



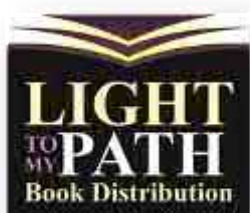
# FACE TO FACE

A Devotional Look at the Life of Moses,  
The Man God Knew Face to Face

F. WAYNE MAC LEOD

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the Man God Knew Face to Face*



**F. Wayne MacLeod**

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# Preface

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Moses was the man God knew face to face. What a title! He was a privileged man. Many times, he was invited into the presence of God to speak with Him. He saw and heard things that we will only see and hear in the life to come. I do not believe that he was any different from you or me, but the grace of God was poured out abundantly on him. He was not perfect. He had problems in his family. He knew what it meant to be discouraged in his ministry. He had, however, many qualities that serve to inspire us in our walk with God.

This small study has been very enriching for me. I pray that it will be for you as well. This book is not meant to be read in one sitting. I would encourage you to take the time to examine your own life in relation to each meditation. May the example of Moses be an inspiration for you in your personal relationship with God.

F. Wayne MacLeod



# Chapter 1 - Surrendered to God

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Read Exodus 1.1-2:10

It was a time of unparalleled suffering for the people of God. They lived as slaves in a foreign land –the land of Egypt. Despite their affliction, however, the Lord their God blessed them. By His grace, they were becoming a numerous people. The Pharaoh of Egypt was worried. He feared that one day they could become a serious threat to his people. He decided, therefore, to take drastic action and restrict their growth before it was too late. Pharaoh spoke to the midwives and said:

16 “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” (Exodus 1)

The Bible tells us that these midwives feared God and did not respect the wishes of Pharaoh. This caused the king to intensify his efforts. Pharaoh called on all his people to join him in a national effort to rid the land of the perceived Israelite threat.

22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall

cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.” (Exodus 1)

Many parents lost their sons to the cruel hands of the Egyptians. Families lived in fear. A few years prior to this, these same people enjoyed the prosperity of their newly adopted land. They had now become slaves to the people their father Joseph had saved from a famine that would have completely devastated their land and wiped out most of their population.

It was in these circumstances that a woman of the tribe of Levi gave birth to a son. One can only imagine the pain this mother felt in her heart as she thought of the grim future that awaited her baby. As any mother would do, she sought to hide her son. For three months, she kept him as quiet as possible. She lived in the fear that one day an Egyptian would break through her door and take away her beautiful child.

After three months, she could no longer hide him. What could she do? If she kept him, the Egyptians would eventually find him and that meant certain death for her baby. The only thing she could do was to place him in the hands of her God. In His hands alone there would be hope.

The decision made, the child's mother made a basket from the reeds that grew by the river. After waterproofing the basket, she placed her precious treasure inside and took him to the river committing him into the hands of her God. It was to this river the Egyptians would have taken him to be drowned. The river was a symbol of death for her. In bringing him to that river she was surrendering him fully to God.

She did not know what his future held. No doubt, with tears in her eyes, she commended him to the grace of God. How I would have loved to hear her pray as she committed her young boy to the Lord, not knowing if she would ever see him again.

Maybe not having the courage herself, she asked her young daughter to watch from a distance to see what might happen to her little child. What this mother did not realize at the time was that this little child, was the instrument of God for the deliverance of His people.

God's protecting hand was on the young child Moses. The daughter of Pharaoh, who had come out to bathe in the river, noticed the basket and sent one of her servants to bring it to her. Seeing the child, she had pity on him and decided to raise him as her own.

Moses' sister, who was watching from a distance, dared to approach the Pharaoh's daughter to ask her if she needed a nurse to care for the child. She then offered to find her a nurse to care for the child on her behalf. It was by this means that Moses was raised by his own mother as a child of the daughter of Pharaoh. Could a mother in that day have wished any more for her child? He had been delivered from the cruel slavery of his people. He would live in the comfort and riches of the palace. He would receive the best possible education. His back would not be scarred by the dreaded Egyptian whip.

Moses' mother learned that in giving her child to God, she received him back. This is a lesson we all must understand. Does it surprise you to learn that God asks us to surrender our lives, our possessions, and our ambitions to Him as Moses' mother surrendered her son? Our situation

is not unlike that of Moses' mother. If we keep what is ours, we will surely lose it. The Bible tells us in Matthew 10.39:

39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10)

Jesus went on to say in Matthew 16.25:

25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

For the mother of Moses, the surest way of losing her child was to keep him for herself. The Egyptians would have killed him. She understood that, if she was to save his life, she needed to surrender him to God.

One day a rich young ruler came to Jesus to ask Him how he might obtain eternal life. Jesus told him that if he wanted life eternal he would have to sell all his possessions, give them to the poor, and follow Him. Jesus knew that the reason this young man could not experience the life of Christ was because he clung so tightly to his material possessions. His riches kept him from the kingdom of God. If only he had surrendered his possessions to God how blessed he would have been. Jesus tells us in Matthew 19.29:

29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

Jim Elliot, missionary to Ecuador, prior to being killed by the Auca Indians said: "He is no fool who gives to God what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Is this

true for you? Are you clinging tightly to your worldly possessions? Have you surrendered your goals in life to God? Are you willing, like the mother of Moses, to give to God what you cannot keep to gain what you cannot lose?

Very early in his life, Moses experienced the sovereign care of God. What he experienced is a lesson for us all. What He did for Moses He can do for you. Mark 8.36 reminds us:

36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul? (Mark 8)

Moses' life began in trying times. From the very beginning, the hand of the Lord was on him to protect and keep him for the task that lay before him. Even before Moses was aware of the purpose of God for his life, God was working out that purpose in him.

For Consideration:

- Are trials the absence of God's blessing or can we experience the richness of God's blessings during our trials. Consider the life of Israel as slaves in Egypt.
- How does God sovereignly protect Moses from harm? How has God protected you in your life?
- How important was it that Moses' mother be willing to surrender her child to God? What would have happened had she not placed him

in the basket in the river? How did her surrender of Moses bring victory for her child?

- What do you need to surrender to the Lord today?

For Prayer:

- Take a moment to thank the Lord for the evidence of His blessings in your life, despite the hardship you have had to face in life.
- Thank the Lord for how He has worked out circumstances in your life for good.
- Ask the Lord to show you if there is anything in your life that you have not fully surrendered to Him. Take that time now to ask that He would give you courage to surrender all you are and have to Him.

# Chapter 2 -

## In the Land of Midian

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Read Exodus 2.11-15

Moses grew up in the home of the daughter of the Pharaoh in Egypt. We know nothing of this period of his life. We can only imagine that he received the very best education. He lived amid great wealth and influence. He enjoyed the good life while his brothers and sisters in the Israelite camp were being mistreated and abused by their cruel Egyptian masters.

The Bible tells us that "when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel" (Acts 7:23). After forty years of living among the Egyptians, Moses was truly Egyptian. He was well accustomed to their traditions, and no doubt spoke the language as well as any Egyptian. The Bible does not tell us why it came into his heart to visit his Jewish brothers. Hebrews 11:24 tells us that "by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Hebrews 11:24). What caused him to turn his back on the people who had raised him? Who told him of his roots? The Bible does not give us the answer to these questions. It is very likely that his mother played an important role in shaping his mind.

When Moses visited his Jewish brothers, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave. This was not an extraordinary thing, it was an everyday occurrence. Seeing this abuse, however, angered Moses to the point that he attacked the Egyptian slave master and killed him, burying his body in the sand to hide the deed.

We are left to wonder why it was that Moses was so angered by the abuse that took place that day. Was the Lord giving Moses a burden for his own people? To understand what Moses did that day, we need to examine Acts 7:23-25:

23 "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. (Acts 7)

According to this passage, the reason Moses avenged his Hebrew brother, by killing the Egyptian, was to prove to his people that he was on their side. He believed that, by this act, his own people would put their confidence in him to deliver them. He was a very powerful man in Egypt. He had tremendous influence. If there was a person in Egypt who could come to the rescue of the people of God it was Moses. Moses hoped that the Israelites would understand this and put their confidence in him as their deliverer. The slaying of the Egyptian was an attempt to gain their confidence and respect.

The Israelites did not respond as Moses had hoped. They refused to put their trust in him. The day after he killed the

Egyptian, Moses went out again to see his people. This time he saw two Hebrews quarrelling among themselves. He asked them to explain their action. Their response is significant:

13 When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?" 14 He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." (Exodus 2)

The Hebrew was really saying this: "Moses, among the Egyptians you are a prince. You are a man of great position and authority, but among us you are nothing. You are not our prince. Who are you to judge us? Go away and leave us alone." These were bold words from an Israelite slave who could have been beaten for his insolence to the prince of Egypt. They were words that hurt Moses. They were words of rejection and hatred from his own people.

Notice also how the Hebrew asked Moses if he was going to kill him like he killed his fellow Egyptian. They saw Moses as a traitor to his own people. Who would put their confidence in a traitor? They also saw him as an Egyptian who solved his problems by violence. They had seen too much violence. They wanted nothing to do with Moses.

This response was very troubling for Moses for two reasons. First, because he realized that his desire to deliver the Israelites would be difficult to realize if he did not have their confidence. How can you deliver a people who wanted nothing to do with you? Second, now that the news of what Moses had done to the Egyptian was out, he

feared for his own life. When Pharaoh heard what Moses had done, he sought to kill him. The last thing Pharaoh wanted was a Jewish revolt.

Pharaoh realized what Moses was trying to do. He could not risk losing the Hebrews. There could be no doubt in the mind of Pharaoh now about Moses' position regarding the Hebrew slaves. Pharaoh needed to get rid of him. Moses had no option but to flee for his life.

What a disillusioned man he must have been as he left the land of Egypt. He had a legitimate desire for his own people and their delivery from oppression. There was a genuine need among the people of Israel for a deliverer. There was no one more qualified to do the task than Moses. Why had God closed the door?

The problem seems to be the fact that Moses wanted to deliver the people by means of his own strength and influence. He believed himself to be strong enough to deliver the people. God was not looking for this kind of man. He did not want Moses' influence and strength. He needed a man with different qualifications. He needed a man who knowing his own weakness would trust in Him for strength and leading. The task of delivering the Israelites from bondage and establishing them as a nation in their own land, required more than human strength. It required a miracle of God.

God did not give up on Moses. Moses would still be the deliverer of His people, but not in his present state. He was not yet ready to be used. God needed to refine him. God sent Him into the desert of Midian. According to Acts 7:30, Moses remained in the desert for forty years. Humanly speaking, there was no more hope of Moses being the deliverer. He was not the man who left Egypt. Forty years

had passed, he was now an old man of eighty years. The Hebrews, who had known him forty years ago as a man of power and influence, had either died or had forgotten all about him. He could no longer count on his influence in Egypt. Any confidence he had in himself when he left Egypt was gone. Humanly speaking, all hope of Moses being the deliverer was gone. As God looked at this eighty-year-old man, however, He saw just the man He needed.

