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Life through the Eyes of a Living Legend

726-B

Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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Father,

It's such an awesome thought that we can call You Father. And that, as we do, and as we whisper that Name, Jesus, the sweetest Name ever uttered, the Name before which one day every knee will bow, we can literally sense in our spirits as the courts of heaven envelop us in our precious God. He spoke the worlds into being and tenderly listens to the very beat of our hearts, and longs for us to tell Him of our love and to worship Him for His grace and power. And so, Father, we come to do just that.

We come, not bringing requests at this time, except the requests that we have mentioned. We come rather, to bring our lives to You and to fall at Your feet and to realize the very privilege of being in Your presence is beyond understanding. We're a presumptuous lot, Father. We tend to take for granted our salvation, the right to pray, and even Your precious Word. Please forgive us. And as we come, this morning, cleanse our hearts, give us a fresh beginning and grant to us hearts that are so open to Your truth, that Your Spirit can be our teacher and we can be changed. May we leave this place different than we came, Father, because we have been with You.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

I don't understand what it's all about, but I understand enough to know that there is something around these days called virtual reality. I don't know how it works either, but I do know that you put on some kind of head gear or something (that's the way I understand it), and you actually enter into another realm where you are experiencing something you're not experiencing or something. Anyway, the problem is at some point in time, you have to take the glasses off, and when you take the glasses off, guess what? It's real world again.

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I was reminded as I began to prepare to look at this last lesson in the life of Moses (I guess it is the 24th lesson in our study on Moses), that you can look at Moses' life in one of two ways. You can put on virtual reality or the world's set of glasses, and you can see him the way the world sees him, which is basically as a failure. Or you can put on the lenses of eternity and see his life from God's perspective and your life through his life and, *wow*, what a difference. What a difference.

This morning we are going to do that. We are going to look at Moses' life from the world's perspective and then Moses' life from God's perspective. Then we are going to stop and listen as Moses calls us together as a congregation and says, "This is it. I'm going bye-bye, but I've got to tell you some things before I go."

And so, this morning, we are going to look at life through the lens of the Word, through the lens of the world, and through the heart of Moses, as well. You remember, if you look at life through the eyes of the world, you always see that there's a common set of objectives. The world views success a certain way. I think we all agree with that—human accomplishment, physical comfort, peer acceptance, pleasant circumstances. If you were to ask someone how they are doing today, they would, unconsciously mind you, but they would answer your question based on how they were doing in those four areas and they would determine either prosperity or success based on those things. But God's perspective is the opposite. In fact, it is so much the opposite that the very things that constitute failure from the world's perspective—human failure, human weakness, peer rejection, unpleasant circumstances, are the very things that strip away the veneer of our independence and allow God to totally change us into His likeness. The world would choose to believe if somebody "does pretty well", that he just pulled himself up and recognized the obstacles in life were not too much for him and he was able to make it. But in reality, the believer recognizes those very obstacles were the tools God used to hammer out His life in their life. That is why we've been looking at the Living Legends of Scripture.

LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF THE WORLD

Well, Moses now stands at the end of his life. He's looking out at the horizon called eternity, and, *wow*, what a life. From any way you look at it, it's been full, it's been notable and it's been

long. But if you measure it by those four rules of prosperity—human accomplishment, physical comfort, peer acceptance and pleasant circumstances, you would have to say, “Whoa, I’m glad I wasn’t in his shoes. What a long, hard life.” And it seemed like the closer he got to success, the more he got hammered. The poor guy had hammer holes in his head about the time he got to the end of his life.

So let’s look at this for just a moment. If today’s history book writers were writing the life of Moses, how would today’s psychiatrists look at his life? Let’s take a look.

1- He had a bad beginning. That’s the first thing psychiatrists seem to look at today. Our bouncing baby boy made his entrance onto planet earth as a basket case. He was left on the marshy banks of the Nile, born into a family of a persecuted minority; so persecuted, they were treated like slaves. And at the moment of his birth, this hostility had hit an all time high. He was so hated (his race was), that all boy babies born in that race were ordered to be murdered. I think he understood persecution. He also understood slavery. His parents were forced to abandon him as a baby and entrust his fate to the very people who sought to destroy him. So, I’d say on a scale of one to ten, he had about a two, as a chance to make it because from what they tell us, this kind of rejection and persecution leaves deep scars, right? Okay, not too good so far.

