

Moses, Servant Of God

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I am going to continue this series on Deuteronomy by focusing today on the man God used to write it and to deliver it so that we can learn something from his example, and hopefully be better prepared for the Kingdom of God than we would ever be without it. Let me tell you, Moses was quite a man.

Deuteronomy 34:5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

We are going to begin with the end of the man's life, and we will branch out from here to the important word "servant." He is called "God's servant," "My servant," "The servant of the Lord" when some other person is describing him. This term "servant" is applied to him more than any other single person in the Bible, including Jesus.

The Hebrew verbal root for "servant" means "to work." It is derived from that verbal root. The English term indicates one who expresses submission to another, and this submission is usually expressed in the person's labors—not necessarily verbally, but his activities. The conduct of his life determines this submission. The term usually indicates a person of low degree, employed to assist a master at his work, and thus the term defined Moses' relationship to God. In reality, Moses was anything but a man of low degree; but nonetheless, it accurately fits Moses as a person to whom a great deal of honor is due, because a servant of the Lord is a very honorable position, and his honor is certainly something that should be given in very fine terms.

In Hebrews 11, we have all of these famous personalities mentioned, along with the things that they did.

Hebrews 11:24-28 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

We talk in terms today of people who have given their life to the Lord, but Moses is outstanding in this regard in circumstances and to a degree that few can match. Servants are frequently thought of in this world as being nobody, but right in these verses we begin to get an inkling of the category Moses belongs in. Those who research into these things very seriously as part of their life's work, to them these verses describe the significant major spiritual acts by the man they calculate, at least as best they possibly can, who gave up, who sacrificed more than any other person in the Bible in order to become, we will call it, a servant of God.

From here we are going to go to the book of Acts and look at a couple of verses in chapter 7. The speaker is Stephen, and he is telling the people about some of the acts of God. Included in this he describes Israel's history and their relationship with God.

Acts 7:20-22 At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

From the very beginning of his life he gave many indications of being a "*somebody*"—an extraordinary leader in many capacities and walks of life. The experiences he had are examples to learn from.

To some degree, everybody is a leader. That is one reason why we have to look at this man's life from this direction. This is a fact that should never be dismissed as irrelevant. Even if you feel you are not a leader now, God's calling involves you *becoming* a leader. But please be assured you are a leader already. You are stepping out away from the world, and that is leadership in action. Not many are following you at this time, but nonetheless it is a step in the same direction that Moses had to trod at one time as well.

By any way we could evaluate Moses, he was a great leader. Many types of leadership exist. Types we might name would be something like this: submissive leadership, realistic leadership, constant leadership, sacrificial leadership, vulnerable leadership, courageous and bold leadership. In every one of these areas, the Bible shows him using these qualities as a servant of God. It is my opinion anyway that Moses, among men, comes pretty close to being about as complete a package that we will ever have the opportunity to learn from. Even when compared to such other outstanding biblical

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leaders as Enoch, or Noah, or Abraham, or Joseph, or David, Moses still stands out almost in a class by himself, as we will see as we progress.

I have expressed a number of times that over the long haul of history, the most important people in the community are its preachers, not the king. My authority for this is the Bible. Whom has God always sent to straighten things out? It is preachers, or as we might say, the Old Testament prophets. That is the way God has chosen to do things. He is showing us that the most important area of life and the success in life for a single individual (and the nation as well) is in the content of their morals and how those things are expressed in daily life. So the greatness of a nation is determined by its conduct in relation to God and His standard.

Now the community standard-bearer—the one always used by God to deliver His message and standard establishing the conduct of the nation—is preachers, whatever rank one might assign them. I go into this because Moses was a preacher, called a prophet. Today he would be a preacher. They might have assigned another rank to him, but there is no doubt the man was a preacher.

God used a preacher to establish the nation, and then the other offices fell into place. But in order to get Israel started off on the right foot, with the right standard for moral and spiritual conduct, He used a preacher, not the king. So God did not raise up a great military leader, a great political leader. He raised up a preacher, and that was the beginning of that principle that establishes what I just told you.