God did not want Moses' strength and influence. If Moses had delivered the people in his own strength, the people would have never seen the power of God at work in their deliverance. God would have never received the glory. The people would have never understood the compassion and mercy of God towards them.

God does not need our greatness. He is not particularly interested in our ideas. He wants our simple obedience. He wants a man or a woman who puts their trust fully in Him. He wants an empty vessel He can fill with His power and strength.

The apostle Paul understood this when he went to the church in Corinth. He told them: "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Corinthians 2:3). Somehow this is not the impression I had of this great apostle of God. Paul, however, did not depend on his own strength and wisdom. He went to Corinth as a man trembling in his boots, realizing that, in himself, he was powerless to do anything of lasting spiritual value.

Paul told the Corinthians:

7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. (2 Corinthians 4)

The person God uses is a fragile jar of clay. The power of God, however, is revealed in this fragile container. God displays His glory through us as weak and ordinary people. For Moses to be the man he needed to be, God spent forty years humbling him and emptying him of his own ideas and pride. Only then could he be useful for the Master.

For Consideration:

- Moses grew up in the lap of luxury. Why did God bless him with this richness only to take it away from him when Moses fled to the desert? How important it is that we be willing to surrender all to the Lord?
- What evidence is there of the call of God on the life of Moses at the age of 40? What do you think it would have been like for Moses to leave Egypt and sense the death of his dream to be the deliverer of his people?
- How did the influence and position of Moses in Egypt get in the way of what God wanted to do? Can our strengths and gifts keep us from trusting and obeying God?
- Have you ever been guilty of taking the glory due to God for yourself? Why do we have such a need to seek praise and glory for ourselves?

## For Prayer:

- Ask the Lord to show you if there is anything in your life that you need to surrender more fully to Him.
- Ask the Lord to forgive you for times you believed that you could do the work He has called you to do in your own strength and wisdom. Ask God to teach you to wait more on Him and to trust in His leading more than you own wisdom.
- Take a moment to seek the forgiveness of God for times when you believed that your success in ministry was due to you, your wisdom and skill. Ask God to give you grace to walk in deeper fellowship, confidence and trust in Him and His way.
- Ask the Lord to empty you as He did Moses, so that you can be a useful vessel in His hands. Ask Him to remove anything that would keep you from trusting Him more fully.



# Chapter 3 - Zipporah

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Read Exodus 2.16-22; 4.18-26; 18.1-8

When Pharaoh sought to kill him, Moses fled into the desert, leaving everything he knew behind. After many days of wandering, Moses arrived in the land of Midian. He stopped at a well to rest and refresh himself. It is here at the well that he met the seven young daughters of Jethro who had come out to draw water for their father's sheep. As the women drew water and watered their sheep, some men also come to the well. To the astonishment of Moses, these men chased away the young girls' sheep.

When Moses saw what happened that day, anger boiled up inside him and he took the defence of the young girls. He chased away the men and helped the young women gather their sheep. Moses did not seem to be able to sit by when an injustice was taking place before his eyes. He felt the need to do something. This is what had gotten him into trouble in Egypt when he saw the Egyptian beating the Hebrew slave. In this instance, however, this act of compassion on Moses part would work out for his advantage.

When the daughters of Jethro returned home, they told their father what had happened at the well. Jethro told his daughters to find this man who had helped them and invite

him to the house so he could show him his appreciation. It was by this means that Moses came to the home of Jethro.

We do not know anything about the conversation that took place around the table that evening. We can only imagine that Jethro was very curious to find out all he could about this stranger. During the conversation, it was made known to Jethro that Moses had no home. He invited him to stay with them in return for his services as a shepherd. A man around the home would be very helpful to Jethro who had no sons. Moses decided to accept the invitation.

This new life was a real change for Moses, the prince of Egypt. Genesis 46.34 explains to us the attitude of the Egyptians towards shepherds: "for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." In many ways, Moses had reached the very bottom. This profession was the lowest of all professions in the mind of the Egyptian.

Among the seven daughters of Jethro was a young woman by the name of Zipporah. Jethro gave her to Moses as his wife. Together they had a son by the name of Gershom. The name Gershom means "stranger." Moses was conscious that he was a stranger in this foreign land. His thoughts were still for his people under oppression in the land of Egypt.

Forty years later, the Lord appeared to Moses in a burning bush. He told Moses to return to the land of Egypt to deliver the Israelites from slavery. After some intense wrestling with God, Moses accepted the responsibility. We will examine this time of Moses' life later. For now, I want to focus on Moses' family life.

When God called him to return to Egypt, it appears that Moses took his wife Zipporah and children with him on this

long journey (Gen 4.20). As they travelled, the Bible tells us that the Lord God attacked Moses.

24 At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. (Exodus 4)

What was the problem? Why did the Lord decide to put Moses to death? The answer is found in the response of Zipporah. Zipporah knew only too well what the problem was and if Moses was not going to do something about it she would do it herself. She took a stone knife and circumcised their son. It was only then that the anger of the Lord subsided. The problem was that Moses had never circumcised his son.

Zipporah was angry with her husband. She threw her son's foreskin at the feet of Moses and cried out in anger to him: "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" Moses had been very concerned for his people in slavery but he had never taken the time to make sure his own family was right with God. Zipporah was justly angered with Moses for this and though she was not of Jewish nationality, she rebuked him for his unfaithfulness to God and to her son.

The Bible does not give us the response of Moses to this incident. The next time we read about Zipporah, however, is in chapter eighteen of Exodus after the deliverance of the people from slavery. The passage tells us that Jethro came to visit Moses and he brought Moses' wife with him. It appears that Moses had sent her away.

2 Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home, 3 along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land"), 4 and the name of the other,

Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"). 5 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. 6 And when he sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her," (Exodus 18)

We are not told why Moses sent his family away, when they had started out together. Was it a result of her anger with Moses over not circumcising their son? There may be an honest and noble reason for Moses sending his family away, but what we do know is that for a period of time, Moses was not available to his family.

We discover also in Numbers 12:1 that Moses was later to marry another wife. This woman was a Cushite woman and not an Israelite. Moses would later write down the Law of God which forbade the marrying of an Israelite with foreign women. He would write this law, however, realizing that he, himself had married women who were foreigners. In fact, Moses' own sister and brother would rebuke Moses for taking a Cushite woman to be his wife:

1 Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. (Numbers 12)

Moses was not perfect. He had failed to be the father he should have been by not circumcising his son. He had to be rebuked by his foreign Midianite wife for this. He had a great vision for his people but failed his own son. Moses did not have the time he needed with his family. Not only did he send his wife and children away (Exodus 18:2-5) but even when they were with him, he spent all his day in

the service of the Lord. Moses' father-in-law would challenge him on this matter:

13 The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning to evening. 14 When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people he said "What are you doing for the people? Why do you sit alone and all the people stand around you from morning to evening? (Exodus 18)

Moses did not have the time for his wife and children. He concentrated all his time on serving the Lord. How easy it is for busy fathers and mothers to fall prey to this temptation. We have all experienced this tension between family and work. The apostle Paul, though he was not married, wrote:

32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. (1 Corinthians 7)

Paul reminded the Corinthians that the married man or woman needs to take time for his or her family. The apostle recognized the importance of the family when he told Timothy:

8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5)

The Bible exhorts us, therefore, to care for our families. Moses, though he was a great man of God, was not always the father and the husband he could have been. He did much for the extension of the kingdom of God but his own family suffered. May God teach us to find the balance between our God-given family obligations and our ministry responsibilities.

For Consideration:

- What evidence is there in the life of Moses that he had a strong sense of justice? What is his response to situations where people were being treated unfairly?
- Why do you suppose Moses did not circumcise his son? How was this an obstacle to him as he went to Egypt to release the Jewish slaves?
- Moses was married to two foreign women? How was this an obstacle to his ministry among the Jews? What does the fact that God still used him teach us about the kind of people God can use?
- What evidence is there that Moses did not have much time for his family? Have you been able to have the time you need with your family? How much does your work and ministry interfere with your family life?

## For Prayer:

- Thank the Lord that He does not need perfect people to do His work. Thank Him that He can use us with all our shortcomings and failures.
- Take a moment to pray for your family. Ask God to show you what you can do to bless, encourage and support them.
- Ask God to give you grace to make the changes necessary in your life when he reveals issues that hinder your walk with Him. Ask Him to give you humility to listen to the rebukes and corrections of friends, family and loved ones.



# Chapter 4 - The Fire of God

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Read Exodus 3.1-6

After forty years of silence in the desert, the calm is broken. It happened when Moses was caring for Jethro's flocks. He saw a very strange sight. Before him was a bush. What was strange about the bush was not the fact that it was on fire but that, although it was on fire, it was not being consumed. Out of curiosity, Moses approached the bush to get a better look. As he approached, he heard a voice calling out his name. "Here am I," responded Moses. The voice continued: "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). In holy fear and reverence to this voice, Moses fell to his face on the ground.

That day God revealed Himself to Moses as the God of fire. This was a very powerful image. What is the significance of fire? Why did God present Himself to Moses in this fire? There may be at least four reasons for this.

Firstly, as a God of fire, the Lord was a light to His people. The path the children of Israel were to tread through the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land was to be lighted by the very presence of God in fire. The Bible tells us:

21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. (Exodus 13).

The fire represented the guidance of God as He led them through the night of their wilderness wanderings. The God of fire went before His people to light their path and show them the way that they should walk. The God of fire is a guiding God.

Secondly, fire has no form. In like manner, the God of Moses had no form. Moses would later warn the people against idolatry by using the imagery of the God of fire:

12 Then the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. 13 And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone. 14 And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and rules, that you might do them in the land that you are going over to possess. 15 "Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, 16 beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, 18 the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth (Deuteronomy 4)

The God of fire could not be represented by any form. Any such representation would not do Him justice. As the God of fire, He was not limited to a physical body as man. He was far greater than the artist's imagination or the sculptor's creativity.

Thirdly, fire represents the judgement of God.

22 For a fire is kindled by my anger,  
and it burns to the depths of Sheol,  
devours the earth and its increase,  
and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.  
(Deuteronomy 32)

During their wilderness wanderings, when the Israelites complained about their lives, God came upon them in a burning flame to judge them for their sins.

1 And the people complained in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes, and when the Lord heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp (Numbers 11)

The God of Moses was a God of fire, wrath and justice. He was not to be taken lightly. His anger against sin was very real.

Finally, fire represents purity and holiness. Fire purifies without ever being contaminated. It burns away impurities. Fire must be treated with respect. Our God is like this. He is never contaminated by sin. He is pure and separated from sin. We do not dare approach Him in our sinful state lest we be consumed.

17 Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. (Exodus 24)

God revealed himself to Moses as a fire in a burning bush. Why did He choose a bush? The bush was a very common object. The very fire of God was being manifested to Moses in a common object. God was making a very important statement. He wanted to reveal His presence through something ordinary. Moses was going to become that ordinary object in which the fire of God was going to blaze.

