

Sermon Series: Moses—God’s Poster Child of Meekness and Dedication—Lord of Life, Westfield, IN – 5/2/2010

Title: “Misery, Midwives, and Murder”

Text: Exodus 1

Intro.: *Persevering Principle*

Theme: Born in the heat of the furnace, the person of faith who leans on God for strength and the will to press forward for God’s glory and plan will find His promised oasis of rest and provision in the midst of turbulent times.

When God uses the trial-by-fire to refine us

Crucible: a container in which metals or other substances may be melted or subjected to very high temperatures. 2 a situation of severe trial, or in which different elements interact to produce something new.

Why God allows severe trial in the life of one of his

1. **The question of gracious God, proven to us in Jesus, is not: “Why the trouble?” but “What is he accomplishing?”**
2. *But who will be able to endure the day he comes? Who will be able to survive on the day he appears? He is like a purifying fire and like a cleansing soap. He will act like a refiner and a purifier of silver. He will purify Levi's sons and refine them like gold and silver. Then they will bring acceptable offerings to the LORD. Malachi 3:2-3*

What God promises to us as we go through those times in the grip of His grace

1. *Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. Isaiah. 43: 1-3*

The story of Moses incubated in God’s crucible surrounding Israel

Prosperity turned to persecution

1. **The legacy of Joseph** was overcoming personal affliction through the plan and promise of God *Print Ex.1: 1-7*
 - a. Favored by Jacob, persecuted by family and foe, alike, but raised up by God for an appointed purpose
 - b. *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time. 1Pet 5:6*
 - c. *A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? Eccles. 2:24-25*
2. **God has a plan**—not always just focused on your circumstances/life—mysteriously at work & graciously implemented
 - a. *Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. Genesis 15:13-14*
3. **But do not build your life on your legacy because it cannot carry you — only God can** *Exodus.1:8*
 - a. Despite magnanimous rule of Joseph, by which God blessed a heathen nation, it all was forgotten after death
 - b. Often, the bitterest pill of persecution to shallow comes when my self-made towers are torn down before me
 - c. *But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 3:10-11*

Persecution developing perseverance *Exodus 1: 9-22*

1. **Persecution is not always a joyful thing to endure**
 - a. **“Harsh” = “broke them”** – Ancient Egypt was built (11) on the bodies and bones of Israel
 - b. **Inhuman** – death in midst of birth; manipulation of Jewish midwives; keep girl baby for work/no fear of revolt
 - c. Believers often manipulated/taken advantage of by sinfully depraved
 - d. *But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 1 Peter 2:20-21*
 - e. **Never stay ‘thrown’**
2. **Learning the spiritual discipline of joyful suffering**
 - a. *We don't enjoy being disciplined. It always seems to cause more pain than joy. But later on, those who learn from that discipline have peace that comes from doing what is right. Hebrews 12:11*
 - b. God was blessing them in the midst of trial and was setting up the deliverance to come in Moses
 - c. *Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but*

on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us. 2 Cor. 1:9-10

Persevering Principle

John Killinger retells this story from Atlantic Monthly about the days of the great western cattle rancher: "A little burro sometimes would be harnessed to a wild steed. Bucking and raging, convulsing like drunken sailors, the two would be turned loose like Laurel and Hardy to proceed out onto the desert range. They could be seen disappearing over the horizon, the great steed dragging that little burro along and throwing him about like a bag of cream puffs. They might be gone for days, but eventually they would come back. The little burro would be seen first, trotting back across the horizon, leading the submissive steed in tow. Somewhere out there on the rim of the world, that steed would become exhausted from trying to get rid of the burro, and in that moment, the burro would take mastery and become the leader. And that is the way it is with the kingdom and its heroes, isn't it? The battle is to the determined, not to the outraged; to the committed, not to those who are merely dramatic. **Leadership, Summer, 1989**

Fools for Christ

Speaking to the Knights of Columbus Council in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said: "God assumed from the beginning that the wise of the world would view Christians as fools and he has not been disappointed. If I have brought any message today, it is this: Have the courage to have your wisdom regarded as stupidity. Be fools for Christ. And have the courage to suffer the contempt of the sophisticated world." **Penny Brown Roberts, "Scalia: Faithful Live for Christ," theadvocate.com**

Never stay 'threwed.'

The story is told that Andrew Jackson's boyhood friends just couldn't understand how he became a famous general and then the President of the United States. They knew of other men who had greater talent but who never succeeded. One of Jackson's friends said, "Why, Jim Brown, who lived right down the pike from Jackson, was not only smarter but he could throw Andy three times out of four in a wrestling match. But look where Andy is now." Another friend responded, "How did there happen to be a fourth time? Didn't they usually say three times and out?" "Sure, they were supposed to, but not Andy. He would never admit he was beat -- he would never stay 'threwed.' Jim Brown would get tired, and on the fourth try Andrew Jackson would throw him and be the winner." Picking up on that idea, someone has said, "The thing that counts is not how many times you are 'threwed,' but whether you are willing to stay 'threwed.'" We may face setbacks, but we must take courage and go forward in faith. Then, through the Holy Spirit's power we can be the eventual victor over sin and the world. The battle is the Lord's, so there is no excuse for us to stay "threwed"! **Our Daily Bread.**

Exodus 1:1-22

¹These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: ²Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; ³Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; ⁴Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. ⁵The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt. ⁶Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, ⁷but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.

⁸Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.

⁹"Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. ¹⁰Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." ¹¹So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. ¹²But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ¹³and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly. ¹⁵The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, ¹⁶"When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." ¹⁷The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. ¹⁸Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?" ¹⁹The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive." ²⁰So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. ²¹And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. ²²Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live." [NIV]