2- He was the product of a permissive, affluent childhood. Best education you could have. He had the run of the palace, the elegance of royalty, he was spoiled rotten and raised with a silver spoon in his mouth. He doesn’t have a chance.

3- As a youth and a young man, he had a tough decision to make. Some of you have had those kinds of decisions. You look back over your life and you say, “Wait a minute. If only I had made that decision differently from the world’s position. He had a make or break decision and he made the wrong one. I mean, he was on the road to success, this guy was. Historians tell us that he was probably in line for the second in command in the nation. He had a military mind. He was a whiz. And the Scripture says he had a choice. He could be somebody the way he was destined to be, or he could throw it all away and become a religious fanatic. Those were his two choices. You read in Hebrews 11:24,

By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be

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called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward [because he knew the end result].

(Hebrews 11:24-26)

So, he rejected the ones who raised him, turned his back on the "chance of a lifetime", assumed the role of delivering his people from bondage and killed a man in the process.

4- He entered the ministry. It was a total failure. Total failure! He was going to deliver his people. He tried to deliver them and he murdered a guy and nothing is left. He was a total failure.

5- Having been thrown out of his first ministry, he was labeled a fugitive and a failure. He was chased out of the country by his stepparents and scorned by his congregation. The wisemen would have written him off as an emotional cripple. He was the product of a minority birth, parental rejection, permissive childhood, fanatical religious experience, the guilt of murder and the scars of peer rejection. Sounds like a winner, right? That's the way the world would look at him, beloved, but God had other plans.

6- He became a forgotten man. He was led into a land of strangers settled in the midst of nowhere, married the preacher's daughter and was forgotten by everybody he ever knew. He suffered further humiliation being relegated to the lowly vocation of a shepherd and having never earned enough money to go into business for himself, this product of the prosperity of the palace, forty years later, finds himself the employee of his father-in-law. By now, according to man's assessment, he was on the bottom looking down. He is eighty years old, just a little younger than I am, lonely and out of touch with the modern ways of the world. He had all these pamphlets, the Goshen Mountain Retirement Home, he was already looking through.

7- A senior citizen from the backside of the desert picks up his cellular phone one day and it's God on the phone. His life is spent. His best years are behind him and God offers him a job. "Now, he calls me!" It's a job he didn't want, leading people who didn't want him, into a land they never got to. Pretty good deal. Graciously, he declined the offer and God said, "No way, you're drafted. Report to duty at basic training camp at the outskirts of

Pharaoh's palace in the shadow of the life you left behind." That was okay. Further rejection came. Pharaoh laughed, Pharaoh scorned, Pharaoh ridiculed. God lets it get worse. His own people rebelled and questioned his motives. What a life!

8- A great let-down and another failure. At last the moment of truth comes. He leads his people out of bondage into freedom. The waters part, the people pass over. He's a hero for a day. Then his forty year tour of duty—the pastor of the most irreverent, irresponsible, rebellious congregation in history. Now you think about the honor this congregation had. He served the same church for forty years. It never grew in size. It just dwindled. Their congregational meetings turned into "Roast the Preacher" sessions. They voted almost unanimously to reject their pastor's proposal to move to a new location that had been given to them free incidentally, and voted instead to elect a new man who had a better appreciation for the past. He announced a free food program for the whole congregation, but they didn't like the menu.

They ran out of water. He led them to more, but they didn't like the way it tasted. He preached and they laughed at his messages. He went on a retreat to get a better handle on the Word, and by the time he returned, his associate pastor had set-up a new program and blown the whole thing. He finally got things under control again, when his own brother and sister started a petition to fire him and replace him with a more democratic form of government. Isn't that a neat life?

