

The Life of Moses

• Lesson Two •

God Calls Moses into Service

1. God's timetable was different from Moses' timetable
2. After an additional 40 years of training, Moses received his call
3. God gave Moses promises to rely on

Worship

The Lord of grace has called us into his kingdom. The Savior's open arms await us after this brief life. To those whom God has called, the psalmist proclaims, "Worship the LORD with gladness" (Psalm 100:2).

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-10. Pay special attention to Samuel's response to the Lord.

L: The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions. One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called Samuel.

G: Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

L: Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Prayer:

Speak, O Savior; I am list'ning,
As a servant to his lord.
Let me show respect and honor
To your holy, precious Word,
That each day, my whole life through,
I may serve and follow you.
Let your Word e'er be my pleasure
And my heart's most precious treasure. Amen. (*Christian Worship* [CW] 283:1)

Introduction

“Not now. You’ll have to wait until you’re older before you can do that.” Do you remember your parents telling you that? If you are a parent, you may only have to think back a few weeks (days?) since you spoke similar words to one of your children.

What might children or teens want to do that they aren’t ready for yet? Why do parents sometimes say, “Not now”? Does “not now” mean “not ever”?

Studying God’s Word

At the time of our reading, Moses was 40 years old. Pharaoh’s daughter had “brought him up as her own son” (Acts 7:21). “Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). Even more important, the Lord had planted faith in his heart. Also, in some way God had indicated to him that he, Moses, would lead Israel out of Egypt. Now “Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not” (Acts 7:25). Moses felt he was ready to serve as the Lord’s appointed leader of Israel. But God had to tell him, “Not now.”

God’s timetable was different from Moses’ timetable

Read Exodus 2:11-15

1. How did Moses try to seize the moment and become Israel’s leader? (verses 11 and 12)
2. What kind of response did Moses receive from his fellow Hebrews? (verses 13 and 14)
3. What was the result of Moses’ bad timing? (verse 15)

His Word in My Life

All Christians can recall God answering their prayers with a yes. We can also remember God responding with a no. Do you remember a time when God answered, “Not now”? How did God’s reply serve to strengthen your faith?

Moses had it made. He lived in a palace and was surrounded by luxury. Yet, as we read in Hebrews 11:24-26, “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.” What worldly “pleasures of sin” try to lure the Christian away from “his reward”? What lesson can we learn from how Moses dealt with these earthy treasures?

God had plans for Moses, but Moses misread when those plans would begin to be fulfilled. So God told him, “Not now.” God’s “not now” might not be what we want, but since it is part of God’s will, it’s what we need.

After an additional 40 years of training, Moses received his call

Moses spent his next 40 years as an alien in the land of Midian. He married Zipporah, the daughter of Reuel, priest of Midian. The once eager, young buck was now an elderly man of 80 years.

Back home in Egypt, the situation became more intolerable for the Israelites. “The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God” (Exodus 2:23). God removed the “not” from the “not now” of 40 years ago. Now was the Lord’s time for Moses.

Read Exodus 3:1-11

1. Why might 40 years in the wilderness have provided Moses with experience to supplement his previous training in all the wisdom of the Egyptians?
2. What strange thing did Moses see? (verses 2 and 3)
3. Why did God call himself “the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”? (verse 6)
4. Why do you think Moses was hesitant to bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

His Word in My Life

God used Moses’ 40 years in Midian to prepare him for a huge task. Agree or disagree: God uses every day of our lives to prepare us for future service to him.

Can you give an illustration from your own life? Perhaps there was a time when you finally realized how God had prepared you for some particular task.

Life was good for Jack. He never lost a loved one, never was hospitalized, and never was out of work. God blessed Jack with a beautiful family bonded in the love of the Savior and love for each other. Jack and his family never missed church. A friend once asked Jack, “Why do you always attend church?” Jack included this among his reasons: “I attend church to be prepared for the inevitable hardship that will come upon me or my family.” Is Jack a pessimist? Discuss his response.

In John 15 Jesus relates that the Father is the gardener, the Son is the vine, and we are the branches. As the gardener, God trims clean every branch that bears fruit so that it will be even more fruitful (verse 2). God’s preparation for us includes pruning us. What does this mean? Why does God do it?

God had a great task for Moses to accomplish. The safety of God’s own people was at stake. Nothing touches the lives of God’s people without first passing through the hands of God. Moses had passed through God’s preparing hand. Now he was ready to assume his role as leader.

God gave Moses promises to rely on

Moses was apprehensive at best, scared to the bone at worst, when the Lord called him from the fiery bush. But God had more to say.

Read Exodus 3:12

1. What did God promise Moses?

2. What sign did God give him?

3. Why did God give Moses the sign?

His Word in My Life

Martin Luther summarized the meaning of Christ's redemptive work in these words: "that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness."

Even though at times we might feel as though we are "spinning our wheels" in some area of service, why isn't that service in vain?

Jesus has given us the same promise God gave to Moses: to be with us to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20). How does Jesus' promise affect you as you serve him?

Our Lord not only abides with us as we serve him but even when we sin. How may that truth both trouble and comfort us?

God remained at Moses' side with preparation and promise. The same is true for us.

Summary

Moses realized he would lead Israel out of Egypt. Although he acted in faith when he killed the Egyptian, his timing was wrong. God had many more years of training in store for him. When the time was right, God called Moses and gave him his commission. He promised to be with him.

Throughout life God prepares us to serve him, and he bolsters our faith with his sure promises.

Life with God

Fill in the blanks: Our lesson has dealt with the high points of the Bible’s account of this portion of Moses’ life. Fill in the blanks by reading Exodus 3:1-12. If you wish, read *Exodus* (The People’s Bible commentary) on these verses. If you are reading all of Exodus through Deuteronomy, continue by reading Leviticus 15–25.

- Day 1: Read and begin memorizing Luther’s explanation to the Second Article.
- Day 2: Begin and end your day by saying, “Today, I serve(d) the Lord.” Continue with the Day 1 assignment.
- Day 3: Memorize Galatians 6:10: “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” Look for the opportunity to serve the “family of believers.” Continue with the Day 1 and Day 2 assignments.
- Day 4: Look for the opportunity to serve someone outside the “family of believers.” Continue with the Day 1 and Day 2 assignments.
- Day 5: Read Psalm 100. Continue with the Day 1 and Day 2 assignments.
- Day 6: Say a prayer of praise to God for using you in his service and for forgiving you in Christ for your imperfect service. Finish the Day 1 assignment. Continue with the Day 2 assignment.