It is the preacher who bears the heaviest responsibility not only of delivering the message, but living it as well. He is one crying aloud and sparing not in order to keep God's spiritual and moral standards in peoples' minds, because, as we are learning from the sermons, we forget awfully easily. Israel shows that. Richard went into that in his sermon. If a preacher fails in carrying out this responsibility, the nation is headed down.

Sometime back about 1930, the preachers in the United States of America began giving up their authority, little by little, over the moral conduct of people, until now, in many cases, they are nothing any greater than a social organization that meets on Sunday and has a little bit of religion mixed in with it. They are not charging people with their responsibilities, by and large—the responsibility they have toward God.

We are going to go back to Deuteronomy 34, verse 5.

Deuteronomy 34:5 So Moses the servant of the LOORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LOORD.

Deuteronomy 34:10-12 But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

These descriptions indicate an outstanding leader having an exceptionally intimate relationship with God, not merely as a servant, but also as a friend. That he carried out his responsibilities well becomes obvious as one continues to read. He became the prophet against which all others are measured. We are excluding Christ here. We are just talking about the prophets God appointed apart from Jesus Christ.

It is in the broad high-level combination and difficulty of those responsibilities that he was assigned by God to operate in that his uniqueness vividly comes to the fore. Humanly, he was the founder of a new nation consisting almost entirely of recalcitrant slave people. He was its prime minister, the lead legislator, the chief judge of the supreme court all rolled into one. Besides that, he was a man of outstanding character. He was far more than merely capable.

He performed these heavy responsibilities with an unusually virtuous character seldom found among human leaders operating in such a high level, and in such circumstances fulfilling, in most cases, nothing more than an inflated ego. Moses seems to have almost no ego, which is really rare.

If it were not God saying this, maybe we could scoff. But this is God, and His word is true.

Numbers 12:3 Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.

He was not just humble. He was **very** humble. What a commendation coming from God!

This statement does not mean he was without flaw. On the contrary, he seems to be a man who was well aware of his flaws. Maybe it was because he was well aware of them, and was honest with himself in admitting that he had these flaws, that helped him to become humble and to feel unworthy of carrying on the relationship that had been thrust on him, as well as the job. So I am sure that it helped to drive him, to motivate

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him, to constantly turn to God for whatever assistance he needed because he did not feel worthy of being able to do it. It was good that he had that, but he really excelled at it.

One of the ways this became practical in Moses' life is that we find that he was not a pushy person, just driving himself, imposing himself on others. He was not a man throwing his weight around, as might be said in our time. He was a man who was content to quietly and confidently serve with all of his heart wherever, whenever, and in whatever capacity God gave him.

God did not let His evaluation of Moses stop there. He expanded on it to give evidence of what was maybe Moses' most outstanding characteristic. Yes, he was humble, and this humility probably helped him very much to be what is mentioned also in this same chapter in verse 7. God is speaking directly to these people involved in this event, and He says:

Numbers 12:7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house.

We could say, "Hey, Moses is a responsible man, a reliable man, a dependable man. He is somebody who can be trusted to carry out whatever obligation is laid on his shoulders by Me without seeking his own glory, but simply to do the job well despite what he personally may have felt about the command or its circumstances that he had to work within. He just did it despite the personal sacrifice it might have caused him, and went forward to meet the challenge."

The Apostle Paul draws on this in the book of Hebrews, chapter 3.

Hebrews 3:1-2 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

That phrase "all His house" simply means "in every circumstance"—that is, in the House of God. Whatever he was told to do, he did as a servant, faithfully.

Let us look at Deuteronomy 18:15. It is here, as in Hebrews 3, that we have a Christ-Moses comparison, but this time directly in regard to those prophets who would come after Moses.

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Deuteronomy 18:15 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,

Jesus' declaration that He gave—"Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done"—pretty much encapsulates the essence of both Jesus' and Moses' life. We know that Jesus did it far better than Moses, but we are talking about men who were really totally completely like us, and to have this responsibility thrust upon us.

Let us turn to this Scripture in John 8:29 just so any of you who are not familiar will kind of have it zeroed in your mind where it is on the page.

John 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."