Grassroots rebellion starts in, a full scale riot ensues, and the people had determined he had served them for forty years but he had outgrown his usefulness. It was time for him to leave. There were no great stories to write about his family either. His first wife—he was so busy, he hardly ever got to see her. His second wife was never accepted either by the family or the church. Almost nothing is said about his sons.

9- Finally he approaches the end of his journey, he loses his cool in front of the whole church, insults God, insults the people and loses his retirement home in Canaan. Questionable legacy. A hundred and twenty years of rejection, failure, and misunderstanding. File it away in a public library under A for *Also Ran*. Right? Not quite. Listen, beloved, God was using all of those circumstances to make a man after His own heart.

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Because through a bad beginning, he was placed strategically where he needed to be. Because through a permissive and affluent childhood, he learned and rejected the ways of the world. Because through making a tough decision, he burned his bridges and settled the course of his life spiritually. Because through a failure in the ministry, he learned to be a man of meekness, the meekest man who ever lived. Because through the life of a fugitive, he learned to be a man of courage. Because through the life of a forgotten man, he learned to be a man of patience. Because through an unwanted call he learned to become a man of obedience. Because through an ungrateful congregation, he learned to become a man of intercession. He even learned to pray for his enemies, those who spitefully used him and hated him. Because of this unsuccessful ministry, he was drawn to the Word until the Word was the only thing he had to hold on to, and, beloved, that's all he needed.

10- Then finally, through a tragic mistake of disobedience at the end of his life, he became a man who viewed eternity in heaven in the proper perspective because he would never find the promised land on earth. Don't you see? Questionable legacy? No. From God's perspective, nothing was accidental and nothing was wasted. And, beloved, it isn't in your life either. I think there are two verses of Scripture and I know this is probably a heresy to pick out two, but I think there are two verses of Scripture Satan hates worse than any other. The first one, I believe, is three words, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The second one is "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20).

I honestly believe as we look at the life of this man, Moses, this morning, we need to realize that from man's perspective this guy just didn't make it. From God's perspective, nothing was an accident.

LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF THE WORD

Let's look then very quickly at his life through the eyes of the Word. You see, God was out there looking for somebody who needed Him and knew he needed Him. So he took a man born in the throws of terror and rejection, raised by foster parents who were not believers. And he asked him to give Him his life and then let him try in the energy of the flesh to have a ministry. God let him fail. Then he let him flee for his life to an unknown land where he had a wife and a job waiting for him. Then he

let the rest of himself die out on a lonely hillside and He called him to the thankless task of leading an ungrateful people so he would have to lean minute by minute on His Master. God was not oblivious to Moses' problems; God didn't see them as problems. God saw them as tools. Tools with which to create and hone out the life of a man who would be a man after His own heart.

He wanted a man that was so unsure of his own words that when at last he entrusted him with His words, he could be trusted to deliver them to the people. You think about that. You see, God led this special man with a special plan through a web of what the world calls failure and disappointments, to make him a man of integrity, a man of meekness, a man of prayer, a man of the Word. So through the eyes of the world, he was a failure. Ahhh, but through the eyes of God, a man after God's own heart.

And beloved, if you don't start looking at life from God's perspective alone, you will be double-minded, unstable in all your ways. The problem is, that we want to look at one lens from the world and one from the Word and try to make the two come together as you would in an optometrist's office when you try to bring them together and get it in focus, but it doesn't work. And the reason is, they are 180 degrees apart. They are just a little different. Man's measuring stick—human accomplishment, physical comfort, peer acceptance, pleasant circumstances—Moses, you're a failure. God's measuring stick—Moses, you're My man. And you and I have the same kinds of problems in our lives that Moses had. Failure, affliction, rejection, unpleasant circumstances, disappointing relationships, and we have a choice. We can groan and moan and complain, or we can crawl up into God and see a miracle. Because it is out of the cocoon of disappointment and weakness that comes the beauty of character. And character develops a message, and a message develops a ministry. And the thing Satan designed to destroy him and to destroy us—parental rejection, minority status, peer rejection, job failure, misunderstanding, failure to be appreciated, traumas, long periods in the desert of loneliness, God wants to use those things to change us. That's the message—weakness to strength through the grace of God. So, don't ever blame your circumstances for who you are or who you aren't. God knew all about those circumstances before the foundation of the world. They are your one way ticket into the heart of God.

