

The Cloud of Witnesses

Moses

Lesson 1: Moses – His Miracle Birth & Princely Childhood

Reading

Exodus 1:15-2:10.

We are responsible for the way we bring up our children

Had it not been for the 'faith' and courage of his parents, Moses wouldn't have made it! Pharaoh of Egypt had decreed that all boys born to the Hebrews should be killed at birth. The Hebrew midwives and Moses' mother had other ideas. So at the risk of their lives, they 'allowed' Moses to live. That was the first risk.

Then he had to survive 'babyhood'. I still don't know how you stop a baby from crying!! His mother must have been very ingenious – she 'hid' him for 3 months!

Then when he was getting stronger and maybe 'louder', she devised her best plan yet. She had a dilemma - keep Moses and undoubtedly be discovered or expose him and hasten the end.

Her plan was extremely clever. She planned to exploit a woman's motherly instinct! She hid Moses in the river among the rushes just where Pharaoh's daughter bathed! His cry was heard and her heart opened.

Moses' mum's scheme didn't end there. She placed her own daughter close by and once Moses was found and had captivated Pharaoh's daughter's heart, Miriam moved in to seal the deal. She offered Moses' mum as his nurse. Pharaoh's daughter was delighted and so Moses' mum was hired to do the 'job' she always wanted – to raise her own son! The only difference was that she was now to be paid for the privilege and had to move into the royal residence!

So Moses was brought up in Pharaoh's palace in Egypt under the authority of the Princess and taught the ways of Jehovah and the Hebrews by his mother.

We also live in a 'foreign' world with secular values. We can either submit our children to them or be like Moses' parents and teach our children the ways of God and prepare them for what He has planned for them.

The Cloud of Witnesses

Lesson 1 continued: Moses – His Miracle Birth & Princely Childhood

Moses would say to us today...

Do your duty! Whatever the cost – teach your children to know and accept the ways of God because sooner or later they will have to choose how they are going to live in this world. They deserve the best!

They need to be taught His truth and values. They also need to be taught that they are precious in the eyes of God and He has a special plan and destiny for each one.

Prayer

Father, thank you so much that I am Your child. Help me to be a good parent and to pass on to my children the knowledge that You love them and have an awesome destiny for each of them, too. Please help me also teach them the things that will make them strong in their faith as they grow up and able to make wise and righteous choices. Amen.

Additional readings

Deuteronomy 1-9; Proverbs 2; Luke 3:51-52.

Questions

What are your values for life?

What are you doing to instil them in your children?

How can you help other children know more about God?

When should we start teaching our children about God and His ways?

The Cloud of Witnesses

Lesson 2: Moses – Moses The ‘Arch-typical’ Adolescent!

Reading

Exodus 2:11-22.

“My way” is not always the best way!

We have all heard the advice – *“Ask a teenager – whilst they still know it all!”*

I have no doubt that Moses’ mum had his best interests at heart. I’m also sure that she would have taught him that the Hebrews did not belong in Egypt and that they were suffering humiliation and hardship under the enforced labour of the Egyptians.

She knew of the need of a Deliverer and as she told Moses of the need, I’m sure that he looked around for the Deliverer and not finding one standing up, decided that he was as good as the next one!

No doubt as he grew he became emotionally identified with the dispirited Hebrews and questioned himself and God what was going to be done about the blatant injustice. He no doubt felt impotent. He was neither a ‘recognised’ Hebrew nor born an Egyptian. He had privilege but no authority. He had security and grandeur far above his ‘position’ and racial ethnicity, but no peace. Undoubtedly, he wrestled with his identity and the overwhelming futility of his royal lifestyle.

The older he grew, the more the injustice of his ‘real’ people, his family played upon his mind. He had to do something about it. When he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, it not only broke his heart but also suddenly released all his pent-up anger. He let fly at the Egyptian and killed him. However, instead of being grateful, word got out among the Hebrews and he fled in case it got to the ears of the Palace Court. He lost family, home and everything he knew because he tried to do things “My Way”.

That seems to be the value system we have today. If it feels good, do it; if you feel aggrieved, take the law into your own hands and get it dealt with. Don’t worry about the consequences of your actions. Stand up for yourself and your rights, regardless of the effects on yourself or others.