None of us can ever pretend to understand why God wants to show forth His power and holiness through ordinary instruments like you and me. We will never be able to comprehend how God would be willing to enter our lives and burn in them like He did in that ordinary desert bush. This is, however, what the illustration of the burning bush teaches us.

What is important to note here is that the bush is not consumed. This was something that astounded Moses. Listen to what he told his people in Deuteronomy 4.33:

33 Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? (Deuteronomy 4)

The God of Moses was a consuming fire who descended on His people without consuming them. Moses entered the fire of God's presence without being consumed. The God of fire descended on him and yet he lived to tell the story. I can think of no greater mystery than this. We will never understand how a holy God can take up residence in the life of a sinner without the fire of His holy presence devouring that individual but this is what He wants to do.

What an encouragement this illustration is to us. I can know this God of fire. Through the blood of Jesus, I can approach the devouring flames of God's holiness without perishing. I can allow the fire of His holy presence to blaze within so that the world might see through me His holiness and power. His light in me, like a lighthouse, can guide the sinner home. I do not understand this mystery, yet I believe it to be true. I, like Moses, am called by God to be a burning bush, an ordinary object on fire with the very presence of God, yet never consumed. Are you a burning bush?

For Consideration:

- God revealed Himself to Moses as a God of fire. What did that fire represent?
- What is the significance of the fire of God being revealed in an ordinary bush?
- Is there evidence of the fire of God in your life? What do you expect to see happen when the fire of God is revealed in the life of an individual?
- What hinders the manifestation of the fire of God in your life?
- How does knowing that the fire of God is burning in you give you courage and boldness in your calling?

## For Prayer:

- Take a moment to thank the Lord for His gentleness in our lives. Thank Him that while He is a consuming fire, He does not consume those who know His Son.
- Ask the Lord to help you to understand what it means to have the fire of His presence in your life.
- Ask the Lord to fill you even more with the fire of His presence so that you can become all that He wants you to become.
- Thank that Lord that when He calls us He also fills us with His presence to do all that He asks us to do.

# Chapter 5 - I Will be With You

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Read Exodus 3.7-22

During his encounter with Moses before the burning bush, God revealed that He had heard the cries of His people in Egypt and had come to deliver them from their bonds. We do not know why, after so many years, the Lord chose this precise moment to answer the prayers of His people. Moses is now eighty years old. Ever since his birth the people of God had been pleading with God for deliverance. God answered their prayer in His time. We must never think that, because the answer does not come right away, He is not going to answer.

There are two sentences that interest us in the passage listed above. The first is found in Exodus 3.8:

8 and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. (Exodus 3)

The second is in Exodus 3.10:

10 Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." (Exodus 3)

At first glance, these two verses seem to contradict each other. Who was going to bring the people out of Egypt? Verse 8 tells us that God would "bring them up out of the land." Verse 10 tells us that Moses was to "bring the people out of Egypt." How do we reconcile these two verses? I believe the answer is to be found in Exodus 3.12. In this verse God told Moses: "But I will be with you."

We encounter this expression in the New Testament. The Lord told His disciples in Matthew 28.19,20:

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28)

Jesus told His disciples what God told Moses: "I will be with you." How are we to understand this phrase? All too often we understand it to mean: "If you have any difficulties I will be there to hold your hand and give you courage. I will wipe away your tears. I will help you as you strive to do your best."

When God told Moses that He would be with him, what did He have in mind? As Moses went out to deliver the people from the bondage of Egypt what role did God play? Was the promise of God's presence to be understood in the sense that God would stand on the side-lines cheering Moses on as he faced the enemy? If that were the extent of God's role, Moses would never have left his father-in-law's

flocks. If there was one thing that Moses was painfully aware of, it was the fact that the task to which the Lord had called him would never be accomplished in his own strength even if God did cheer him on. The task was an impossible one for a mere human like himself.

Moses needed far more than a helping hand from the Lord. He needed the Lord to do the task. The task of delivering the people from slavery was the Lord's work. He told the Lord one day:

And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here." (Exodus 33:15)

"Lord" said Moses that day, "If you don't go with me than don't even bother to send me." He cried out again to God in Exodus 34.9:

9 And he said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance." (Exodus 34)

Moses knew the people to whom the Lord had called him. He understood the hardness of their hearts. He saw how they did nothing but complain day after day. He saw how quickly they could be lead astray into sin. For this reason, he cried out: "Lord if you love me, if I have found grace in your eyes, if you are at all concerned about me, then walk with me, I cannot do it without you." Moses was in constant need of the Lord's wisdom, strength, and patience. He did not want to be, for a second, separated from the enabling presence of the Lord.

The presence of the Lord in him, like the flames that blazed in the burning bush was his strength for the task. While Moses was powerless to deliver the people, with God's presence in him, nothing was impossible. When God sent Moses, He went with him. It was God's strength and wisdom in him that empowered him to do the task. Controlled by the indwelling Spirit of God, Moses was able to accomplish the mission to which God had called him. Moses was the lamp but God was the flame that burned in the lamp. Moses was the body but God was the life of the body. They were intimately associated.

The New Testament uses the illustration of the vine and the branches:

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15)

I believe that the secret of success in the ministry of Moses was the fact that he understood this vital principle of the vine and the branches. Apart from God he could do nothing, but with the sap of God's life flowing through him, nothing could stop him. He did not dare count on his own resources. Nothing short of the presence of God in him would do. Without the presence of God, Moses was a lamp with no flame, a body with no life. The power in his ministry was not his own.

Could it be that we need in our day to be reminded of this truth? Could it be that we are powerless to face the foe because we do not understand what Jesus meant when he said: "I will be with you?" The example of Moses is a

very important one for us to follow. I praise the Lord who says: "I will be with you." Without Him our efforts are in vain. May we cease to depend on our own strength, so that His power might be evident in us. The presence of God in us is our only guarantee of success in ministry and service for the Lord. God has promised His presence, not just to cheer us on as we labour in our own strength, but to bring vitality to our lifeless and impotent souls. Do you know the power of this presence in your life?

#### For Consideration:

- God promised to be with Moses. How important was this for Moses?
- What is the difference between God cheering us on and God being our strength or God giving us a helping hand and God being the fire inside us?
- How much do we realize our need of God's presence in us to accomplish the task at hand? How much do we attempt to do in our own wisdom and strength?
- How much courage do you think that presence of the Lord gave Moses as he stood before the impossible task of delivering his people from Egypt?

#### For Prayer:

- Ask the Lord to help you to see your need for His presence in everything that you do.

- Thank the Lord that He is willing to be our strength and wisdom for all the tasks that He calls us to do.
- Ask the Lord to teach you what it means to trust in Him and His strength and purpose. Thank Him that with His presence in us to strengthen, nothing is impossible.

# Chapter 6 - Questions

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Read Exodus 4.1-17

When Moses heard the call of God to return to Egypt, his first reaction was to say to the Lord, "who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:11). Although God had explained to him that He would be with him, Moses is still not convinced that he is the right person for the job. In Exodus 4.1 he said to God:

1 Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'" (Exodus 4)

"Lord," said Moses, "anyone can say that he has come from You. What they really need is a proof. How can I prove to the people that I have really come from You?" We can ask this same question today. How are men and women in our day and age to know that we are really the messengers of God? What will it take for them to accept what we say as truth? Moses is convinced that the Lord was sending him, but he is not convinced that the Israelites and the Egyptians would see things in the same way.

God gave Moses three signs. He asked him to throw his rod on the ground. Moses obeyed and his rod becomes a

serpent. God told him to pick up the serpent by the tail and it turned back into a rod. He asked him secondly, to put his hand into his cloak. When he obeyed, his hand became leprous. In putting his hand back into his cloak, it was healed. Finally, the Lord told him that if the people did not believe these last two signs, he was to take some water from the Nile River and pour it on the land and it would turn into blood.

It was by means these three signs that Moses would prove to the people that he was a prophet sent from God. Notice, however, what Moses told the Lord after receiving the three signs:

10 But Moses said to the Lord, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue." (Exodus 4)

Despite these powerful signs of God, Moses still struggles. What is that nature of his struggle? He is looking at himself and not at God. He is failing to see the significance of the illustration of the burning bush. He is still trusting his own ability. Moses was not fully understanding that God was promising to fill Him. God would be the strength in him. God would do what he could not do. Moses is feeling the weight of responsibility and knows his own unworthiness and inability. He can't imagine being able to speak to the people and have them believe what he said. He had already been rejected by the Hebrew slaves and couldn't imagine that they had changed their mind. He is still struggling with the rejection of his past effort forty years earlier.

There was, in the heart of Moses, a tension between the call of God and his understanding of himself. We understand very well what Moses is feeling. We see our weaknesses all too clearly. The problem is that such a focus can keep us from stepping out into God's greater purpose. God does not always want us to do what is comfortable and familiar to us. There are times when He will stretch us in ways we never thought we could be stretched. He will put us in situations where the only one we can trust is Him.

God gave Moses three signs but those signs were no substitute for trusting Him. Until Moses got his eyes off himself, he would never be able to step out into the unknown. God was casting him into a ministry that was bigger than him and his gifts. This would require faith in God and not in himself.

God became angry with Moses because of his lack of faith. God wanted Moses to trust Him. Moses was certain of the call of God on his life. He did not doubt what the Lord was asking him to do. The doubt, for Moses, was about what the Lord could do in him. Moses just could not see himself as a burning bush, full of the fire and glory of God. He did not feel worthy of this.

Though Moses was not completely qualified for the ministry to which the Lord was calling him, the Lord would meet him in his need. God provided Moses with a co-worker. Moses was sensitive to the voice of the Lord, Aaron was an able speaker, together they were to become a powerful team.

Like Moses, we live in a world that needs to be delivered from the bondage of slavery. God wants to deliver His people from this bondage. He is ready to equip us for the task and provide us with support in other people. He will stretch

us as He stretched Moses. We will find ourselves over your head in a ministry that is bigger than our gifts and experience. We will be cast completely on Him for strength, wisdom and grace. He will fill us with His fire. He will burn in us and through us bringing light to those around us. This fire of His presence will overpower the sin that surrounds us. The burning fire of God's Spirit will be our strength and confidence. He will do through us what you could never do in our own ability.

While the humility of Moses was admirable, it could also be a hindrance for him. He could not envision the presence of the Lord God in Him. He could not imagine the victory God promised ever becoming a reality in him. God will do more than we could ever imagine. Moses could not at this point imagine God making the people of Israel listen to his words. He could not imagine God using him to be the instrument of release for His people. "What if they don't believe me?" was the question Moses asked.

All the while God's purpose for Moses was clear. He would be the instrument to deliver the people of Israel from bondage. The victory would be obtained by hard work but it would be given to Moses. What does God want to do in you? Will you be hindered by your inability to imagine how God could ever use you? Step out boldly in the leading of the Lord and you will be surprised at what God wants to do in you and through you.