That is pretty much the way it was with Moses as well. That is why he is faithful in God's eyes. It is this outstanding characteristic that set both Jesus and Moses apart. Moses too had this virtue to a very high degree, and brethren, so can we. We will not be operating in as lofty a position as Moses, but we can be faithful in whatever responsibility God gives to us. We can be faithful according to the gifts given us, and that becomes important as we move along here. The gifts are given in order to meet responsibilities, and because God has given the gifts, we can be faithful in carrying out those responsibilities.

Luke 12:48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

God's judgment of everybody is consistent, and it is consistent to what He determines is the right level, the right degree to the gifts that have been given and the responsibilities met as they are carried out.

We are going to go back to the book of Acts again and pick up where we left off. Turn to Acts 7:20 to review that so we get a flow.

Acts 7:20-23 At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. But when he

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was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

This was not like it happened in the movie *The Ten Commandments*, like Moses suddenly found out when he was that age that he was an Israelite. No. He knew all along.

Acts 7:23-29 "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday? Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.

Moses was an incredibly gifted man. First of all, one of the first gifts that ever came to him was that he was born into a very fine, spiritually-stable family. Though they were slaves, they were nonetheless people of faith in the Creator God. As a result of that gift alone, his life was preserved to achieve great exploits. Other baby boy Israelites were being killed, but God had His eye on this little baby. We are going to see *how* closely God had his eye on this little baby.

Moses was not only gifted with a fine family to just get him started for the first three months, he was gifted again by God by being saved from death, and then taken right into Pharaoh's very household. His life was not only spared, but he received the gift of the very best worldly education that could have been given at that time and location in the world. As the Scripture says, "He was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt," which was a great nation at that time.

We turn away from the Bible for just a while here to the writings of Philo, who was a Hebrew living in Egypt when he wrote these things. Philo wrote the secular histories which indicate that Moses rose in power within Egypt and he became a general of the

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army. From those experiences, he was familiarized with the political circumstances of dealing with other men in positions of power and to commanding men to possibly go to their death in battle.

Now being cast out of Egypt was another gift of God. Moses was probably upset about it for awhile, and maybe kind of terrified about what he was going to do, having been brought up in the lap of luxury, and you might say, waited on hand and foot; but he had to flee. That was actually a gift of God because it led him to Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he became a shepherd of Jethro's flocks, thus giving him a great deal of time for meditation on his experiences, where he could think things through.

I am sure that he spent a lot of time thinking about laws, about human nature, and about military things. You name it. He had time to do those things, and that was important to God to give him the time. Not only that, he learned a great deal about human nature taking care of those sheep.

He learned further to be a humble man. It is quite possible that when he was a commander of an army he was not very humble, as he was commanding people all the time, and people were bowing and scraping to him. They knew who he was, but here the sheep were not bowing and scraping to him. They were following him.

He had a lot of time to think about what is really important in life, and you can be very sure that God was instructing him as well in a relationship with Him. When God called him from the burning bush, he was ready. He did not realize it himself at the time, but I am sure he was a far different man, greatly humbled as a result of the education as a shepherd, and his fall from power as well, and knowing what it was like in comparison with being a scion of Egypt. So now God considered him ready for the intense practical training in leadership of a stubborn and recalcitrant slave people that were going to try his patience and cause him to make use of the combination of the earlier preparations in Egypt and in the desert taking care of those sheep.

Let us go back to Ephesians, because this has very interesting ramifications for you and me.

Ephesians 1:3-6 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed **us** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose **us** in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined **us** to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made

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us accepted in the Beloved.

He is talking about **us** here, not Moses.

What I am stating here, brethren, is that I think all of us are pretty much dealt with the same as Moses was. Recall that David said in Psalm 139 that God knew *him* from the womb. David was no stranger to God when he was born. God was already looking at him had His eye on him in the womb. I do not know how far before our calling that God knew us, but there is interesting information in the book of Jeremiah 1, and I want you to turn to it and look at it.