Now, what I'm going to beg you to and hope that some of you in

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the focus groups will do this week, is take a blank piece of paper, and begin to chart out your life from the world's perspective from the beginning, from when you were born. And then list all of your weakness and all of your traumas and all of the things that have happened in your life and stop and praise God for everyone of them, because out of each has come something in your life you never would have had otherwise in the Spirit realm.

LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF A LIVING LEGEND

Well, so much of Moses through the eyes of the world and the eyes of the Word. What about Moses through the eyes of Moses? And what about life through the eyes of Moses?

Well, it's at the end of his life. He's pushing my age by now, (Deuteronomy 29). He is 120 years old and he does what us old folks tend to do, don't we? He turned around and looked back, not to see who was chasing him, but just to see what was behind him. Then he called the people to him and he began to tell them what life was all about.

I just want to remind you one more time. I have said this too many times. The church of Jesus Christ in the 20th century has lost the blessing of listening to those who have walked the walk and talked the talk. The church of Jesus Christ today has relegated those in the sunset years of life to some kind of a program over here to keep them occupied, instead of sitting down and listening to their heartbeat because they've been there. And I think we need to rethink that. The Christian community today because of the way the world treats older people, the Christian community has lost that level of respect. They are the ones who have been there. We need to listen to them. Moses has now reached that stage. He didn't give the congregation any choice. I think that's neat. He called them together and said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to tell you what I have learned in 120 years." Let's take a look at it. I'm going to call them the Seven Wonders of the Word because there are really seven great truths, at least in this passage. It starts in Deuteronomy. 29, verse 2. And it goeth like thiseth.

And Moses called unto all Israel, [he called the whole church meeting together] and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land;

The great temptations [trials] which your eyes have seen,

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the signs, and the great miracles: (Deuteronomy 29:2,3)

And I have led you these forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. [He's taken care of your basic needs. Got it?]

Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I AM the LORD your God.

[And think about the warfare that God has won on your behalf] when ye came unto this place, Sihon, the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan came out against us unto battle, [Do you remember that? You haven't forgotten that battle, have you? And we won!] and we smote them: [Remember?]

And we took their land and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites and to half of the tribe of Manasseh.

Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. (Deuteronomy 29:5-9)

So Moses' first wonder of the Word is this: "*Don't you ever forget what God has done for you.*" The minute you do, you lose it. You and I need to remember the miracle of our salvation. We have experienced the miracle of God's presence, His will, on a day-to-day basis. We have lived with the miracle of His provision, the miracles of His power and, beloved, that's all we need to worship Him. Where would you be today without the Lord? We were talking this week, some of us, about some of the pressures of old age and how difficult it is to get old. It's just not as easy as it looks like! And the neat thing is that to stop and realize as difficult as old age is, what would old age be like without Christ? And we need to stop and realize where would we be today without the Lord? Instead of focusing on, "You'll never believe all the problems I've had. You'll never believe how my health is failing. You'll never believe how my family did this or that." Instead of doing that, could we say, "Wait a minute, where would I be today without the Lord?" You would be trapped in the mire of Egypt in bondage to sin or dying in a desert with no water of life, clinging to golden calves for your salvation, only to drink of their bitterness and die. The curse of a short memory. Murmuring Christians who never stop to think what it would be like if Jesus Christ had not reached down and touched their life. And I know you get tired of my saying it, but you'll have to get tired of it. We need a book of

remembrance. We need a page in our prayer notebook. We need someplace to keep a record of the things that God has done, because we have short memories. And Satan sees to it that we forget. We forget how He parted the sea of salvation for us and took us across on dry land. We forget the little miracles day by day that remind us He cares, He cares, He cares. Instead we long for Egypt and we want to go back. God forgive us. Don't ever forget what God has done for you.