For Consideration:

- What kind of signs does the Lord give today to confirm the truth of His Word?

- Are signs and miracles enough to convince people of the truth? Did the miracles of Jesus always convince the people of His day that he was the Messiah?
- What is the danger of trusting in our gifts and experience? Is it possible for us to put more confidence in our gifts than in the Lord?
- Has the Lord ever stretched you beyond what you felt you were able to do in your own strength and wisdom? Explain
- Are you aware of the fire of God's Spirit in you? What is the implication of knowing that the fire of God burns in us?

For Prayer:

- Thank the Lord that He promises to be our strength and wisdom for every task He calls us to do.
- Ask the Lord to give you more willingness to follow Him and His calling into areas that are unfamiliar and uncomfortable.
- Ask the Lord to forgive you for times when you were not willing to step out because you failed to see how God could ever use your gifts and talents.
- Take a moment to commit yourself afresh to the Lord, to go wherever He wants you to go and to do whatever He wants you to do.

- Ask God to give you a greater faith to believe that He is able to do even greater things in your and through you.

# Chapter 7 -

## Why Did You Send Me?

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Read Exodus 5.1-6.5

After a long journey to Egypt, Moses, along with his brother Aaron, gathered the elders of Israel. Aaron explained to them that the Lord had sent them to deliver their nation from bondage. Moses performed the signs the Lord had given to him to prove that they had come from the Lord. The response of the people was encouraging:

31 And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped. (Exodus 4)

Moses and Aaron were confirmed in their calling by the people of God. The people worshipped the Lord in response to His sending of Moses and Aaron in answer to their prayers. How encouraging this must have been for Moses and Aaron.

With a certain confidence, the two men went to the palace of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Pharaoh's response was not so encouraging. When Moses and Aaron asked him to let the people go into the desert for a celebration in honour of their God, Pharaoh responded:

4 But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens." (Exodus 5)

Not only does Pharaoh send Moses and Aaron away, but he also decided to increase the burden on the Israelite slaves. The Egyptians had always supplied the straw necessary to mix with the bricks the children of Israel were making for Pharaoh. After the visit of Moses and Aaron, however, Pharaoh decided that the people would gather their own straw without reducing the quota of bricks required per day. This was a harsh blow to the already overworked Israelite slaves. Pharaoh was expecting the impossible.

The Israelites did not have the time to find straw required for Pharaoh's bricks. The Bible tells us that they replaced the straw with stubble instead (Exodus 5.12). Even by using stubble they were not able to produce the quantity of bricks required each day.

Because the quota of bricks was not being met, the Egyptians began to beat the taskmasters. The life of the taskmaster became more difficult. They begin to ask the question: "why?". They did not understand why Pharaoh had increased their load. They decided to go to him to find an answer. When the taskmasters ask Pharaoh to explain his actions, Pharaoh responds:

17 But he said, "You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.' (Exodus 5)

When the taskmasters heard Pharaoh mention the sacrifices to the Lord, they understood the problem. It was because of Moses and Aaron that Pharaoh was oppressing

them. Leaving the palace, the taskmasters met Moses and Aaron. The Bible tells us what they told Moses and Aaron that day:

20 They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh; 21 and they said to them, "The Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us." (Exodus 5)

The words of the taskmasters were harsh. They must have deeply hurt Moses. The last thing in the world that he wanted to do was to make the conditions for the people of God worse by putting a sword in Pharaoh's hand. This, however, was just what was happening. Moses only had to go to the Israelite camp to see that the morale of his Israelite brethren had seriously declined. Ever since his arrival, the conditions had only gotten worse. That day Moses cried out to God:

22 Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all." (Exodus 5)

Moses was a discouraged man. Things were not unfolding as he had hoped. Why had the Lord sent him when conditions were only deteriorating for the people since he came? It would have been far better for the people if he had stayed in Midian.

Moses is not the only person to be discouraged in the work of the Lord. 1 Kings 19 tells us the response of Elijah, when

he heard that Jezebel had sworn before her gods to kill him:

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." (1 Kings 19)

Job lost all his earthly possessions. Satan also killed his children and left him sitting on an ash heap covered with ulcers. That day Job cried out to God:

11 "Why did I not die at birth,  
come out from the womb and expire?  
12 Why did the knees receive me?  
Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?  
13 For then I would have lain down and been  
quiet;  
I would have slept; then I would have been at rest  
(Job 3)

A few years later, the prophet Jeremiah, discouraged in the work of the Lord declared:

14 Cursed be the day  
on which I was born!  
The day when my mother bore me,  
let it not be blessed!  
15 Cursed be the man who brought the news to  
my father,  
"A son is born to you,"  
making him very glad.  
16 Let that man be like the cities  
that the Lord overthrew without pity;  
let him hear a cry in the morning

and an alarm at noon,  
17 because he did not kill me in the womb;  
so my mother would have been my grave,  
and her womb forever great.  
18 Why did I come out from the womb  
to see toil and sorrow,  
and spend my days in shame? (Jeremiah 20)

How often have we, in our spiritual service, asked ourselves if it would not be best to simply throw in the towel. Maybe you have been persevering without result in your ministry. Maybe you have been misunderstood. Every servant of God comes to this point in his or her service for the Lord.

Why do we, as God's servant, become discouraged? In the case of Moses, was it not that he was looking too much at his circumstances? As he looked around him he could see only oppression and despair. He had heard the harsh words of the taskmasters. These words had cut him deeply. His eyes for a moment wandered from the Lord to his circumstances. He forgot that he served a sovereign God. He forgot that the Lord, who was in control of the situation, had already told him that these things would happen:

19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. (Exodus 3)

As long as his eyes were off his Lord, Moses would remain a very discouraged man.

Isaiah tells us:

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, declares the  
Lord.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55)

God's ways are very different from our ways. When all around us begins to crumble, more than ever we need to turn our eyes to God who is not only bigger than these circumstances but can also use them to accomplish His greater purposes.

In his discouragement, Moses cried out to God. "Why is all this happening?" What is the response of God to Moses? Exodus 6.1 tells us:

1 But the Lord said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land." (Exodus 6)

God reminded Moses that day that He was a sovereign God. Moses would soon see what the sovereign God would do. The work belonged to God, He would intervene in His own time. How refreshing it must have been for Moses that day to be reminded that His God was sovereignly unfolding His plan. It is true that Moses had come to the end of his personal resources but God had not finished. Moses would, in God's time, see a mighty working of His God.

Are you discouraged? Lift up your eyes to the sovereign Lord who has not yet finished the work He has begun in your life. Nothing is impossible for Him. He will intervene

in His time. He who has called you is faithful (1 Thessalonians 5:24). He did not make a mistake in allowing your circumstances. He knows what He is doing. You can trust Him fully. In His time, you too will hear him say: "Now you will see what I will do."

#### For Consideration:

- Should we expect that because God is with us that people will listen to us? Should we expect that the ministries to which God has called us will always be easy? What are some of the struggles you have faced in ministry?
- Have you ever been discouraged in ministry? Explain.
- Is there cause for hopelessness when we understand that God is a sovereign God who controls and has authority over all things? What comfort do you find in the fact that God is bigger than your discouragement?
- How does knowing that God's ways are different from ours, help us to deal with the discouragements that come our way?

#### For Prayer:

- Thank the Lord that He is bigger than our greatest discouragement.

- Ask the Lord to help you to understand that He is in control of the circumstances that you face today.
- Ask God for the grace to persevere when things do not turn out as you expected.

# Chapter 8 -

## Go, Speak to Pharaoh

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Read Exodus 6.10-12, 28-30; 7.14,15; 8.1,2; 8.20; 9.1; 9.13; 10.1

Since Moses and Aaron had arrived in Egypt, the living conditions of the children of Israel had only gotten worse. The people, who had put their confidence in them at their arrival, were now cursing them. This was a painful time for Moses. It was not what he had expected. Sometimes we expect that if we are ministering in the name of the Lord, everything will flow smoothly. The reality, however, is that we are engaged in an intense spiritual battle. This battle will have its struggles. At times, the enemy will seem to be winning. This was one of those times. As Moses looked around him and saw the intensifying agony of his people, he cried out to God, "why did you send me." There is a sense of disappointment in his voice. God had told Moses that He would break Pharaoh and he would be forced to let the people go. While this would indeed happen, it did not do so immediately. Before the breaking of Pharaoh, there was an intense battle to be fought.

Why doesn't God give us victory without a fight? Why does there have to be disappointment and discouragement in the battle before us? What pastor has not faced the criticism of people in his congregation? What church has not

had people leave in anger? What parent has not been disappointed with the actions of his or her children? How easy it is in these times to feel like giving up. As Moses cried out to God that day, "why did you send me?" he was feeling disappointment in God and his calling. God, however, had not finished with him. In fact, God told Moses that day to get back on his feet and return to Pharaoh.

Hearing this Moses replied:

12 ... "Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?" (Exodus 6)

Moses did not understand why the Lord would ask him to return when Pharaoh had been so hostile toward him and the Israelites. Even his own people had lost confidence in him because of that meeting with Pharaoh. It was evident that the heart of the king of Egypt was hardened. What good would it do to return? Moses already knew the answer Pharaoh would give.

Beyond this, however, was the fact that Moses simply felt that he was in over his head. "I am a man of uncircumcised lips," he told the Lord. Circumcision of young males was a means of consecrating them to God. It was a sign that they belonged to God. By telling God that he was a man of uncircumcised lips, Moses is telling Him that he was not gifted to speak. His lips were like the lips of those who did not belong to God. These lips did not demonstrate the power and anointing of God. What could he do without that anointing? How could he ever expect to break the power of Pharaoh with uncircumcised lips? He had already tried, and that attempt led to serious failure and disappointment.

The temptation for Moses here was to give up and admit failure. God told him to get back on his feet and go back to Pharaoh. He called him to persevere.

Pharaoh's heart was very hard to the things of God. He was not ready to listen. There have been times when I have preached to people who had no desire to listen to what I have had to say or who did not like what I had to say. God often called His prophets to go to those whose hearts are hardened and who did not want to hear what they had to say. Listen to the call of God on the life of Isaiah:

8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying,  
"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"  
Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." 9 And he said,  
"Go, and say to this people:  
"Keep on hearing, but do not understand;  
keep on seeing, but do not perceive."  
10 Make the heart of this people dull,  
and their ears heavy,  
and blind their eyes;  
lest they see with their eyes,  
and hear with their ears,  
and understand with their hearts,  
and turn and be healed."  
11 Then I said, "How long, O Lord?"  
And he said:  
"Until cities lie waste  
without inhabitant,  
and houses without people,  
and the land is a desolate waste,  
12 and the Lord removes people far away,  
and the forsaken places are many in the midst of  
the land. (Isaiah 6)

From the outset of his ministry, the prophet Isaiah understood that people would not listen to his message. God was calling him, however, to preach until the "cities lie waste without inhabitants." It is difficult to be faithful under such terms. These, however, were the terms of Isaiah's ministry calling.