Jeremiah 1:4-5 Then the word of the LOORD came to me [to Jeremiah], saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; [God knew Jeremiah before he was conceived.] Before you were born I sanctified you; [God already had Jeremiah set apart to carry out a responsibility.] I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

Do you think that God did not do the same thing with Moses, having him born into that stable family, having the things that were going on in the nation impact on them so that they did what they could to try to save their son, that the hand of God was guiding everything that was going on so Moses did not float by in that basket to just *any* old place? It was being pushed by the current of God's finger to the right house that led him right to Pharaoh. From there it led to the education he received, to the responsibilities that he had within Egypt, and then from there on. God was guiding the entire process.

Now perhaps with us it is no different, but there is the possibility here that it is exactly the same, that He too knew us from the womb, since He said that way back, even before the foundation of the world, we were predestined.

Is there anything we can turn to in a practical way to see that this might very well be true? In a way, I do not see how it can be denied, given what we know about God. Do you think that when God created the earth He just threw it together, and that then here was this big ball of mud and He began shaping it? No. I do not think His creation shows anything haphazard about His mind, about the orderliness of the way He thinks and the way He puts things together.

He put things together so that every part of this awesome universe is working in accordance with the way He fixed it in the heavens, with all the stars and everything in

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the place where He wanted them to be. There are billions, maybe trillions of stars out there, and according to Isaiah, God calls them all by name. No part of His creation escapes His mind, and so He knows all of those things.

I worked in the steel-mill, and there were times when I was working on new construction. We were putting up a new building inside the mill. It was going to have some kind of machinery operating within it. I did not get involved in that part, but I did get involved in the building of the building, and so I worked with an awful lot of blueprints. I worked with fitters, boilermakers, pipe-fitters, and so forth. I looked at those blueprints, and each blueprint showed every nut, bolt, hole, girder, pillar, and column.

Everything in that drawing was prepared beforehand on the drawing board so that it could be duplicated in the field. Nothing was missing. Every pipe that was going to carry water, every pipe that was going to carry oil, every pipe that was going to carry steam was marked. They even told us where they wanted it welded. Every operation was in place in the minds of those who engineered the building, from the architect who designed it, to the engineer, and to the draftsman who drew it all out until it finally came to us out in the field, and we put it together. We knew we were putting this puzzle together, and this was the way they wanted it to be done.

Now if men can do something like that, why cannot God? Are we smart and He really does not know how to do things? When He designed your body, He designed each and every part of it so that it works together with systems that are all there, that the liver does not do the heart's job, and the heart does not do the brain's job.

You know what I am getting at here. Why cannot God put together a church? Why cannot God put together a family in which everything is being conformed to the design He wants it to be? If He chooses to have a Moses prepared to lead a slave people and to carry out certain responsibilities, do you think He would not have a baby born with characteristics within it that—if developed—would be able to do that job, and then see to the development of them?

Now how early did God start working with you? It is no surprise that you are begotten of Him and that you are now sitting here at the Feast of Tabernacles. He prepares people for His family, and we find out from Jesus who said, "I am going off to heaven, but do not worry. There is room there for you too, for in My Father's house are many rooms." That can also be translated as "many offices," as "many positions of responsibility."

Our responsibility is to be faithful, and Moses is an outstanding example, because the difficulties he faced were far greater than what we face. However, I also want to assure

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you that the difficulty *you* face, according to the gifts given to you, and the responsibilities given to you, are just as hard for you as they were for Moses. "To whom much is given, the much more is required." And to those to whom less is given, not so much is required.

God judges us fairly in every case, and that is why I said we can be within our gifts and within our responsibility just as faithful a servant as Moses. That is what we need to emulate in this man. He truly did overcome. But never forget that he was *prepared* to overcome. God prepared him, and then he faithfully followed through. That is the hard part, but he did it.

Let us go to the book of Joshua, chapter 1.

Joshua 1:1-2 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel.

At this point I just wanted to remind us again that Moses is called God's servant more frequently than any other person in the Bible, and it almost becomes his title. I think this is because of his extraordinary reliable service to God. He could always be counted on.

We are going to go back to the New Testament and we are going to tie this to something Jesus said regarding servanthood.

Mark 10:42-45 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Turn now to John 13 and we will look at something we are all quite familiar with—another time which being a servant is spoken of.

