

The Life Of Moses

Introduction. Moses became the voice of Israel and the conscience of a pilgrim nation at odds with itself. His life was one of wisdom, and a life of wisdom pleases God (Proverbs 2:10-11). In Hebrews 11:23-29, the writer explained how much wisdom and faith Moses manifested in his life.

Moses demonstrated tremendous wisdom as he chooses to look beyond immediate pleasures to see God's plan for him and its less tangible, but more lasting, rewards. His courage in the face of adversity and persecution is also evidence of wisdom, a wise trust that God was with him as long as he was submissive. And surely we can see great wisdom in his leadership. He is an example for parents, preachers, elders, and teachers who have influence over young minds today.

I. Wisdom in Farsightedness

A. A charge to keep.

1. The account of Moses actually begins in Genesis, as a drought afflicts the homeland of the patriarchs, forcing them to move to Egypt to find sustenance.
 - a) When they arrive, Joseph has the ear of the Pharaoh and makes their stay a happy one, but they stay long enough to outlive that Pharaoh and multiply in the land, so that succeeding generations began to fear they would try to take over.
 - b) This bigotry led the new Pharaoh to enslave the Hebrews and give them hard labor; their cries came up to God, who decided it was time to redeem them from bondage and start them on their journey to the land he promised to Abraham.
2. The Lord also recognized that He would need to delegate leadership of this flight to a trustworthy man on earth, someone who could have the ear of the new Pharaoh and the faith of the Hebrew people.
 - a) Moses was born to be just such a man, but at a time in which Hebrew boys drew their first breaths under a death warrant from the Pharaoh who decreed their extermination (Exodus 2:1-10).
 - b) Moses established himself as a familiar face in the Egyptian court, a surviving Hebrew with a charge to keep (Exodus 3:1-10).
3. The Hebrew writer reminds us that, although Moses was chosen for this great task, he had the ability to refuse.
 - a) It appears he tried to talk God into finding someone else, coming up with all sorts of excuses, but God knew better.
 - b) Hebrews 11 tells us that he refused any longer to be known as Pharaoh's grandson, choosing instead to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoying the passing pleasures of sin.

B. Servants of God are farsighted.

1. The devil is expert at making the pleasures of sin seem almost irresistible and justifiable, and diminishing the hope of heaven with the hammer of time.
2. It takes a special person to forgo immediate gratification of his basest impulses because he is waiting and looking for something better (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:7).

- a) We can imagine Moses and his band of Hebrews making that trek from Egypt to Canaan, taking a detour around the Philistines before complaining their way into 40 years of wandering in a wilderness.
 - b) While so many others are falling along the way, Moses and a few others have that image of Canaan so etched on their minds that nothing is strong enough to distract them.
3. There is evidence in our lives that would show we have this wisdom of farsightedness.
- a) Where is your treasure (Matthew 6:19-21)?
 - b) What sort of inheritance thrills your soul (1 Peter 1:3-5)?
 - c) How comfortable are you in a place of corruption (1 Peter 2:9-12)?
 - d) Knowing that heaven is a realm of endless worship service, how well are you preparing yourself whenever the saints assemble today?
 - e) Does heaven mean to you what Canaan meant to Moses?
- C. The pleasures of sin are passing.
- 1. In Pharaoh's court, Moses could have enjoyed all the wickedness he could handle, but he made the same decision that we all must make when we choose to cast off the works of darkness and put on Christ and the armor of light (Romans 13:11-14).
 - 2. Every indulgence of the impulses of the flesh brings only temporary gratification, which quickly fades and leaves behind only remorse in its wake.
 - 3. This age is perilous in that men have become lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (2 Timothy 3:4).
 - a) The joys of inebriation last but a moment compared to the harm done to family, mind, and body.
 - b) The joys of fornication last but a moment compared to the anguish of an unwanted pregnancy, a ruined reputation, and forfeiting the grace of God.
 - c) The joys of gossip last but a moment compared to the division sown in the church, harm done to a brother, and insult against the Holy Spirit.
 - 4. Yet the devil deceives us into thinking that one time won't hurt or that no one will ever know, but God knows.
 - a) As Moses was called to lead Israel, we have been called to follow and as Christians, have taken up that charge.
 - b) Should we take our hands off the plow and look back to the Egypt of our sinful life, we fail that charge and make ourselves useless to the God of heaven who called us and sanctified us.

II. Wisdom In Courage

A. Overcoming self-doubt.

- 1. When God called Moses, the man doubted that he was really able to do such a great work.
 - a) He expresses fear that no one would believe he met God in a bush.
 - b) Then he says he is afraid that no one would listen to him.
 - c) Then he claims that he lacks enough eloquence to inspire the people.
 - d) Finally, with all those doubts answered, he begs God still to find somebody else (Exodus 4:14-17).