The second thing that Moses had to share begins in verse 16. Incidentally, if you struggle finding memory verses to memorize, just pay attention this morning. I think the rest of the year could be covered in these passages. Moses goes on,

For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which ye passed by;

And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them:

[Beware] Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; (Deuteronomy 29:16-18)

In other words, Moses said, "Don't ever forget folks, this world is not your home. You are passing through on your way to glory. You're a tourist here. Don't start acting like the natives."

Set your affection [Paul said] on things above, not on things of the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:2,3)

The children of Israel never really learned that lesson. They never recognized the land of promise when they saw it. They glamorized Egypt. Even its gods looked good to them. They lost their grasp on eternity. The peril of living in this world we live in today is, it's such a time of prosperity, we begin to think that if we lay up treasures in this world and we're well received in this world, that we are spiritually mature. I think one of the greatest sins of our generation is that no one preaches on heaven enough. I think of our children growing up, and you go into the Christian bookstores today, and most of the material that's written is how to cope with life. Well, that's important, but, beloved, this life represents a very small training ground for something ahead of us, that's so beautiful, so wonderful, so awesome, that the mind

of man cannot grasp it and the tongue of man cannot explain it. It's called heaven. And the disciples understood it. This world is not our home. And it isn't that we don't focus on what God wants to do in our lives here, but what a difference it makes when we realize why He is doing it. We realize that this is a temporary address.

Folks, one of these days they are going to put a tag on us that says, *Forward to Eternal Glory*. Moses understood what Solomon understood, that all is vanity and everything in this life is like a vapor that's vanishing away. And this 120-year-old man looks back over his shoulder and says, "It's been a long, hard life." But, let me tell you, beloved, this isn't where it's at. This world is not my home.

The next wonder of the Word is found in verse 29. Moses went on and said this,

[Remember] the secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.
(Deuteronomy 29:29)

In other words, he said, "Don't you ever forget, folks, you don't have all the answers yet. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:9,

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

For now we see through [sunglasses, but one day we're going to take them off. Now, we know a little bit, one day we are going to see it all] a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known.
(1 Corinthians 13:9,10,12)

I believe one of the marks of maturity is the growing revelation that we don't have all the answers; we just belong to a God who does. He's a God who reveals them in ever-increasing splendor as we have the capacity to receive them and the teachability to desire them. But I know one thing, as I get older and boy, do I get older, that the longer I live, the less I know. And the reason is, the longer I live, the more acquainted I am with how much more of Him there is to know.

Some things in the Christian life you'll never know on earth. Are you willing to accept that? They are called mysteries. Some things we are supposed to accept by faith and God has

intentionally put a veil over our eyes so we can't understand them totally. It says, Now, we see through sunglasses, but one day, face to face. Moses says, "God has given you everything you need to know, but the secret things, those things too wonderful for you to know, they belong to Him." Trust Him. Are you willing to do that?

The fourth wonder of the Word goes to chapter 30, verse 5. Moses said this,

And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee [even more than he did the generation before] above thy fathers. [The Lord God will do something special for you. Oh, it's not just what He will give you in the land.]

And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.

(Deuteronomy 30:5-8)

Moses looks back over his life of 120 years and he reminds us that Godliness is an issue of the heart. He reminds us that God is not at all impressed with your ministry. God is not at all impressed with your vocation. God isn't even tremendously impressed with your status in life. God is impressed with your heart. For out of the heart are the issues of life. (Proverbs 4:23) And Moses says as you grow older, you better realize that God is not looking at your resume`. God is looking at your heart.

Have you ever asked God to circumcise your heart? It's a dangerous prayer to pray, but it's wonderful. Did you ever ask God to create in you a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you? When last did you admit to yourself that God is not so impressed with your church committee responsibilities, or with how faithful you are in attending this or attending that. God is looking in the secret places of your heart, at the motion pictures that show in your mind when nobody else can see but you.

Moses looks back at 120 years of greatness and failure combined and he says, "I'm just beginning to realize in all of the

fullness of it, the only thing that really matters is a pure heart.