The Cloud of Witnesses

Lesson 2 continued: Moses – Moses The ‘Arch-typical’ Adolescent!

Moses would say to us today...

Stop. Talk to God first. Seek His will and way before going and doing it your way. Just consider there may be a better way! His plans are always superior – even if we have to wait. He alone knows the big picture!

Prayer

Father, please forgive me for wanting everything in a hurry – even patience! Help me realise that Your way is always best and Your timing is perfect. Teach me to trust You more knowing that You have both my present and my future well in hand. Amen.

Additional readings

Proverbs 3; Matthew 6:25-34; Romans 8:28-39.

Questions

What are the things that cause you to doubt God knows what you are going through?

What are the things you normally pray about?

Should you pray about other things too?

What are the things you ‘give to God’ and then ‘take back’ again?

How can we learn to stop doing that?

The Cloud of Witnesses

Lesson 3: Moses – Moses At The Burning Bush

Reading

Exodus 3:1-22.

Look for the extraordinary in the ordinary!

Bush fires often begin spontaneously! One minute the bush is benign and the next, a raging inferno. It would not have been unusual for a bush to catch fire in that arid, burning, barren desert. Moses had probably seen hundreds over the years he had been a shepherd. But today was different. This time the fire was not consuming the bush! Yes, there was fire all right but the bush remained untouched!

As he looked intently at the unusual sight, he became aware of something far greater than a bush or even a bush on fire! God called to Him from the bush and told him that the ground was now Holy. He experienced an encounter with God. God took an ordinary thing in Moses life – a desert bush - and turned it into an extraordinary moment in time.

Moses was to meet with God and be given one of the greatest commissions anyone ever received. Firstly, God introduced Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses had been taught about Him! He was to be feared above all and no one could use His name or live in His Presence and so he hid his face.

Amazingly, God told Moses to go and do what he had already tried to do but had failed at! Yes, God wanted Moses to deliver the Hebrews from Egypt. The only difference was that this time God was coming down to rescue them and He was sending Moses to do it! The Authority under which Moses was to perform the task (and miracles) was the Ultimate Authority. He was given a new name for God – I AM. The 'was and am and will be' God. The God who is totally able and eternally existent. With such a commission, he could not fail!

How easy it is for us to get settled into the 'rat-race' or the 'humdrum' repetitiveness of the routine of our lives! We don't have time for God or being still to hear His voice. We are far too busy and yet far from effective. We have all the labour-saving devices but have no time for reflection or waiting on God.

The Cloud of Witnesses

Lesson 3 continued: Moses – Moses At The Burning Bush

Moses would say to us today...

You can find God even in the simple and routine things of life. Don't miss those opportunities – they are God's way of setting a burning bush in your way! When you recognise the opportunity, take time out to receive your commission from God and your life will never be the same – AND you'll never regret it!

Prayer

Father, thank you so much for that absolutely awesome sunset the other night! Please forgive me for taking those things for granted so often. Help me to see and remember that You are always trying to get my attention – even through the 'small' things of nature. Amen.

Additional readings

Jeremiah 1:7-10; Psalm 139; Isaiah 61:1-6.

Questions

What are the things you most often take for granted?

What has God asked you to do?

What is God's life purpose for you?

What is your next step?

The Cloud of Witnesses

Lesson 4: Moses – How To Be A Wise Leader Of Men!

Reading

Exodus 17:1-16.

You are never too mature to seek God's wisdom

We've moved on and so has Moses! He had tried to 'get out of' doing the job God wanted him to do. He had experienced the fury of Pharaoh. He had seen the incredible miracles God had performed over the land and people of Egypt. He had experienced the awesome power of a prayer-answering God. He had seen the description-defying deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt. He had endured the waywardness and rebellious nature of the people he was sent to rescue. He had witnessed the supernatural provision of the 'Manna' and the quails.

He had grown up in his relationship with God. He could claim that He knew God and the ways of God. He could justifiably feel that he was the leader of the people of Israel and he was answerable to no one. He knew how God worked and what He wanted – he no longer needed advice or counsel. He was a grown man of God.