The angels of God came one day to the town of Sodom. They warned Lot of the impending danger to the city. They told him to warn his family of the coming destruction of their city. Lot went right away to speak to his family but his family did not take him seriously (Genesis 19.14). Why did God send Lot when He knew his family would not listen?

What purpose is there in preaching to the hardened hearts of sinners who will never listen? God not only sends us to proclaim deliverance; He also sends us to proclaim His judgement. The Lord knew that the words of the prophet Isaiah would not change the hearts of the people to whom He sent him. God sent Isaiah, however, to pronounce His judgement.

In the case of Moses, the Lord did not send him back to the king of Egypt because He felt that the heart of Pharaoh would be changed. Ten times Moses went to Pharaoh, ten times Pharaoh's judgement was pronounced. Each time Moses returned, the plagues became more serious. With each refusal of Pharaoh to listen to the word of God, his land was plunged more deeply into destruction. The judgement of God, proclaimed against Pharaoh and the Egyptians was clear.

The fact that God sent Moses back proves to us that our God is a God of justice and compassion. He is a very patient God. He could have given Egypt only one opportunity before proclaiming His final judgement but He sent Moses

back ten times. Pharaoh had no excuse. He had every opportunity to repent. His tenfold refusal sealed his judgement.

Like Moses, we too are sent by God. We are sometimes the savour of life and sometimes the savour of death.

15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, 16 to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? (2 Corinthians 2)

Sometimes we are called to proclaim the deliverance of God, sometimes to proclaim His judgement. Moses lived with this tension. To the Israelites, he was the savour of life and deliverance, but to the Egyptians he was the savour of death and condemnation.

The apostle Peter tells us concerning Jesus:

6 For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

8 and

“A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. (1 Peter 2)

The Lord we proclaim is precious to those who believe, but a rock of offense and a stumbling block to those who are disobedient. Like Moses, we place life and death before those who hear our message. The promise of God is that His word will never return void:

10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from  
heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
11 so shall my word be that goes out from my  
mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.  
(Isaiah 55)

The words of God through Moses to Pharaoh were not in vain. By them the judgement of God was

proclaimed and released in Egypt. Though people may never believe, they still need to be warned. These were difficult lessons for Moses to learn. As a spokesman of God, Moses did not get to choose the message. He was to deliver the message God gave him to deliver. Sometimes people would be richly blessed by that message. Other times they would reject the message and the messenger who brought it. Sometimes we proclaim the blessing of the Lord. Other times we must proclaim His judgement and curse. The faithful messenger will proclaim both the blessings and the judgement.

I admire the patience and the courage of Moses who persevered despite such great obstacles. He returned again

and again with the message of God. What a difficult ministry it was to be a proclaimer of judgement. How much more pleasant it would be to be a proclaimer of deliverance. Whether it be to proclaim judgement or to proclaim deliverance, the ultimate call of God on our lives is to be obedient and faithful servants, proclaiming the message He gives us to proclaim at the right time.

#### For Consideration:

- Does God ever promise that when He calls us, everything will be easy? What struggles did Moses have with his calling?
- Have you ever been disappointed because your ministry did not turn out as you had anticipated?
- How does understanding that we are in a spiritual battle temper our expectations in ministry?
- Why should we preach to those who will not listen? Why do they also need to hear the Word of God?
- Does the messenger get to choose the message he or she speaks? Will the message we share always be pleasant for those to whom it is intended?
- Are we called to “success” or to faithfulness? What is the difference between setting our focus on success rather than faithfulness? How did Moses struggle with this?

## For Prayer:

- Ask the Lord to give you the perseverance necessary to keep going when you feel like quitting?
- Ask God to help you to put aside all your own expectations in ministry so that you can let Him bless as He sees fit. Ask God to forgive you for coming into ministry with your own ideas. Ask Him to keep you faithful to Him and His purpose always.
- Take a moment to thank the Lord for the things He has taught you in the times of deep ministry and personal struggle.
- Ask God to give you a heart to be faithful to Him in all things. Ask Him to set you free from your own ideas of what your ministry should be like. Thank Him that, even though we may not understand, His way is greater than anything we could ever imagine

# Chapter 9 - Moses Cried unto the Lord

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Read Exodus 15.22-26; 17.1-7; 18.9-26

In the last two meditations, we saw how Moses struggled with the call of God on his life. God challenged Moses to keep his eye on Him and to persevere in what He had called him to do. Not all victories come immediately. Some of the greatest victories are only won over time and with great perseverance. Over the course of the days and weeks that followed, God called Moses to return repeatedly to Pharaoh. With each rejection of Moses and his words, the Lord unleashed another judgement on the land. Egypt's supply of food was devastated and her people were crushed. Pharaoh would finally release the people of Israel when every first-born son of his nation perished at the hand of Moses' God.

Pharaoh was not easily defeated, however. His pride pushed him to chase after Israel to bring them back to Egypt. Pharaoh's army pursued the children of Israel as they fled. Again, God revealed His power by opening the waters of the sea to let His people pass on dry land to the other side. When the Egyptian army followed, the Lord sent the walls of the sea down on them. The Egyptian army

perished in the waters that provided a way for Israel to escape.

This incident had a powerful effect on the Israelites and their attitude toward God and His servant Moses:

30 Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses. (Exodus 14)

There was no question now that the Lord God had come to their rescue. These Hebrew slaves were renewed in their confidence in God and knew that He had sent Moses to deliver them from the cruelty of Egypt. This new faith in God, however, would soon be put to the test.

Under the leadership of Moses, Israel entered the desert. The people who "believed the Lord and his servant Moses" now began to experience the difficulties of desert life. On one occasion after suffering the heat of the desert they arrived at a place where there was water. The water there, however, was so bitter the people could not drink it. We can only imagine the frustration of seeing water but not being able to drink it. Very quickly they began to complain. "What shall we drink?" they cried out to Moses.

Moses did not have the solution and so he went to the Lord with the problem. The solution of the Lord was very simple. He told Moses to cut down a tree and throw it into the water. When he did so, the waters were "made sweet." The people were satisfied.

As they continued their journey, the supply of food they had brought for the journey began to run out. This worried the people and they began to wonder if they were going to die of starvation in the desert. Again, they began to complain to Moses. This time accusing him of bringing them out into the desert to kill them with hunger.

2 And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, 3 and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exodus 16)

What was Moses to do? Where could he find food to feed this multitude in the midst of the desert? Once again, Moses cried out to the Lord and the Lord provided the solution. He rained down bread from heaven. Every morning when they woke up the people found manna on the ground. They would gather it up and have sufficient food for the day.

4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. (Exodus 16)

Again, the people saw the glory and provision of God. Moses, however, understood just how dependant he was on the Lord and the answers He provided for the needs of the people.

As the journey continued through the desert. The people arrived at a place called Rephadim. There was no water for them in Rephadim. Again, the Israelites complain:

3 But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" (Exodus 17)

As on the other occasions, Moses cried out to the Lord: "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." (Exodus 17:4). Yet once again the Lord provided a solution. He told Moses to strike a rock with his rod so that it yielded water for the people to drink.

What do we learn from these incidents in the life of Moses? In Exodus chapters 15-18 we read of at least four occasions where Moses sought the counsel of the Lord in relation to the difficulties he encountered. Moses did not depend on his own wisdom. He knew that he did not have the answers. Consider the immensity of the task God had called him to in those days:

Dr. Danny Kellum, Headmaster of Donelson Christian Academy, wrote:

"One of the biggest arithmetical miracles in the world: Moses and the people were in the desert, but what was he going to do with them? They had to be fed, and feeding 3 or 3 1/2 million people requires a lot of food.

According to the Quartermaster General in the Army, it is reported that Moses would have to have 1,500 tons of food each day. Do you know that to

bring that much food each day, two freight trains each a mile long would be required!

Besides you must remember, they were out in the desert, and they would have to have firewood to use in cooking the food. This would take 4,000 tons of wood and a few more freight trains each a mile long, just for one day.

And just think, they were forty years in transit.

Oh, yes, they would have to have water. If they only had enough to drink and wash a few dishes, it would take 11,000,000 gallons each day, and a freight train with tank cars 1,800 miles long, just to bring water!

And then another thing. They had to get across the Red Sea at night. Now, if they went on a narrow path, double file, the line would be 800 miles long and would require 35 days and nights to get through. So, there had to be a space in the Red Sea, 3 miles wide so that they could walk 5,000 abreast to get over in one night.

But then another problem. Each time they camped at the end of the day, a campground two-thirds the size of the state of Rhode Island was required, or a total of 750 square miles long, think of it! This space just for nightly camping.

Do you think Moses figured all this out before he left Egypt? I think not! You see, Moses believed in God. God took care of these things for him. (<http://www.kubik.org/lighter/exodus.htm>)

The words, "Moses cried unto the Lord," are significant. This was the secret to Moses' victory in the desert. This was the source of his strength. He was strong because he relied on the Lord and sought Him in everything he did. He did not rely on his own ability because he knew that what he was being asked to do was far greater than him.

The writer of the Proverbs tells us:

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.  
6 In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.  
7 Be not wise in your own eyes;  
fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. (Proverbs  
3)

If we want to be successful in our undertakings, we must not lean on our own understanding. Instead we must trust in the Lord and acknowledge Him in all our ways. This means bringing Him into all our plans. It means seeking His will and not our own. It means doing things His way and not our way.

I believe that Moses understood this principle. Day after day he returned to the Lord seeking His counsel. Day after day the Lord filled Moses with His wisdom. Moses succeeded because he did not depend on his own wisdom. He regularly sought the will of the Lord in the difficulties he faced.

The wisdom Moses received from the Lord is available to us today as well. The apostle James tells us:

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1)

What a wonderful promise. We do not have to face life, with all its difficulties and uncertainties, in our own wisdom and strength? The wisdom of God is at our disposal if we will but call out to Him like Moses. What a difference it would make in our lives if, like Moses, we spent more time seeking the Lord's wisdom in our daily routine!

How much of your life do you live in your own strength and wisdom? What part does God have in the decisions you make daily? Have you been shutting Him out of your life? Do you consistently seek the Lord's will in your daily routine? God placed Moses in a ministry that was bigger than him, so that he would learn to call upon His name. Will we do the same?

#### For Consideration:

- Consider the answers that God provided for Moses when he cried out to Him. Could he have ever come up with such solutions? How are God's ways different from ours? Why is it important to cry out for His wisdom?
- Is it a shame not to have the answer? How does not having the answer drive us more to God?
- Does your ministry reveal that you have great skill and wisdom or does it reveal the power of God? When people see your ministry, do they

see you or do they see God? How did Israel see God in the ministry of Moses?

- Should we fear being called to a ministry that is bigger than us and our skills?