The fifth wonder of the Word is found in chapter 30, verse 11. Moses says this,

For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. (Deuteronomy 30:11-14)

Moses looks at the people one more time and he looks at his life and he draws one more inescapable conclusion. He says, "All you need to know about God and about life is right under your nose. It's in the Word of God." It isn't wrapped in some mystical experience awaiting you in the heavenlies. God isn't playing hide and seek with His people. He's not hidden in some secret place where only a few special men who have a special education can interpret it for us. It's ours. It's yours. It's in your heart. It's right there.

Paul says you want to know it all on earth, but you can't know it all on earth. All you need to know on earth is right there in the Word of God. Put it in your heart and put it in your life. The mystery isn't how to find the will of God. The mystery is that the will of God is in the Word of God and we don't pay any attention to it. The older you get the more you see that everything but the Word passes away. And if I were to interview you today and ask you to hold up your hands; of course, nobody here holds up their hands. But, if you were to consider holding up your hands and I were to ask you, how many of you in this room have said to God, and said to yourself, "I'm going to memorize the Scripture more faithfully. I'm going to meditate on it more faithfully. I'm going to spend more time in the Word. I'm going to be a man or woman of the Book. And you've said it over and over and over and yet how many of us when yesterday becomes today, it never quite gets there? And we come to the end of our lives and we scratch our heads and we'll look around like Moses did and say, "Boy, wouldn't it have been neat if I would have invested my life in the

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Word of God?” Moses did it. As he looked back over his life, he was able to see. The Psalmist had Moses’ perspective. He said,

How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore, I hate every false way.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
(Psalm 119:103-105)

The sixth wonder of the Word is found in verses 15-19. And here Moses made this incredible statement,

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.
(Deuteronomy 30:15-16,19)

Moses looks back over his life for the sixth time and he says, “Over my 120 years I can draw one more conclusion and that is this, the choices in life were mine. I made them. Good and bad, right or wrong. We’re not puppets on a string. God gives us choices. He gives us answers and choices, and we determine the course of our spiritual destiny. It isn’t whether or not our parents loved us, it’s whether or not we let God take the soil He prepared in our youth no matter what it was for, and plant the seed of life therein. It isn’t whether or not we were accepted as a young person, it’s whether we accepted as a young person, the gift of life from someone Who always will accept us. It isn’t whether or not we have had bad breaks. It isn’t whether or not we have had good breaks. It’s whether or not we have responded to the circumstances God has allowed in our life. We have a choice, life or death, good or evil. We are responsible. No one else is responsible for our choices.

If we’ve chosen immorality, if we’ve chosen impurity, we pay the price. It’s not our parents’ fault, it’s not God’s fault, it’s a choice we made and it’s a choice we are making. If we’ve chosen

to be jealous and bitter, we've made that choice. You say, "Well, God, life has dealt me a bad blow." Yes, it did Moses, too. Blow after blow, after blow. It isn't because we have had bad blows, it's because we have failed to see beyond those blows to the will of God, and it isn't too late today. The choice is yours; the choice is mine. Moses said, "First of all you have a choice between life and death." And, if you are here today or you are listening on tape and you have never personally received Christ as your personal Savior, it isn't because God hasn't shown you the way. He is the Way. With outstretched arms right this moment, He calls to you by name and says, "Whosoever will, may come." (Revelation 22:17b). He says, "It isn't in some faraway place just beyond your grasp. The Word, Jesus Christ, is near to you. He's very near to your heart. You can choose right now to trust Him and take His life. You can trade death for life, darkness for light. That's your choice! And He says, "Christian, the day-to-day choices are yours, too." He'll give you choices between good and evil, right and wrong, and He says, "Choose to walk in My way or not." You can use all kinds of excuses, you can use all kinds of explanations, but, beloved, the truth of the matter is, every young person today still needs to understand, the choices they make are their choices, spiritually.

And then, of course, the seventh wonder of the Word is found in chapter 31.

And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.

And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also, the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. [I think it's interesting he gave two reasons for not going into the land. He said, "I'm too old." And God said, "No." It's a good reason.]