2. As Isaiah answered God, "Here am I, send me" (Isaiah 6:8), Moses answers, "Here am I, send somebody else!"
 - a) He is like the man from the parable who tells his father he will not go and do something, but repents and does after all (Matthew 21:28-29).
 - b) Despite his slow start, Moses overcomes all his shortcomings, real and imagined, and leads his people.
 3. Some churches are plagued by the self-doubt of their members.
 - a) There is no one to teach Bible classes or fill in at the pulpit, for everyone is afraid that he is not eloquent enough or that no one will listen.
 - b) There is no one to do personal work for everyone is afraid that no one will believe they are really carrying the word of God.
 - c) Even when every doubt is answered, many can be heard to exclaim, "Here am I, send someone else."
 - d) But if everybody expects somebody else to get something done, nothing will ever be accomplished.
- B. No spirit of fear.
1. Moses was given the unenviable task of confronting Pharaoh with God's demand to let His people go, knowing ahead of time that the man would not (Exodus 3:18-19).
 2. With the power of God behind him, Moses confronts Pharaoh, succeeds in freeing the Hebrews on the Passover night, and leads them to the Red Sea.
 - a) To the Egyptians, the sight of that great body of water impeding their slaves' escape was the end.
 - b) To Moses it was miraculous deliverance, as he lifted his arms and parted the Sea to allow Israel to continue and their pursuers to be drowned.
 3. What kind of man does it take to have such faith, take such risks, and exhibit complete mastery over doubt?
 4. It takes a person determined that his faith will move the mountains of persecution and overcome a world of temptation (2 Timothy 1:7).
 - a) God sealed and knows His people (2 Timothy 2:19).
 - b) What is there to fear (Romans 8:31-39)?

III. Wisdom In Leadership

- A. Dealing with complaints.
1. Almost before the spray of the Red Sea dried from their hair, the Hebrews started complaining about their conditions (Exodus 16:2-3).
 2. Quite clearly, you take Israel out of Egypt, but you can't always take the Egypt out of Israel.
 - a) These people were literally begging to give up the pilgrimage toward Canaan that they might return.
 - b) We were slaves to sin but were redeemed by the gospel; we cannot become entangled again in the devil's web, nostalgic about that buried old man's lifestyle, and drift back into our former ways (Romans 6:16-19; 2 Peter 2:20-22).

3. Here is where leadership and influence play such an important role.
 - a) Elders must feed the flock with manna from heaven — effective Bible classes and book, chapter, and verse preaching, and offering themselves whenever and however needed.
 - b) Class teachers must make it plain and impassioned, and be good examples.
 - c) Preachers give the flock what it needs, not always what it wants.
- B. Dealing with sin in the camp.
 1. Moses was over and over again forced to deal with sin in his camp — they made a molten calf, they committed adultery, they threatened his authority.
 2. Today, God has delegated oversight of local churches to the elders, who must not only feed the flock, but also be watchful and chasten it when necessary.
 - a) Provide preaching that has rebuke as well as exhortation.
 - b) Treat everyone fairly and maintain the church's purity with impartiality.
- C. Dealing with personal failure.
 1. With so much wisdom, Moses failed on one famous occasion; he took credit for a great miracle and left none for God (Numbers 20:7-12).
 2. Moses was punished harshly, in that his only glimpse of Canaan was from the other side of the river; he died before he could enter it (Deuteronomy 3:23-29).
 3. Moses knew this would be his fate some time before he reached Canaan, but he did not quit.
 - a) We will all have to deal with some personal failure, even those of us who are elders, preachers, and teachers.
 - b) Will we curl up in a ball and quit or fight on (Philippians 3:13-14)?
 - c) Our Canaan is still accessible if it means that much to us.

Conclusion. Moses is one of the greatest figures in all of history. He has few peers. The mission of Moses, the servant of the Lord, had to come to an end. Moses had believed in it; he had preached it; he had prayed for it; he had worked and fought for it. Now within reach and view of Canaan he must lay himself down to die.

We close our study with the words of Joseph W. Kemp about Moses: "Moses never appears quite so fine, noble, and practical as in Deuteronomy. His personal history comes out in great prominence, and with a solid grandeur, a calm earnestness, an affectionate persuasiveness, an unflinching fidelity to truth, a singleness of aim, and unselfishness of purpose; which command the most reverent attention, bespeak the most intense sympathy, and endorse to the fullest extent the statement of Divine inspiration: 'There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face' (Deuteronomy 34:10)."

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