John 13:12-17 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and

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sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

There is the key. Both the Hebrew and the Greek words translated "servant" have a strong sense of "being under subjection to another." Now depending upon the context, it is and can be correctly translated as "slave"—a little bit stronger terminology, but there is a difference. A person who is a slave has no rights. A servant has more liberty, but if the context indicates "slave," that is a person who has no rights of his own because all the exercising of his will is owed to someone else. A literal slave is not free to spend his time and energy as he pleases. So this point, when taken from what Jesus said, is that every Christian must be God's slave. The word in Greek is *doulos*, and it means "slave."

Though our will remains, it must be under strong internal control lest we disobey our Master. Of course, we have been bought with a price, and therefore our life literally belongs to another. This places the responsibility on us that is not always easy to carry out. It requires meditation and control.

I want you to turn to Psalm 10:4. Here a contrast is made between the ways two different people think.

Psalm 10:4 The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.

This does not mean that the wicked being referred to is an atheist. It is simply a person who does not use his time and energy to seek God, and therefore he does not think a great deal about God. Hardly ever, maybe, and he feels no responsibility toward God.

The contrast is this: If we are to be one of the righteous—if we are not to be one of the wicked— then time and effort has to be sacrificed in order to seek God, to learn about Him, to learn about the way He thinks, to learn what His character is like, and to think of what it is that He wants us to do in any given situation. People who do that, when they face a certain circumstance in which their faithfulness is on the line, when the carrying out of their responsibilities to God—the One who owns them—is on the line, they are

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already a step ahead because they have already thought on it.

Because we are a slave in practical fact, it means that we should always be preoccupied with what God wants rather than what human nature considers as its right. There is a difference between the two, and this, brethren, is the battlefield where our struggle is fought.

What is essential to our faith is to know and to believe that what God requires, He always enables. Always. He never fails. What God requires of us, He always enables us to meet it. He supplies His servants with whatever tools, blessings and gifts that are needed to carry out their assignment. All of us have had times when God really did intervene for us to be able to do something, to escape something, or whatever. He is always on the ball, if I can put it that way.

What I have just described, is this not what a good human employer does? Does he not supply his employees with whatever tools are necessary for them to be able to carry out the job? That is the way it is with God. That is the way He operates. What He requires, He always enables with the gifts and the circumstances so that it can be carried out.

Let us go back to the book of Deuteronomy, to chapter 34 again. Here is a simple example of how God enabled Moses.

Deuteronomy 34:7 Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.

God did that. He enabled it. There may have been others who lived to an old age, but not with the enabling Moses received from God. He not only enabled him to live to that age, He enabled him to live to that age with *great vigor*. He will do that for us as well. If we are carrying out a responsibility for Him, He will enable us. There is a song—"He's Got The Whole World In His Hands"—and of course that is lightly taken, but it is a true fact that God's children are enabled, and God provides for them. This enabling was given to Moses so that he could carry out his work. He needed it.

Do you remember when this journey began for Moses? God revealed Himself in the burning bush, and it was not long after that Moses was arguing with God that he was not able to do what God wanted him to do because he said he could not speak well. That is interesting, because in Acts 7, it says "he was a man mighty in words in Egypt." Before he became humbled out in the desert, he was a man mighty in words. But out in the desert he learned a great deal about humility. Now, when God challenged him with

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what he was going to do—to go to Egypt and speak for God there—why suddenly he was a stutterer or whatever it was he had there. He said, "I can't do it."

Did you ever notice, as you read the story, stuttering never really seems to be a problem? It began to disappear very quickly. There is no doubt that Aaron did the speaking there for awhile, but it was not long before Moses was doing the speaking. He overcame. God enabled him to get over that and to do the speaking directly to those people who needed to be spoken to.

Again, this is another area in which we have to learn, like Moses did, to make use of the faith and the gift God has given to us.

Let us go now to the New Testament to Philippians 4, verses 13 and 19.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Paul believed just like Moses did.

Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

We have to look at this enabling within the framework of His employing us in *His* work. We cannot do just any old thing, just suddenly flying or leaping tall buildings in a single bound. That is not the kind of thing Paul is referring to here. God will supply us with what we need within the responsibilities that He has assigned us to carry out. But in order to make use of this, you are going to have to believe that God is really with you, and if you do believe that, the power, the strength, the will, and the motivation will be there.