For Prayer:

- Thank the Lord that He does not leave us alone in the ministries He has called us to. Thank Him for how He revealed His presence through Moses. Ask that the same presence would be revealed in you and the work He has called you to do.
- Ask God to forgive you for times when you have resisted His wisdom and done things in your own way. Ask Him to give you grace to surrender to Him and His purpose in all that you do.
- Ask God to forgive you for the pride that wants people to see you more than God. Take a moment to pray that God would break any pride in you that will not let you see your dependence on God.

# Chapter 10 - A Hand Lifted Up

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Exodus 17.8-16

The time the children of Israel spent in the desert was not without its difficulties. During their passage, they encountered many enemies. Exodus 17 tells us the story of the Amalekites.

Hearing of the presence of the Israelites in their region, the Amalekites became fearful. To defend their land from this perceived threat, the king sent his army out to fight the Israelites. When Moses saw the enemy, he prepared the people for war. With Joshua at their head, the Hebrew army faced its foe. Moses climbed a hill that overlooked the valley where the battle took place. In his hands was the rod the Lord had used to bring water out of the rock and to part the sea. The Bible tells us that Moses rose that staff up above the battle as he watched it unfold. Notice the result:

9 So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and

Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. (Exodus 17)

While the people of God were in a physical battle against their enemy, there was a spiritual warfare raging simultaneously. This battle was invisible but just as real as what was taking place down in the valley. As long as Moses lifted up the rod of God before the people they won the battle but when his hands grew weary and he let down the rod of God, the battle went to the enemy. The role of holding up the rod of God was vital to winning the battle.

The rod that Moses held in his hands represented the power and authority of God. It was this authority and power that delivered Israel from the Egyptians. Moses had stretched it out over the sea and the waters parted. This very same rod brought water from the rock at Rephidim. This rod had eaten up the rods of the Egyptian magicians who had turned them into serpents before Pharaoh. It was a symbol of God's enabling and powerful presence. The holding up of this rod was a constant reminder to the people fighting below that the victory was not in their own strength and skill but in the power and authority of the Lord.

Moses was human and his strength was limited. His hands grew weary and from time to time he had to let them down to rest. We are not told if Israelite soldiers lost their lives

when Moses let down his hands. Moses, however, could not let his people down because of tired hands. To insure victory, Moses needed help. Aaron and Hur had climbed the hill with Moses that day. They took a rock and placed it so that Moses could sit down. Each of them took one of Moses' arms and supported it so that they it would not fall. By this means the rod of God stayed over the Israelite soldiers and the victory was assured.

Have you ever asked the question why Moses did not simply place the rod of God on a rock above the battle field? Was it necessary that Moses hold the rod in his own hands? Could he have not simply passed it on to Aaron when his hands grew tired? It seems that the task of holding up the rod had been given to Moses alone. It was necessary that he be faithful. He had his moments of weakness when his hands fell but, with his friends beside him, he could persevere.

There are many rods we need to lift over the spiritual battle today. If we allow the rod of prayer to fall, the arrows of the enemy will penetrate our ranks. If we let down the rod of the Word of God we lose our source of wisdom and direction. If we permit the rod of obedience to drop we disconnect ourselves from our source of strength.

Like Moses, we sometimes grow weary. Jesus knew what it was like to grow weary in the spiritual battle. One day He went to the garden of Gethsemane. A heavy spiritual battle raged as He prayed. Feeling the intensity of this battle, He asked His disciples to watch and pray with Him. Like Moses, the disciples were called to hold up the rod of God in this battle. Jesus left His disciples to pray but when He returned, He found them asleep. He woke them and said:

41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26)

The disciples of Jesus, on their side, fell prey to the weakness of the flesh. All too often, like them, we do not hold up the rod God has given us. Our flesh is weak, the temptations are great. It is not easy to persevere in prayer, obedience, and faithfulness. These rods, however, are powerful arms against the enemy. In lifting them high in the heat of the battle victory will surely be ours. Moses learned that there were sacrifices to be made in the battle before him. There would be discomfort and fatigue. He also came to understand his need for faithful and godly friends to stand with him in the battle. May the Lord help us endure what we must for the victory before us. May He also provide us with the friends we need to stand with us. Maybe He has called you to be an Aaron or a Hur to lift up and support the hands of a servant of God. May we be faithful in this task.

#### For Consideration:

- What do we learn here about the nature of the battle before us? Are our battles won in flesh and blood, human wisdom and skill? What is the source of our victory?
- What are the weapons of our warfare against the powers of darkness?
- What role did Moses' friends play in the spiritual battle? Do you have friends to support you in your time of weakness?

- Should we expect that the battle before us will be comfortable and easy? What sacrifices will we have to make in the battle before us? Are you willing to persevere even when things are difficult?

For Prayer:

- Ask the Lord to teach you that the battle is not won in human wisdom and skill. Ask Him to reveal to you more fully the nature of the spiritual battle before us.
- Ask the Lord to show you your role in the spiritual battle that rages in our society. Pray that He would teach you how to use the gifts He has given you in this battle.
- Take a moment to pray that the Lord would give you endurance and strength not to give up when things become difficult.
- Does the Lord want you to be a support and encouragement to someone in the battle before them? Ask the Lord to show you if He wants you to stand with someone in the coming weeks.



# Chapter 11 -

## On the Mountain Top

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Read Exodus 19.16-20; 24.9-18; 34.1-5, 29-35

The relationship Moses experienced with God was unique. He became an intimate friend of God. The Bible tells us that God spoke to Moses face to face. Speaking to Miriam and Aaron, the Lord said about Moses:

6 And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. 7 Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. 8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Numbers 12)

This special relationship with God grew thanks to the moments Moses spent with Him on the mountain top.

The first time Moses went to the top of the mountain to meet with God was to receive the Ten Commandments. This story is told in Exodus 19.10-25. Before coming down to meet Moses, God commanded him to prepare the people. It was necessary that the people be pure with their clothes washed. When the Lord revealed His presence on

that mountain, the people were not to approach Him lest they die. Anyone who touched the mountain during the time that the presence of the Lord was being revealed, was to be stoned to death. Moses alone would enter the presence of Almighty God.

When the day arrived, there was thunder and lightning on the mountain. A thick cloud covered the peak. Standing at the foot of the mountain, the people of God were full of awe and wonder. The mountain appeared to be on fire. The Lord God descended into the flames. The place shook with violence. As Moses looked in awe at this terrific manifestation of the presence of God, he heard a voice calling him to come up into the midst of the flames. There amid such glory, Moses would commune with His Lord and Creator. We can only imagine what those days were like. We can only imagine the impact they had on Moses.

A little later in Exodus 24, Moses is again invited into the presence of the Lord. This time he was to go up with Aaron and seventy elders. Aaron and the elders, however, were not to go to the top of the mountain. Only Moses could enter the presence of the Lord. Aaron and the elders saw a small part of the glory of God that day. They share that experience with us in Exodus 24:

9 Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, 10 and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. 11 And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank. (Exodus 24)

The experience of seeing the glory of God was so overwhelming that Aaron and the elders were amazed that they

lived to tell the story. God “did not lay his hands on” them and they lived to eat and drink. Notice, however, that all they describe for us is the pavement on which God walked. Even that, however, was an experience that would change their lives.

On the seventh day of their stay on the mountain the Lord descended in the form of a consuming fire. From a human point of view, no one could stay in the presence of such a God and live. For forty days, however, Moses would remain there. During this time, the Lord gave Moses instructions for the construction of the tabernacle. Moses never tried to describe these moments with the Lord. How could one put into words an experience that went beyond human imagination?

The third time Moses went to the top of the mountain to meet with God is recorded in Exodus 34. On that occasion a great cloud descended, and the Lord spoke to His servant Moses. For 40 days Moses neither ate nor drank. The Lord strengthened him during that time. After these forty days on the mountain Moses returned to the camp. He did not know it at the time, but his face glowed with the radiance of the Lord his God. Seeing the glory of God revealed in the face of Moses made the people afraid. Moses was obliged to cover his face to hide its radiance.

The last time Moses went to the top of the mountain was just before his death. This time it was not Mount Sinai, but Mount Nebo. There on Mount Nebo God showed Moses, His friend, the land that his people would inherit. It was here that, for the last time, Moses would speak to his God in his earthly body. This time the mountain became his grave. Moses never came down from that mountain. From there he went directly into the presence of the Lord for eternity.

The Bible tells us concerning Moses:

10 And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,  
11 none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land,  
12 and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel. (Deuteronomy 34)

Never in the history of humanity was there a man who enjoyed such a close communion with his God. Never had the earth seen the power of God revealed through one individual as it did in the person of Moses.

Exodus 33.11 tells us:

11 Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. (Exodus 33)

This relationship was very special indeed. It was cultivated through times of intense fellowship on the mountain and in daily walking with his Creator.

It is rare to find men and woman like Moses. For the most part, we are like the people of Israel at the foot of the mountain standing in awe of God from a distance. It is true that even at the foot of the mountain the people of God were richly blessed. They saw the glory of the Lord, they heard His voice, they saw the lightning and the dark clouds. Those who stood at the foot of the mountain were greatly touched by this experience.

While there are rich blessings at the foot of the mountain, how wonderful it would be to venture yet a little further toward the peak. Is this possible? Aaron and the elders could only approach by special invitation of God. What about us? Do we have to content ourselves to stay at the foot of the mountain? Have we not been invited to enter the presence of God? Through the death of Christ Jesus, the door has been opened for all us to enter the presence of the Father. Hebrews 10.19-22 tells us:

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10)

The writer to the Hebrews would go on to say:

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4)

The invitation goes out to all who stand at the foot of the mountain. All that remains is for us to accept the invitation and boldly make the climb. Will you cry out to God today and say: "Lord, for too long now I have been content to

stay at the foot of the mountain? I have been happy to keep my distance. Today, however, I hear Your call and dare to enter Your presence."

The Lord challenges every one of us through the life of His servant Moses to a deeper relationship with Himself. Does that example of Moses stir up within you a desire for a closer walk with God? He invites you into His presence. Let us not be content to stand at the foot of the mountain when we have been invited into His presence.

For Consideration:

- How was Moses' relationship with God cultivated by his times on the mountaintop?
- What impact do you suppose these times with God had on the life and ministry of Moses? Can we have an impact in our ministry if we do not have a relationship with God?
- How would you describe your relationship with God? It is possible for you to enjoy a deeper relationship with God?
- What role did the Lord Jesus play in enabling us to enter a deeper and more intimate relationship with God?
- What do you suppose needs to happen for you to enjoy deeper intimacy with God? What stands between you and this relationship?

For Prayer:

- Thank the Lord for the wonderful example we have in the person of Moses and His walk with God.
- Thank the Lord Jesus that He laid down His life to pay the penalty for our sin, so that we could enter a relationship with Him.
- Ask the Lord for forgive you for times when you have been content to know God at a distance. Ask Him to give you a deeper passion for Him and to experience Him in a more intimate and personal way.