The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said. (Deuteronomy 31:1-3)

Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. (Deuteronomy 31:6,8)

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So, the seventh word of faith for Moses, he winds up his message as this. Beloved, I don't care how you feel, you will never, ever walk alone. I think some of us as Christians, miss that fact. Scripture say,

“The God of all comfort, comforts you in all your sorrow and trials so you may be able to comfort others with the same comfort with which you yourselves are comforted of God”

(2 Corinthians 1:3-5 paraphrase)

And people will come to you and say, “God didn't comfort me last night in all my sorrow”, and that's not true. If you say that, God's a liar. That's not true. What you did not do is appropriate the comfort God gave you last night because the Scripture says He was there comforting you. And I honestly believe, beloved, that we need to understand. That truth ought to ring clearly in our minds. You may feel lonely. You may feel as though you've been left on the banks to dry. You may feel like you're Moses as a shepherd off in a lonely existence with no one around that cares for you or loves you. But Moses said, “I have learned as I look around behind me, I will never walk alone.”

I think the most important issue here is, “God didn't send me into the battle,” Moses said. “He took me.” Psalm 23, verse 4,

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou [what?] art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

David wrote in Psalm 37:25,

I have been young, and now I am old; [some of us can relate to that one], yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

[I've never seen God let me down.] (Psalm 37:25)

When life's shadows cast their darkest rays of gloom, Moses said, “There He is with more light.” When life's pressures seem unbearable, there He is with more grace. He will never leave me; He will never forsake me. I may walk through the valleys of suffering or loneliness, but I will never, ever, ever walk alone.

So, Moses closes the book. And he looks out at the people, and he said, “Don't you ever forget these truths. You may forget me,” Moses was saying, “but don't you ever forget what God has said.

1. Don't ever forget what God has done for you.

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2. Don't ever forget that this world is not your home. That's part of your problem, you know.
3. He said, don't ever forget you don't have all the answers yet. You're not supposed to.
4. Don't you ever forget the real issue is the issue of the heart.
5. Don't you ever forget God's Word is all you need.
6. Don't you ever forget the choices are yours.
7. And don't ever forget, you'll never, ever walk alone.

And with that, the Godly old saint closed his Bible. He looked up into heaven, and opened his arms and walked triumphantly into the hands of the One who had held him so closely for lo, those 120 years. If you want to sum up his life, look at the last words he spoke in chapter 33, verse 7. It was this,

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: (Deuteronomy 33:7)

In chapter 34, verse 5 we read,

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

And he [God] buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day. (Deuteronomy 34:5,6)

Moses died according to the Word of the Lord. Every man dies according to the Word of the Lord. When your work is done, He calls you. God chose the time. God chose the place. He always does. But so precious was this saint in the sight of God, that he had his own personal burial service. You may be sitting here today saying, "I wonder who I'd like to do my funeral service?" Well it can't get any better than this. God did it. Jehovah did it. He buried him in a personal place that no one but He knew where it was. Isn't that neat? You see, it wasn't important to know where he was buried because he's still alive. He's not only alive in the presence of the Lord, he's alive in our hearts and he's alive in the lives of those he touched. Chapter 34, verse 9:

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: [And that's not just a physical laying on of the hands. If you read the chapters before, Moses spent year after year after year disciplining this man.] and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and

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did as the LORD commanded Moses. (Deuteronomy 34:9)

But he not only lived on in those he touched, he lived on because of who he was. And verse 10 kind of winds it up. God is speaking:

And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, [heart to heart].

In all the signs and wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,

And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel.

(Deuteronomy 34:10-12)

Wouldn't it be neat to come to the end of your life and have God say that at your funeral service? God said, "What a man. There has never been another like Moses. He knew Me face to face." Heart to heart is what it means. And that's the bottom line. And as we close this morning, I'm only going to ask you one question. When the pages of history are written by God's hand about you, there's really only one thing that will matter. How well did you know Him?