Here in Chapter 17 of Exodus, we find two totally different incidents in the journeys of the people of Israel. In the first, we have the people moaning and grumbling, yet again over a lack of water. Moses asked God what to do and He said, "*Strike the rock*" and water flowed out in abundance.

In the second, the Amalekites came and attacked the people. This time instead of 'action', Moses passively stood with his hands held high 'praying'. Yes, Moses interceded for the people on both occasions. In the first, his response was to strike the rock; in the second his response was to stand with his hands outstretched to God. (Albeit Joshua led the army into battle.)

We so often want to put God in a box, don't we? God did it that way before; He will do it again the same way. As we grow in our walk with the Lord, it is easy to become overconfident in our abilities or our ministry.

The Cloud of Witnesses

Lesson 4 continued: Moses – How To Be A Wise Leader Of Men!

Moses would say to us today...

Never take God for granted. Always seek His face before making any decisions and always follow His guidance. (Particularly if you are a leader of people.) If you don't know what to do – wait for God to speak or make His way plain. You stand to be disappointed if you go it alone! Maturity in Christ brings humility, patience and peace!

Prayer

Father, I long to 'grow up' and mature in my Christian walk with You. Please help me remember that to do so I have to stop putting You in a box and expecting You to do things my way. Help me by Your Holy Spirit to become more and more sensitive to Your will and Your ways and then give me the courage to follow them out. I ask it in Jesus' Name and for His glory. Amen.

Additional readings

Colossians 2; Hebrews 6:1-8; 2 Peter 1:3-11.

Questions

How do we 'grow up' in Christ?

What are you doing to make sure you are?

What plans have you made to make sure you continue to grow this year?

To whom are you spiritually accountable this year?

The Cloud of Witnesses

Lesson 5: Moses – The Father Of Israel

Reading

Deuteronomy 33:1-29.

Before you can lead you must learn to love

God said of Moses – No prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. Deuteronomy 34: 10

Moses didn't lead the People of Israel into the Promised Land. He failed in that role because he disobeyed God – he struck the rock (like last time) instead of 'speaking' to it this time. Yet no other human being had 'given his life' for the People of Israel like Moses. The Bible also records that there has never been anyone as humble as him. He was certainly a very unique man.

He had given up the Palace for the plight of the Israelites. He had to escape from Egypt and live in the Wilderness in preparation of his return. He had to overcome his reticence and timidity to return to Egypt. He had to 'promote' the cause of the Hebrews before an antagonistic, volatile and determined Pharaoh. He had to trust God when all the circumstances were going against him as well as the anger of the Hebrews who felt he was just adding to their pain. He had to lead an unruly rebellious multitude of frightened misfits and slaves from Egypt into the barren wilderness and an unknown future. He had to 'deal' with hardships, disappointments and the faithlessness of his brother, as well as the people.

Yet we find that when God threatened to annihilate the people 'once and for all' and start again with Moses' children – Moses 'stood in the gap' and said, *"No, God, banish me, NOT the People."* I find that beyond understanding! He put his eternity on the line for the people of Israel. God, being a just God, did not take his life even though the offer was made. His true love for the people was beyond description. Even just before he was about to die – God had already revealed it to him – he still took time out to bless each of the Israelite Tribes as we read today!

What a man!

In our 'dog eat dog' society, which promotes self-aggrandisement and self-centredness, we need to hear what Jesus said, *"Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant."* Matthew 20:26

The Cloud of Witnesses

Lesson 5 continued: Moses – The Father Of Israel

Moses would say to us today...

If you really want to lead people – first show you love them and really seek their betterment. You will never lead anyone until you show you really care for them. That's what a father does! He loves & leads!

Prayer

Father, when I look at Moses I realise that he was an incredible person. No wonder You loved talking to him. Please help me become someone You like talking to with such intimacy. Teach me to have compassion for people and through that love lead them to know and love You too. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Additional readings

Philippians 4:4-9; Psalm 103; Luke 4:38-44.

Questions

Why is it so easy for us to get 'frustrated' with people?

How can we grow in our love for people?

What is the greatest thing we can do for those living next door to us?

What can we do to help those with whom we work?