# Chapter 12 - The Meekness of Moses

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Read Exodus 32.7-14; Numbers 12.1-13; 14.10-20

Moses had been forty days in the presence of God. This time with God was something words could not describe. No prophet had ever experienced such closeness. I am sure Moses was in no hurry to return to the mundane affairs of life in the camp. The Israelites, however, seeing that Moses was not returning, began to worry. They feared the God of Moses. They wondered if Moses was ever going to return. Had the God of consuming fire and deep cloud devoured him? Was this the kind of God they wanted? This was a God they could not control, predict or explain. As they reflected on this, they decided to ask Aaron to make them another god—one they could see and touch and one that would not consume them.

The Bible tells us that Aaron took the people's golden earrings, melted them, made a golden calf and presented it to them. The Israelites were happy with their new god. They proclaimed a celebration in its honour. The Bible tells us that this celebration was a time for the people to eat, drink

and to do what pleased them (Exodus 32:6). In doing so, they turned their backs on the God who had brought them out of the bondage of Egypt.

Moses' glorious communion with God was interrupted by what took place in the Israelite camp. God saw what was happening and commanded him to return to his people. He told Moses that He was going to destroy the Israelite nation and, through him, build an even greater nation. Moses alone was found worthy of being the father of this new people of God. After hearing the intentions of God, however, Moses cried out:

11 ... "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" (Exodus 32)

Moses realized that the sins of the people were serious but begged God to show mercy. With a heart, broken for his people, Moses petitions God to forgive them. The Lord heard that prayer and relented of the evil He wanted to do (Exodus 32:14).

Moses would often intercede in this manner for his people. In Numbers 12, Miriam and Aaron spoke out against his

decision to marry a Cushite woman. The anger of the Lord broke out against Miriam because of her grumbling and He struck her with leprosy. Notice the response of Moses? "Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee" (Numbers 12:13). Would that have been your response? We do not know what Miriam said about Moses and his wife, but we can imagine what our own response would have been in a similar situation. Justice had been done. Miriam had lacked respect for a man of God. She had insulted the woman that Moses loved. Her punishment was merited. Moses, however, pleaded with God for her pardon.

The author of the book of Numbers introduced this story about Miriam grumbling about Moses by telling his readers:

3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. (Numbers 12)

This story is an example of the meekness of Moses towards those who did him wrong. He did not get angry with his sister Miriam for her insult. He continued to seek her wellbeing despite what she said about him and his wife.

In Numbers 14, twelve spies returned from spying out the land of Canaan. They returned with a report of giants and fortified cities. Hearing this, the Hebrews were discouraged, believing that they did not have any chance against such enemies. This resulted in them grumbling against Moses and Aaron, their leaders. The Bible tells us that they even spoke of stoning Moses for taking them into the wilderness to die (verse 10). When God saw the attitude of the people, He was angered and said:

11 ... "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." (Numbers 14)

Moses too was disappointed with the response of the people and their lack of trust in God and His ability to deliver them. He also feared for his life for he knew that the people were ready to stone him. He cried out to God, however, not for his own protection, but for the protection of those who sought his life and the glory of the name of their God. Crying out to God on their behalf he said:

13 But Moses said to the Lord, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, 14 and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O Lord, are in the midst of this people. For you, O Lord, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, 16 'It is because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.'" (Numbers 14)

God again heard the prayer of Moses' and answered: "I have pardoned, according to your word" (Numbers 14:20). We are left to wonder what would have happened had Moses not cried out for the life of those who sought to stone him.

Moses was a man who prayed for those who offended him. He shows a great capacity to love with unconditional love. In each of the situations we have examined above, Moses is proven to be a man of tremendous patience in his dealings with his fellow man. His life is an example of what Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5)

The love Jesus speaks about here is exemplified in the life of Moses. When the patience of others would have worn thin, Moses' remained strong and devoted to those who offended and hurt him.

Jesus prayed for the soldiers who crucified Him saying: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). When the enraged crowd picked up stones to stone him, Steven cried out "Lord do not hold this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). It is never easy to pray for and bless those who persecute us. These examples, however, ought to challenge us.

It is important to note that the prayers of Moses for those who had wronged him were not mere words. When he

prayed that the Lord would forgive, he meant it with all his heart. Listen to his prayer in Exodus 32 after the people had made the golden calf:

31 So Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written." 33 But the Lord said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book." (Exodus 32)

"Lord," he prays, "if you won't forgive than let me die." There is a sense here that Moses is asking God to take his life instead of theirs. He was willing to die for them. He was willing to take their punishment on himself. There is real intensity in the words of Moses.

Years later the apostle Paul prayed a similar prayer in Romans 9:

1 I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit— 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. (Romans 9)

Paul would have surrendered his own life if it was possible for the sake of the Israelites. His passion for them was such that he would have given everything, if by doing so they could come to know the Lord Jesus.

Moses demonstrates the heart of a true pastor for his people. He is insulted but does not retaliate in anger or revenge. He accepts the insults of the people he serves and continues to pray for them and minister to their needs. He willingly sacrifices himself and his time to care for the people God has given him.

In an age where church leaders expect people to respect and honour them, we would do well to remember the example of Moses. Apart from the Lord Jesus, there was no one who enjoyed such a relationship with God or demonstrated His power as Moses did. Yet, he was willing to sacrifice all he had for the people he served. He endured their insults and grumbling and was willing to lay down his life for them. The meekness and humility of Moses is one we would do well to seek in our lives and ministries as well. How we need to see men and women today who reject a self-serving attitude in favour of the meek and humble attitude of Moses that willingly forgave and continued to serve his people. It is truly a clear example of what Christ has done for us. Shall we who have been treated with such tenderness, not demonstrate this same love to others?

#### For Consideration:

- How does Moses intercede for his people? What would have been the result if Moses had not interceded for them?
- How does Moses respond to those who have offended him? Have you ever been offended by someone? What was your response?

- What are you willing to sacrifice for the sake of those who have offended you?
- Does Moses high position and calling hinder his ministry to people? Is it possible for us to think too highly of ourselves and our position that we are not willing to make the sacrifices necessary for others?
- How does Moses demonstrate his humility and meekness in ministry?

For Prayer:

- Thank the Lord that He willingly sacrificed everything for you.
- Ask God to give you more meekness. Ask him to help you to take your eyes off yourself so that you can more effectively minister to those around you.
- If you have been offended by others, ask the Lord to give you grace to forgive and bless those who have offended you. Ask Him to show you how you can minister to them in their need.

# Chapter 13 - If Your Presence Does Not Go with Me

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Read Exodus 33.1-23

In the last chapter, we saw how Israel had angered her God by making a golden calf. This so angered the Lord that he told Moses that He would consume the people and make a great nation from Moses' descendants (see Exodus 32:9-10). Moses interceded for the people and God agreed to forgive them. As Exodus 33 begins the Lord commanded Moses and the people to continue their voyage to the Promised Land. He explained to them, however, that while He would send His angel before them to accompany them on their journey, He Himself, would not go with them lest He consume them on the way because of their sin.

1 The Lord said to Moses, "Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your offspring I will give it.' 2 I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 3 Go up to a land flowing with

milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.” (Exodus 33)

Consider this for a moment. God was going to open the way to the Promised Land for His people. More than this, however, He would send His angel before them to prepare the way by driving out their enemies. The only problem was that He personally would not make His presence known among them as they travelled.

Remember that the reason the people of God had made a calf-god was because they were not sure that they wanted to deal with a God of consuming fire. Despite their sin, God chose to give His people the land He promised their ancestors and His angel to smooth the way to that land. I have often been surprised to see the response Israel to this word of God.

Upon hearing that the Lord would not go with them, the people mourned. While they were not an obedient people they still wanted the Lord's blessing. They wanted God to be faithful to His end of the covenant relation without having to meet up to their end. They were sincerely grieved to see that God would not, Himself, be with them. While God had justly withdrawn His presence from His people, upon seeing their grief He said to Moses:

4 When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. 5 For the Lord had said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.’” (Exodus 33)

Notice that the people mourned when they heard that God was angry with them and would not reveal His presence among them. How many of us would have such a response? There are believers who live their lives content to know that they are going to heaven and that God will protect and keep them on the way. These believers, however, are not aware of the presence of God in their everyday activities. They live each day as if everything depended on them. They do not recognize the leading of God nor do they see God in the blessings of life. They do not experience true intimacy with God as they walk through the struggles of life nor do they know His empowering in their ministry. For these believers, God is distant and far removed from their everyday life. For them, this is the normal Christian life.

Israel, however, had experienced the wonderful leading of God as He moved before them in a cloudy pillar. They had seen His provision of manna every day. They had watched Him part the waters and destroy their enemies. These were normal events in the life of the people of Israel. To think that this God was angry with them and would not make His presence known as they travelled was cause for great mourning and fear.

What is of interest to us here is the response of Moses to these words of God. Moses entered the tent of meeting to speak with God. That day Moses spoke boldly. He asked God to explain His intentions:

12 Moses said to the Lord, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' 13 Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that

I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." (Exodus 33)

"Lord," said Moses, "You have told me that you want me to lead this people to the Promised Land. You tell me that I have found grace in your eyes, but you are not telling me everything. You are keeping things from me. Explain to me your intentions. Why are you not coming with us? Who are you sending in your place?"

Moses dared to ask God to explain His actions. He was devastated when he heard that the Lord, would not go with them. He boldly exposes his heart to God. While it is not expressly stated, it seems to me that Moses is really asking the Lord to change His mind.

After hearing the prayer of Moses, the Lord told him: "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Exodus 33:14). God heard the prayer of Moses for the people. In response to Moses' pleading, God's decision is reversed. His presence would go with His people. Moses is very honest with God here. He dares to ask Him to explain His ways. He calls on Him to change His revealed intentions. The Lord seems to respect this boldness and grants him the desire of his heart.

Even more astounding than the boldness of Moses in this passage is the response of Moses to the Lord when He tells him that His presence would go before them after all. Moses responds in Exodus 33:15: "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here." (Exodus 33:15). What audacity on the part of Moses! God had already granted His request and now Moses responds by saying "If you don't go with us Lord don't even bother sending us from here." I can almost hear the thunder of God's

wrath as He responds in anger to this seeming insolence of His servant. Instead of anger, however, God responds by saying:

17 ... "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." (Exodus 33)

The question I ask myself here is this: Why did Moses speak so boldly in this matter? It is obvious that this was a very important matter to Moses. In fact, he literally told God that he did not want to leave that place if God's personal presence did not go with them. Moses understood something that we often forget in our age of education and experience. He understood his need of God. As he considered his leadership to that point, he understood that he could not have led this people without the presence of God to guide and empower him. The plagues that brought Egypt to its knees had nothing to do with Moses or his skill. The power that held back the waters to let the people cross on dry land was not Moses' power. The ability to bring water from a dry rock was a miracle of God. The food that lined the desert floor was not cultivated and cared for by Moses. All these things were the result of the presence of God and His power at work. Were it not for the presence of God, the children of Israel would still be in Egypt. Moses owed everything to God and presence. Moses could not imagine trying to lead the people without that presence of God to guide and empower. In fact, he would go on to say:

16 "For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth? (Exodus 33)

The words of Moses are important. How will anyone know that we are the people of God if the presence of God is not with us and in us? This is what distinguishes us from the unbeliever. The presence of God's Spirit in the believer is what makes him or her distinct from all other people. Moses does not rely on his own wisdom and skill. He knew full well how much He needed the Lord God. God had given him a ministry that was well beyond his human capacity. He did not have the wisdom or ability necessary to lead the people through the wilderness. He did not hesitate to admit this. His dependence was on the Lord God for every decision and circumstance they encountered. He would not dare attempt to lead the people without the clear sense of God's presence with him every step of the way.