Were you so intimately acquainted with His heart, so at home in His presence, that when your name is read, God will smile and say, "Ah, he or she was face to face with Me?" When you develop that kind of walk with God, a face-to-face kind of walk, it won't matter what circumstances came your way. You may have been abandoned, you may have been forgotten, you have been rejected. So what? He'll never leave you! He'll never forsake you! He'll always accept you. But through those valleys, will you not come to know Him face to face? And as you walk with Him face to face, could it not be true, that even you would become a Living Legend?

With this we close.

OH, TO BE LIKE MOSES

So, it matters not what life may bring;
What terrors this world holds.
There is no cause for panic
When life's script for you unfolds.

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Those deep, dark hours that cloud the way
With Satan's foul intent,
Will yet unveil God's real design
When all of our life is spent.

The world will say, "What good?
What good could this trauma bring?"
Yet even as the hours pass,
The choirs of heaven sing.

For every plan that Satan has
To harm us if he could,
The Master plans for glory
To use it for our good.

So, then, the issue isn't,
"What trials have been our lot?"
The question is, "Is God in charge?
Are we His own or not?"

For if we are, then nothing can
Destroy that precious plan.
He has in mind to use each trial
To make His kind of man.

The only thing that matters then,
As life falls into place,
Is that through whatever happens,
Do we know Him face to face?

Do we spend the kind of time with Him
That when life's problems start,
We at once rejoice that we can
Better know His heart?

Oh, to be like Moses,
To stand on holy sod,
Until our very lives reflect
Face to face with God.

Our Father and our God,

What a life, what a testimony, not because it was easy, but because it was Yours. Not because he didn't have problems, but because the problems were turned into stepping stones that drew him closer, and closer, and closer and closer to the heart of the only One who could take care of him.

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Father, we're so independent. We call on You when we're desperate, but when we're not desperate, we live our lives and we strut around as those who could do something for You.

Dear God, forgive us. Somehow, Father, as the blows fall upon our lives, both good and bad, may we, in the days to come, just quietly crawl up closer into Your arms and rest, until we can come to that place beyond our understanding, that's all of grace, face to face.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen.

For Focus and Application

1- Why do you think a constant battle goes on in the life of Christians concerning their perspective of life? Why do the problems of prosperity and success always seem to come up? Why do you think God decided to use the things the world hates to glorify His name in the believer?

2- Re-read the circumstances in Moses' life that made him who he was. Why was he, like Joseph, such an unlikely one to succeed by the world's standards? How do you think the world viewed Jesus? As a success or a failure? Why does it sometimes take years before God's real "success" stories surface?

3- Re-read the ways God took Moses' failures and turned them into character. Try to envision your own life and your own "failures" and place them alongside his. Why do you think God allowed those "disappointments" to happen to you? How have they worked together for your good and His glory? Do you thank Him often for those disappointments and the ensuing grace He gave you?

4- Moses gave us a series of truths in his final address. How do these truths seem to summarize his life?

- a- Don't ever forget what God has done for you. Have you followed through and begun or continued a "Book of Remembrance" for you and your family? Why is this so important to God? Why do you think Satan keeps us too busy to do it?
- b- Don't ever forget this world is not your home. Does an

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ambassador to a foreign country on a tour of duty make his investments in that country or in the country from which he came and to which he'll return? Where are your investments? What permeates your thoughts? Heaven? Things? Success?

- c- Don't ever forget you don't have all the answers yet. How does spiritual pride rob us of our humility and thus of our joy in the later years of our lives and ministries? What can we do about it? What are some of the things that develop spiritual pride in you?
- d- Don't ever forget that God is not impressed with your performance, but with your heart. What ways do you try to "bribe" God with good works, while allowing sin to remain in your heart as though God can't see it?
- e- Don't ever forget that life is a series of choices, and our lives will reflect those choices. We are so prone to try to affix blame on someone else for the problems in our lives instead of taking responsibility for our responses to those circumstances. Ask God to deal with this in your own life.
- f- Don't ever forget that you will never walk alone. Our loneliness, then, is the result of our failure to accept His love, which is always there. Ask God to reaffirm that truth in your heart today.

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(02.04.20.dvd)