

“Come and you will see....”

John 1:39 (ESV)

One of the reasons Christianity is so difficult is that God demands obedience *before* He provides revelation. We always want it to be the other way around. We want God to provide the revelation and *then* we will believe. But God says, “No. That won’t do. First believe *and then* I will reveal great and wonderful things to you.”

When Moses saw the burning bush and went to investigate, he encountered God. God identified himself to Moses and told him to takeoff his sandals because Moses was standing on holy ground. God gave Moses the assignment of going down to Egypt to free the Hebrew people. To say Moses balked at this assignment is to put too nice a spin on it. Moses was appalled by the assignment. Moses didn’t just balk at what God wanted him to do, he argued with God against doing it. He came up with a bunch of excuses. “I stutter, and don’t speak well. The people won’t understand me.” “The people don’t know who I am; they will reject me.” “The people won’t believe me when I tell them You have sent me.”

Moses reluctance was understandable. When he lived in Egypt he was 40 years old and at the height of his power and influence. Now standing before the burning bush he was an 80-year-old fugitive on the lam from Pharaoh, tending his father-in-law’s sheep. There was an earlier time in his life when Moses did in fact believe that God called him to free the Hebrew people. At that time he was young and powerful, full of spit and vinegar. Now he was an 80-year-old, forgotten shepherd. His time had passed. He was irrelevant and useless, a has-been. In the midst of this dialogue

Moses asked God: "But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" [God] said, "But I will be with you, *and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.*"¹

In other words if Moses wanted to know whether God was truly calling him to free the Hebrew people, Moses would have to *first* go down to Egypt, confront Pharaoh, lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt, cross the Red Sea on dry land, cross the desert with two million people trusting God to provide food, water and shelter from the heat and cold of the desert, travel to Mount Sinai, climb Mount Sinai and then Moses would know that God had sent him. God told Moses: "Obey Me. Do everything I tell you to do. I will deliver the people out of Egypt and you will take them to Mount Sinai. You will go up that mountain and I will speak to you. And when you arrive at that mountain and I speak to you then you will then know that I have sent you." What a remarkable statement! How we hate God's way of doing things! His methods are so uncomfortable to us. He stretches us, but we do not want to be stretched. He makes us walk in places we want to avoid. He is always saying to us: "My way, not your way." But we are always saying to God: "my way, not Your way." Only one of us can win this exchange. If we prevail, we are utterly lost. But if God prevails, we are forever saved. God says: "if you want to know Me, you must *first* obey Me. If you want My revelation, you must first obey Me. There is no other way."

¹ Exodus 3:11-12