Have we come to a place in our lives where we trust our own reasoning more than the leading of God's Spirit? Have we come to believe that our education will take us anywhere we want to go? Have we failed to understand our need of God in all things? Where are those, who like Moses will refuse to step out if God's presence does not go with them. How many works have been destroyed by human wisdom and effort? How many people has Satan brought down because they failed to see their need of God? Moses had no pretensions about his own ability. He knew that without God, he would surely fail. May the Lord give us that same attitude today.

For Consideration:

- Why do you need God? Do how you live your life and exercise your ministry show that you need God?

- What are the dangers of attempting to live and minister without knowing the presence and leading of God?
- What evidence is there in your life and ministry of the presence of God?
- Are you content to know that you will go to heaven and that God will protect you, but not know His personal presence each day?
- How does knowing the personal presence of God in everything we do change how we live our Christian life? What blessings are there in knowing that presence in your daily routine?

For Prayer:

- Ask the Lord to show you your need of Him in your personal life and ministry.
- Ask God to forgive you for the times you have lived your life without truly seeking Him.
- Ask God to reveal His presence in you and in your ministry so that those around will see that you belong to Him and that He is in you.



# Chapter 14 - Speak to the Rock

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Read Numbers 20.1-13

In Numbers 20 we read of an occasion when the people of God found themselves without water to drink in the desert. Numbers 20 tells us that they assembled against Moses and Aaron:

2 Now there was no water for the congregation.  
And they assembled themselves together against  
Moses and against Aaron. (Numbers 20)

This was not the first time they had been in this situation. In Exodus 17, when the people were in the region of Rephidim, they had experienced a similar situation. On that occasion, the people quarrelled with Moses and accused him of bringing them into the desert to kill them (see Exodus 17:2-3). When Moses spoke to God about this, He told him to take his staff and strike a certain rock. When Moses obeyed, water gushed out from that rock providing water for the nation to drink.

This time, the people were in the region of Kadesh, north of Rephidim when they experienced the same thing once again. As the people assembled against Moses and Aaron their complaint this time is more about the inconvenience

and discomfort they were experiencing because this had happened again:

3 And the people quarrelled with Moses and said, "Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord! 4 Why have you brought the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? 5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink." (Numbers 20)

The people of Israel saw the wilderness as an evil place with no water, grain, figs, vines or pomegranates. Notice how they express how it would be better to be dead than to be in such a barren place.

When Moses and Aaron heard the complaint of the people, they withdrew to the tent of the Lord to seek His wisdom. Here the Lord revealed the solution to the problem. He asked Moses to call the people together. In their presence, he was to speak to a certain rock and command it bring forth water. God would hear that request and provide water from the rock for the people to drink.

As we have already mentioned, this was not the first time Moses had been used to bring water from a rock. This time, however, the command of the Lord was different:

8 "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle (Numbers 20)

The first time Moses did this, God instructed him to strike the rock (Exodus 17:6). This time, however, the clear command of God was to speak to the rock.

Moses assembled the people as the Lord had commanded. It is obvious from his words that Moses was not happy with the people (see Numbers 20:10). This was not the first time that the people had lacked confidence in their God. God had always come to their rescue but the people continued to complain and lacked faith in Him. In his anger, Moses told them: "Shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" (Numbers 20:10). In other words, he was saying something like this: "Don't you understand the God we serve? Is anything impossible for him? Must I bring forth water out of this dry rock to show you that God will provide for your needs?" After speaking to the people in this manner, Moses struck the rock two times with his staff and water flowed out abundantly for the people to drink (Numbers 20:11).

Remember that the Lord had asked Moses to speak to the rock. Moses disobeyed the direct command of the Lord and struck the rock instead. Why did Moses disregard this command of the Lord? Was he depending on his experience the last time he had brought water out of the rock? Maybe he had not really listened to the Lord when He told him what he wanted him to do. He had already brought water out of a rock—he knew what to do. When we think we know the answer, the temptation is not to listen to the instructions. While we do not know why Moses did not obey the instructions of God, he was disobedient.

It would be easy to say that what Moses did was not really a serious sin. He struck the rock rather than speaking to it. Surely there are worse sins than this. In the eyes of God, however, Moses had disobeyed. Because of his sin, God

told him that he would not take His people into the Promised Land. After so many years of working to this end, Moses was never going to set foot in the land he had longed to see. What a punishment! This punishment would be easy to understand if Moses had committed adultery or murder. All he had done was to strike a rock. Was his punishment too severe?

God told Adam and Eve that while they were free to eat of every tree in the Garden of Eden, they were not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. One day, Eve, was tempted by Satan and picked one of the fruit from the forbidden tree and ate it. She gave the fruit to her husband and he ate it as well. Because of their disobedience, the Lord chased them from the Garden of Eden. Sin entered the world by means of that act of disobedience and all of humanity from that point on was set on the road that led to hell and eternal separation from God. All this came about because Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. (See Genesis 3).

During the conquest of Jericho, a man by the name of Achan found several objects he coveted among the possessions of the inhabitants of the city. Despite the command of the Lord to destroy everything and to take no spoil, Achan felt that there would be no harm in taking just a few small objects. Compared to the riches in Jericho, what he took was like a drop of water in a vast ocean. When God saw what he did, He withdrew from His people. The army was left with no strength to face their enemies. They were defeated in the little town of Ai because God's presence was no longer with them.

What do we learn from all of this? God wants our complete obedience. Disobedience in even the smallest area of our lives is a serious matter. The apostle James tells us:

10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. (James 2)

God does not put our sins on a scale to weigh them. If you have sinned in the smallest area of your life you are as guilty as he who has sinned much. There is no consolation in the fact that I am less a sinner than my brother. My small sin merits the same eternal punishment as his "bigger" sins. I am no better than him for I too have turned my back on God.

What is interesting in this passage is that, despite the sin of Moses, the Lord still brings water out of the rock. Moses had been unfaithful to the Lord but God had remained faithful to His people. The blessing of God on His people came despite Moses disregard for the Lord's command. The blessing, however, did not justify the disobedience. Moses would still answer to God.

We serve a God who does not always treat us as we deserve:

10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
or repay us according to our iniquities.

11 For as high as the heavens are above the  
earth,

so great is his steadfast love toward those who  
fear him;

12 as far as the east is from the west,  
so far does he remove our transgressions from  
us.

13 As a father shows compassion to his children,  
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear  
him. (Psalm 103)

Writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul would say:

13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful—  
for he cannot deny himself. (2 Timothy 2)

Nothing can change the faithfulness of God toward us. This is what Moses experienced that day as he stood before that rock. He was guilty before God and he knew it. Before all the people he had committed a terrible sin. He had accused them of unfaithfulness and a few minutes later he found himself committing that very same sin. He was as guilty as they were. Despite his failure and disobedience, there at his feet flowed the fresh water of God's faithfulness. The guilty sinner soaked in the water of God's blessing.

Our God is a God of compassion and mercy. He does not treat us according to our sins. He is a God who blesses us despite our shortcomings. He is a God who will never abandon us even when we abandon Him. How we need to thank God for His compassion and mercy.

That day, Moses stood guilty before God. His experience had gotten in the way of obedience. He failed to carefully obey God in every way. He learned that day just how easy it was to fall. He stood before the people, condemning them for their rebellion but he himself was guilty of that very same sin.

The Lord Jesus told a parable of a master who set out on a journey and gave his servant the responsibility of caring for his estate. He concludes His parable with the words:

47 And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. 48 But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was

given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. (Luke 12)

The phrase, “everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more,” is very significant. We are accountable to God for all that he entrusts into our care. Moses had the privilege of entering the presence of God. As wonderful as this was, it placed him under an intense obligation. God had given him a position of authority in the land, but that authority brought great responsibility. The apostle James would say:

1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. (James 3)

Those who teach and preach the word of God, will be judged with greater strictness if they disregard themselves what they teach. How easy it is for us to desire positions of honour and responsibility. How careful we need to be however, as we take on these roles. Moses let down his guard and suffered the consequences. As meek as he was, he was humbled before the people. He understood that day, just how important it was to walk in complete surrender and obedience. He learned just how easy it was to fall short.

Moses teaches us how important it is to discern the leading and direction of the Lord. He shows us how important it is to be faithful in even the seemingly small details. He reminds us that when we have been entrusted with a great ministry, we must be even more diligent for with great authority comes great responsibility.

Moses would never enter the land promised to his fathers. He would climb to the top of Mount Nebo and from there see the vastness and beauty of the land but God would take his life that day. His earthly task completed, Moses would enter His eternal rest and experience the wonder, grace and compassion of a God who had sustained him despite his hesitations and disobedience. His life is an example of a simple and meek man, who struggled with his own ability. He was not perfect, but he was a man who sought God and trusted God in a ministry that was too big for him personally. May God give us grace to be like Moses.

For Consideration:

- Does God promise that life under His leading will be easy? What are some of the struggles you have faced as you follow the Lord?
- Have you ever found yourself trusting your experience rather than the leading of the Lord? How did this get Moses into trouble?
- Does God always do things the same way? Why is it important that we seek the Lord's leading in all things?
- What does this passage teach us about obedience to the Lord in even the seemingly small details?
- Why do we see some sins as being worse than others? Does God see sin in this way?

- What does this passage teach us about the blessing of God despite our disobedience and failure? Can we measure our success by the blessing of God on our ministry?
- What does this passage teach us about the obligation placed on those who have been given great authority?

### For Prayer

- Ask the Lord to keep you from grumbling when things are difficult in life and ministry. Ask for grace to trust Him in those times.
- Ask God to teach you how to discern His leading. Ask Him to help you to place more confidence in His leading than in your own skills and experience.
- Thank the Lord that despite your failure, He has often blessed you and your ministry.
- What authority has the Lord given you in ministry? What is His calling on your life? Ask Him to help you to take this matter very seriously. Ask Him to help you to be diligent and obedient in the use of your gifts and in the exercise of your calling.



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