

Sermon Series: "Moses—God's Poster Child of Meekness and Dedication"

Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield—5/23/10

Title: "Lessons Learned from Failure"

Text: Exodus 2: 15-25

Theme: Living under God's grace in Jesus, we can shed guilt over past failure and learn lessons of growth as God opens new or revitalizes old opportunities in our future.

Looking back to past failures to learn from and respond to God's grace

Relearning the lesson of salvation by grace through faith

1. Moses was not in a negotiating position of strength with God; yet, God was not through with him – not even close
2. *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh. Romans 8:1-3*
3. When we are flat on our back is when we are finally able to look up to see the **Amazing Grace** of God

Understanding that spiritual ends are not achieved by carnal means

1. God at times stops our effort which might end up in the right place but having taken a destructive path to get there
2. Like Moses, a disappointment from failure of plan born out of scheming can be very instructive if we learn from it

Timing is as important as action

1. *There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. Eccles. 3:1*
2. When God is in a plan, it flows; when the flesh is in it, it's forced.

Hiding the wrong done does not erase it – only Jesus can

1. Concealment of past sin only delays its discovery and intensifies the severity of the failure
 - a. *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"--and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Psalm 32:3-5*
2. Confession is not only good for the soul but it also brings you and me back under the immunity of Christ's blood

Spiritual leadership is God-developed rather than self-deployed

1. Sometimes, it is born in the furnace of adversity or in the back-pool of reflection
2. It is always done with your spiritual welfare and that of those whom you will in mind
3. *But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness. Malachi 3: 2-4*

Looking forward to new, divine opportunities to be used by Him

Letting God develop a servant attitude within me

1. Moses learned selfless servanthood rather than resume -building aggrandizement
2. *For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 14:11*

Willing to be obscure so that God can bring clarity to his future plan for him

1. Moses stepped down from the most powerful throne of the time so God could teach him a shepherd's heart
 - a. God gave him a wife and a son whose name Gershom (alien) always grounded him in perspective
2. *People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Hebrews 11:14-15*
3. Willing to wait patiently for God to develop his perfect perspective on life within your mind and heart

Resting and relying on God

1. Notice no mention is made of Moses and Israel; yet, God was at work setting up for him 40 years up the road
 - a. God *heard their groaning* and *took notice of them*
 - b. *In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat--for he grants sleep to those he loves. Psalm 127:2*
2. God is building His consolation into our own lives so that we might be his merciful and comforting agent to others
 - a. *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. 2 Cor. 1:3-4*

Lessons from Exodus

In his book *Exodus and Revolution*, Michael Walzer shares three lessons we can all learn from the Exodus event of the Old Testament: What the Exodus ... taught: first, that wherever you live, it is probably Egypt. Second, that there is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land. And third, that "the way to the land is through the wilderness." **Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (Basic Books, 1986), p. 149; quoted in the "Reflections" section of *Christianity Today* magazine (September 2008), p. 82**

Moving Forward Means Leaving Behind

After the Civil War, in an incident recounted by Charles Flood in *Lee: The Last Years*, Robert E. Lee visited a woman who took him to the remains of a grand old tree in front of her home. There she cried bitterly that its limbs and trunk had been destroyed by Union artillery fire. She waited for Lee to condemn the North or at least sympathize with her loss. But Lee—who knew the horrors of war and had suffered the pain of defeat—said, "Cut it down, my dear madam, and then forget it." When you're tempted to get even with those who hurt you, remember that you can't go back, you can't stay where you are, but, by God's grace, you can move forward one step at a time. **Ray Pritchard, *Something New Under the Sun***

George Washington Carver and the Peanut

"God's little workshop" was the name George Washington Carver gave to his laboratory. According to his own account, it was there the famous scientist asked in prayer to discover the uses of what was then a lowly, unesteemed crop: the peanut. "Dear Mr. Creator," the humble man began, "please tell me what the universe was made for." "Ask for something more in keeping with that little mind of yours," God answered. So Carver tried again. "Dear Mr. Creator, what was man made for?" Again the Lord replied, "Little man, you ask too much. Cut down the extent of your request and improve the intent." So the scientist tried once more. "Then Mr. Creator, will you tell me why the peanut was made?" "That's better," the Lord said, and beginning that day Carver discovered over 300 uses for the lowly peanut. **Paul Thigpen, "No Royal Road to Wisdom," *Discipleship Journal* (Sept/Oct 1985)**

Exodus 2:11-25

¹⁵When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.

¹⁶Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.

¹⁸When the girls returned to Reuel their father, he asked them, "Why have you returned so early today?" ¹⁹They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock." ²⁰"And where is he?" he asked his daughters. "Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat." ²¹Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. ²²Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, "I have become an alien in a foreign land."

²³During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵So God looked on the Israelites and took notice of them.

Romans 8:5-9

⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. ⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.