

Serm.Series: “Moses—God’s Poster Child of Meekness and Dedication”—Lord of Life, Westfield, IN–5/30/2010

Title: “The Desert: School of Self-Discovery”

Text: Exodus 2: 21-23; 3: 1

Intro.: *The Pests We Tolerate*

Theme: More than some self-actualization activity, a true awareness of who God has created you to be begins in a confidence born in grace, seeking not self-fulfillment but rather a formation into Christ’s mind and spirit.

*My children, I am suffering birth pains for you again until Christ is formed in you. Galatians 4:19*

*For Christ to be formed in us, what are we tolerating that needs to be gotten out of the way?*

#### **My location**

1. For Moses, his relocation to the desert on the west side of Horeb was not a vacation but a rehabilitation
  - a. No grand vistas but the “rear part” of Mt. Sinai—sand and rock but away from temptations mirages of Egypt
2. Sometimes, we may moan over loneliness or loss of familiar, not realizing that it may have been poisoning our soul
  - a. *Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 1 Cor. 15: 33*
3. God uses Moses’ and our “alone” time to more clearly focus on Him, His nature, and His plan in our lives

#### **My education and reputation**

1. Often our credentials — the letters before or after our name – become a sense of worth and accomplishment for us
  - a. Moses was Prince of Egypt, highly educated, military commander but now husband, father, and shepherd.
  - b. *With a lot of wisdom comes a lot of heartache. The greater your knowledge, the greater your pain. Eccles. 1: 18*
2. Do not despise the present moment where God has taken you because it may be a very high position in disguise
  - a. ***The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world*** poem published in 1865 by William Ross Wallace
  - b. *Each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him .1Cor 7:17*
  - c. As God was teaching in the 40 years of desert training (40-80yrs.); so he is in every moment of our lives

#### **My vocation or avocation** (spare-time activity/hobby)

1. It is said that ***we play at our work and work at our play.***
2. Moses was thrust into a new role – shepherding polar opposite to leadership – worth not defined by what you do
3. We so often let our work/occupation drive who we are/what we do; rather than who we are driving what/how work
4. At times we can make our recreation time our god, even “x-ing” out God-given responsibility for selfish play
5. *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 1 Cor. 10:31*

#### **My accumulation**

1. **Timothy 6: 9-10**
2. It is not the stuff but the love of stuff that pulls us from God and sometimes what God must pull us from
3. What if God took everything but your basic provision from you? Could you still love and serve him?
4. *Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 1Tim6:6-7*

#### **Our Response to the Desert times in our life**

##### **“I don’t need it!”**

1. Pride or fear is at the root of this response and often what is killing us
  - a. *Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. Proverbs 3:7*
  - b. The story of the frog and the ducks – see notes below
2. It is often in our weakness in which God is the strongest for us (Moses eventually would meet God face-to-face)
  - a. *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 2 Cor 12:9*

##### **“I’m tired of it!”**

1. Although understandable – it usually comes from self-pity and often illustrates a subtle rebellion
  - a. Elijah and the still small voice (*The LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 1 Kings19:9*)
2. There is no tired situation for which God’s strength is not the answer
  - a. *He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Is 40: 29*
  - b. *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Gal 6:9*

##### **“I accept it.”**

1. Like Moses, investing for the long haul (married and had child) so God can teach you thru circumstances (**Exodus.2: 21-22**)
2. *Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, Hebrews 6:1*

### **The Pests We Tolerate**

Pests—bugs and rodents—even the thought of them makes our skin crawl. But pests find their way into everyone's home at one time or another. The question is, do we hate these pests enough to do what it takes to get rid of them? One survey says that depends on what sort of pest is in the house. Researchers found that people will dish out their hard earned money for an exterminator—meaning they are really serious about getting results—when the following pests are in their home:

24% of adults will pay an exterminator to kill spiders.

27% of adults, will pay to annihilate ants.

56 % will pay to banish bedbugs.

56 % will pay to get rid of rodents.

58% will pay to kill cockroaches.

87% of adults will pay to terminate termites.

Notice that except for termites, almost half of adults will live with some very unpleasant creatures rather than pay a professional to ensure the pests are eradicated. This survey also showed that many people are willing to endure a certain kind of pest, but not others. Take that concept to a spiritual dimension and the same thing holds true. Many people are willing to live—or feel they have to live—with spiritual ants, spiritual spiders, spiritual bedbugs, spiritual cockroaches, spiritual mice, spiritual rats, or spiritual termites. Some sins we tolerate in ourselves; others we won't. **Anne R. Carey and Keith Simmons, "Calling the Exterminators: Critters that bug us most," USA Today Snapshots (May 22-25), 1A**

### **The frog and the ducks**

The story is told of two ducks and a frog who lived happily together in a farm pond. The best of friends, the three would amuse themselves and play together in their waterhole. When the hot summer days came, however, the pond began to dry up, and soon it was evident they would have to move. This was no problem for the ducks, who could easily fly to another pond. But the frog was stuck. So it was decided that they would put a stick in the bill of each duck that the frog could hang onto with his mouth as they flew to another pond. The plan worked well--so well, in fact, that as they were flying along a farmer looked up in admiration and mused, "Well, isn't that a clever idea! I wonder who thought of it?" The frog said, "I did" as he opened his mouth and fell to the ground

*Today in the Word, April, 1989, p. 34.*

### **Exodus 2:21-22, 3: 1** [NIV]

<sup>21</sup>Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. <sup>22</sup>Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, "I have become an alien in a foreign land." . . . <sup>3:1</sup>Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

### **1 Tim. 6:17-19**

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.