I am not going to tell you that you are going to conquer things without any flaw or fault, especially the first time you meet a crisis you have not faced before. You are probably going to stumble through it. You are probably going to crawl through, but that is the way we learn. We have to crawl before we can walk in any given situation. It certainly is a wonderful thing that God is patient with us.

Let us go back to Deuteronomy 8, still considering this same thought about God supplying all of our needs. He is doing this so that we can be faithful and so that we can be prepared.

Deuteronomy 8:4 Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

Let us turn to Deuteronomy 29:5 where he repeats this at the end of the book, as he is approaching his death.

Deuteronomy 29:5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet.

I read these verses only to help you understand that Moses was not the only one that had miracles done in, through, and upon him. Every Israelite out there experienced it, and just as surely as God was faithful while they were in the wilderness, He is still the same God. He is still faithful, and He will supply *our* need as well, though the circumstances are not exactly the same, yet the trials and the tests and the purpose for them is the same.

God will do miracles for us, and I know that just about very many of you have told me of things you feel sure where God dramatically intervened in your life in some way. What I am trying to get at is that these things He did for the Israelites occurred every day. It was not just a passing thing where every once in a while He did a miracle for somebody. He did this for two and one-half million people for forty years. Every day (except the Sabbath) they had a witness of the manna that came out on the ground or on the bushes, or wherever it came out. It was there for them to eat.

They should have been well aware that their shoes were not wearing out, that their clothing was not wearing out. Their animals were being fed. Can God take care of us? If He is faithful in taking care of us in that kind of situation, why cannot we be faithful in return to Him?

Now Moses did it. Joshua did it. Caleb did it. If they did it, we can do it. That is the point. You do not have to be a Moses, you do not have to be a Joshua, you do not have to be a Caleb. Just like in the physical body, there is only one heart. There is only one liver. There is only one diaphragm, but there are millions of cells that are working all over the place that God is taking care of.

In some ways, there is no reason why we should feel that God has gone way off somewhere. No, He has not. Somebody else will probably have to speak on this,

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because it is the fear factor, or it is the pity-pot factor. But those things work, and God is able to help us through those things as well, and He wants to, if we will just permit Him by exercising our faith and repenting of our lack of it.

I John 1:6-9 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Brethren, we can give ourselves any number of justifications for our failures, but before God we have no justifiable excuses. God is aware of us in this way, that we are weak. He gives us time to grow and to overcome, and He is very faithful to allow the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sins. When I say sins here, I am not talking necessarily about breaking one of the commandments. I am talking about those things in which we just fall short.

You know sin is described in the Bible as missing the target, or wandering from the way. Sin does not always occur in terms of a legal breaking of a commandment. We get lazy, lackadaisical. We just fail to follow through on things that are right and good, failing to take the opportunity to do good. So we fall short, and that can be described as a sin. We are not just talking legal things here.

God is willing to help us through all of the difficulties of our falling short. He will supply whatever it is we need to give us that boost to do what we need to do rather than avoid doing what we need to do, and thus commit sins of omission rather than commission. So we find here that we have no justifiable excuse before Him for not being faithful, and we are not facing many times the truth of God's word—a promise that He will supply all our needs.

Moses' life was not perfect, and I know that you are aware that he did not go into the Promised Land because of that one major failure in his life. I was going to go into something here because I was going to cover a principle that John covered in his sermonette about us being the temple of God. I was really glad he did that because it fit right into this sermon. I would like you to remember that in relation to this sermon as well as his sermonette. We are the temple of God, and we have a relationship with Christ that the Israelites never had. In fact, the only Israelite that we know for sure who

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had the kind of relationship we have is Moses, where God knew him face to face. We share that with him because, through Jesus Christ, we have been invited directly into God's presence.

You know that the Israelites were not allowed even inside the Temple or the Tabernacle. The ordinary Israelite could not go in. They were withheld from God's presence, as it were. The priests could go in to execute their daily duties, and the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies one day a year. But we have access to God anytime we want to speak to Him, fall on our knees, pray while we are walking, or whenever.

