God's favor that God be with us. Indeed, blessing is God's presence with man. Blessings are the result of God's being with us. Moses was a man who understood this. Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, accused of a crime he did not commit, and thrown into prison, but because the Lord was with him, he

was protected, given wisdom, and was able to solve his problem. The phrase “the Lord was with Joseph” (Genesis 39:2, 3, 21, 23) is repeated four times.

God heard Moses' request and promised to go up with him. Moses asks, “Show me your glory” (33:18). Glory is the manifestation of God, so he asks to be shown. Perhaps because he thought that as long as he could see him, the people would feel secure. Then God said, “You cannot see my face. For no man can look upon me and yet live. Behold, a place is beside me. Stand thou by the rock, and thou shalt see me. When My glory passes by, I will put thee in the cleft of the rock, and I will cover thee with My hand until I pass by. And when I remove My hand, you will look behind Me, but you will not see My face.” (Ex. 33:20-23). Man cannot see God, but he can see God in one place beside Him, which is a rock, and he can hide behind that rock. To see the back of the rock would mean that we can see the work that God has done. This rock was Christ.” (I Corinthians 10:4). This rock traveled with the Israelites without leaving them. We see God through Jesus. He promised that He would be with you until the end of the world.

### ③ **【Let's make an effort to climb God's mountain】**

The Lord said to Moses, “Prepare it (the two stone tablets) by tomorrow morning, and go up to Mount Sinai in the morning and stand before me at the top of the mountain.” (Exodus 34:2). So Moses got up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai as the Lord had commanded him. Then “the Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with Moses, proclaiming the name of the Lord” (34:5). (34:5). Mount Sinai is a very steep and rocky mountain, and it takes about two hours to reach the summit, so Moses must have gotten up at about 4:00 in the morning to go up there. We, like Moses, must spend two hours every morning preparing to meet God. In other words, we climb the mountain of God through prayer. It takes that much time to encounter God. No one can see the Lord apart from a holy life.” (Heb. 12:14). Only those who live a life of prayer can see God.

● There was a pastor in London named George Muller. He was known as the father of orphans, and Juji Ishii, who devoted his life to orphans in Japan, followed his way of life. Muller nourished thousands of orphans with his prayers. The scripture he constantly spoke was, “I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you” (Heb. 13:4). (Heb. 13:4). He prayed to the point of sickness. He prayed, but God never gave until he was just about there. But it was never too late, never too much, and when he prayed for this much money, it was given.

God has promised to be with man. But man must also make an effort to be with God. We want to remember once again and firmly that without faith it is impossible to be pleasing to God and to see God without a holy life.