He is available for conversation with us because of what Christ did. He made that possible for us, and as John pointed out, He dwells *in* us. *We* are the tabernacle. *We* are the temple. We do not have to go anywhere, as it were, because if we are His children, His spirit is with us all the time. That is how close the enabling is to get us through a difficulty, to meet the requirement in order to be faithful. It is not something that is far away.

That thing that Moses did is a very powerful lesson. It occurred in Numbers 20:1-12. The Israelites were grumbling again, but this time, though, Moses' temper got away from him. It is very likely he had that temper all the while, but he kept it subdued through his contact with God. We are not given any other occasion that his temper really flared up anything like that.

But therein is the lesson, that even somebody as great as Moses was, as righteous and as close to God as he was, that human nature in him was still alive and well, and just like that it came bursting out, and instead of following Christ's command to speak to the rock, he struck it with his staff—not once, but twice! He was really hot.

And then in a sense took the credit for supplying them with the water. "Must we give you water again?" How quickly his temper erupted and broke an almost perfect record. But it was so serious. Remember what we read in Luke 12:49: "To whom much is given, much is required." One time was enough for God, and He said, "Moses, you are not going into the Promised Land." It was that quick.

There is a warning there. We have to mind our "Ps and Qs." God is ever willing to forgive, and as we are going to see in just a moment, He really did forgive Moses for what he did, but He still kept some of the punishment on by not allowing Moses to go into the land. He could have put him to death for that act, but He did not. It was actually a merciful act that He did under that circumstance, because hitting that rock was the

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same as if Moses had hit Christ with his staff, because that rock represented Christ, and He was the One who was supplying all of their needs.

It was a rather presumptuous act, and it is interesting to follow the story of it through the Bible, because at the beginning of the story all the blame was on Moses. But as things begin to unfold, we begin to see that part of the blame fell on the Israelites too. If they had not done what they did by rebelling when God told them to go into the land at the end of the second year that they were in the wilderness, if they had not sinned in that rebelling, that episode where Moses struck the rock would never had occurred. Interesting. At any rate, some of that was relief from him.

Let us go to Deuteronomy 34 and we will wrap up here pretty quickly.

Deuteronomy 34:1-4 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."

There is an interesting little thing here, and it is in that saying about allowing him to see the land. There is more there than meets the eye.

God did the same thing with Abraham in Genesis 13:14-17. He gave Abraham the ability to see the land, as it were. In I Peter 1:3-4, the same principle is given to us, only ours is a heavenly kingdom.

Genesis 13:14-17 And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

I Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope

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through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

Can you remember when Satan tempted Jesus Christ there in Matthew 4 and also in Luke 4? One of the things Satan promised was that he showed Jesus, "in a moment," all the kingdoms of the earth, and told Him, "They are all yours." It is this thing about "It is all yours"—this "seeing the land."

Luke 14:16-18 Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and **I must go and see it.** I ask you to have me excused.'

What we are looking at here is a Hebrew idiom—"I must go and see it." That "going and seeing it" indicates the completion of a formal legal transfer of property. It is more than just looking at it. You see, the idiom means more than just merely looking at it. It indicates the formal legal transfer of the property. Now God did this to Abraham, and what was the result? Well, God was saying to Abraham, "It is now yours." We all know he lived there, but he never owned a piece of ground except for the burial plot. But in God's mind, who calls things what are not as though they are, it already belonged to Abraham. It already belonged to Abraham's descendants in the mind of God. He is going to carry on through. He is determined to do that.

Now do you know what God was saying to Moses when He said, "You can go see the land"? He was telling Moses, "It is now yours" in the same way, you see, that it was the Israelites, except that they were going to get to live in it. But God was saying to Moses, "I am going to go one step further. You have made it into My kingdom." So there was an assurance there. Moses did not actually get to walk in the land, to live in the land, but he knew he had "made" it. Pretty good. So Moses knew that he was forgiven, that the right of ownership had passed on to him. Pretty great.

I think that is enough for Moses. Remember that he faithfully carried out his responsibilities, and that all of us can carry out our responsibilities just as faithfully as he did. Our responsibilities and our gifts are not as great as his were, but we can be every bit as faithful within what we do as he was in what he did. He was a faithful servant.