

# The Life of Moses

## • Lesson Four •

### Moses Confronts Pharaoh with God's Message

1. Moses' message was scorned
2. Moses was scorned also
3. God's message reassured Moses

## Worship

How will our message be received? That's the main question we ask whenever we tell someone about our faith. That also worried Moses as he made his way to Pharaoh's palace to confront him with God's message.

**Read God's promise in Isaiah 55:9-11.**

L: As the heavens are higher than the earth,

**G: So are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

L: As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish,

**G: So that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,**

L: So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty,

**G: But will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**

**Prayer:** O God, your Word brings peace. But many want nothing to do with the peace your Son has won for them at the cross. They rebel against your Word. They renounce your messengers. We pray for those who renounce your Word. May your gospel take root in their hearts. Bless their souls with the peace of forgiveness and salvation. We also pray for the messengers of your Word. Give them the courage to proclaim it faithfully in the face of all adversity. Amen.

## Introduction

Peter (Acts 2) and Stephen (Acts 6,7) proclaimed Jesus Christ. When Peter finished preaching, the crowd was "cut to the heart" and asked, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Three thousand people came to faith that day. When Stephen finished preaching, the people "covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him" (Acts 7:57,58).

The same message. Two very different results. Why? The Holy Spirit was present in both messages. Proclaiming God's Word always accomplishes something. God wants his Word to create or

strengthen faith, as it did in Acts 2. Sometimes, though, sinners harden their hearts in unbelief, as in Acts 7, and the message has the opposite result; it stirs up resentment against the message and the messenger.

Sharing God's Word may cause us discomfort. Stephen certainly felt pain while the stones kept flying at him. We don't expect to be stoned for speaking about our Savior, but we can expect some "uncomfortable" situations. Even though discomfort may come our way, we still hold out the Word of Life. Why?

## **Studying God's Word**

For 80 years God prepared Moses for this day—the day he would confront Pharaoh. Remember, Moses wanted to opt out of God's call, but God would not allow it. If Scripture only recounted this first confrontation of Moses and Pharaoh, we would presume Moses was right—he should have stayed in Midian and enjoyed his retirement years in peace. But God's work had to be done! And Moses was the man to do it. Moses' work would not always be pleasant, but it would always accomplish God's purposes.

### **Moses' message was scorned**

#### **Read Exodus 5:1-5**

1. What did Moses demand of Pharaoh? (verses 1 and 3)
2. At whom did Pharaoh aim his sarcastic remarks? (verse 2)
3. Why didn't Pharaoh grant Moses' request? (verses 4 and 5)

#### **His Word in My Life**

Pharaoh's sarcastic remarks show that he didn't think much of the Lord. Discuss some unfavorable impressions unbelievers may have of the Lord and why they might have these impressions.

Pharaoh rejected the Lord more than he rejected Moses. Jesus attests to this in Luke 10:16 when he says, “He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me.” How does this truth both keep our sinful pride in check and keep us from becoming forlorn?

Agree or disagree: Scorning the Word of God is something only unbelievers do.

*One may choose to scorn the Word his entire life. Pharaoh did. A reminder: “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked” (Galatians 6:7). All unbelievers can put God off for a time, as Pharaoh did, but not for forever.*

## **Moses was scorned also**

### **Read Exodus 5:6-23**

1. How did Pharaoh display his displeasure with Moses and the LORD?
2. The Israelite foremen weren't shy in expressing themselves. At whom did they direct their anger? (verses 19-21)
3. The problem began with God's command. On whom did the anger of those involved finally end up? (verses 19-21)

### **His Word in My Life**

Our redemption is free, bought and paid for by the blood of Christ. But there is a cost involved in being one of Jesus' disciples. In Luke 9:24-27 Jesus relates this cost: daily denial, cross carrying, following, and loss. What have you lost or what might a Christian lose for the sake of Christ?

Like Moses, Christians of all ages have been rebuffed by fellow believers and persecuted by unbelievers. In Acts 5:41 we read, "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name." Agree or disagree: Such rejoicing will always be our attitude when we are oppressed for our faith.

Moses' preaching certainly wasn't popular with Pharaoh or Moses' own people. Discuss the following statement: Our congregation would grow if we would eliminate some of our unpopular teachings.

*God's will for Moses brought suffering into the lives of Moses and his people. Being Christian often brings suffering into our lives also.*

### **God's message reassured Moses**

We can sympathize with Moses. Things weren't going well. All Moses wanted was three days of "vacation" for Israel so they might worship the Lord. Pharaoh said, "No way!" Moses hadn't even gotten to the part about letting the people go for good. More than ever, Moses needed some assurance. As always, God provided it.

#### **Read Exodus 6:1-11**

1. Pharaoh's obstinate heart was setting him up for a fall. Pharaoh's resistance would make it all the clearer that Israel's deliverance could be credited to only one source. What was that source? (verse 1)
2. God said, "I have remembered my covenant" (verse 5), "I will redeem you" (verse 6), and "I will take you as my own people" (verse 7). How did God fulfill his promises to Israel through Moses? How has God done the same for us?

3. Knowing that many will despise the Word of God and reject the one who brings the Word might make us apprehensive to share the Word. What motivates you to keep plugging away at sharing the Word of God, even though you might think it is falling on deaf ears?
4. What new instructions did God give to Moses? (verse 11) How would this up the stakes in the battle over the people of Israel?

### **His Word in My Life**

The Israelites weren't happy with the results of Moses' first confrontation with Pharaoh. How would Saint Paul's words have helped them: "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation" (Philippians 4:12)? Why was Paul content? For what similar reason should Israel have been content in the midst of their sufferings?

Agree or disagree: Christians will never be unhappy with their situation in life.

The Israelites were ready to give up on Moses, Aaron, and the Lord. Sadly, many Christians do give up on the Lord. They leave the visible church and never want anything more to do with Christianity. What effect, if any, does their decision have on others?

God promised the Israelites deliverance from slavery. He assured them that they would live in the Promised Land. God in Christ has accomplished our deliverance from the slavery of sin. He too in Christ has given us the assurance of the promised land of heaven. How does this promise alter our view of death?

*The Israelites were suffering. God knew about their trouble and sent Moses to them with the promise that God would be faithful to his covenant. He would deliver them from Egypt and bring them into the Promised Land. We have similar promises as we seek to be released from this world and brought into the promised land of heaven. May we await our deliverance with great patience and contentment!*

## Summary

After Moses expressed his frustration at how the negotiations with Pharaoh were turning out, God reassured him by promising that he would remember his covenant and fulfill his promises. The suffering would end, and God would deliver his people.

God gave his Son a crown of thorns so that we might have a crown of glory, not only for a time but for eternity.

## 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 5:1–7:5. 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 Numbers 17–36.

- Day 1: Memorize Isaiah 55:11, “[My word] will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”
- Day 2: Read Psalm 119:105-112. The title for these verses could be “A Christian's Commitment to the Word of God.”
- Day 3: Write a note to a world missionary, thanking him for sharing the Word of God in what may well be an uncomfortable situation. Include his wife in the thank-you. (Your pastor should be able to give you a name and address.)
- Day 4: Pray that the Word of God may be proclaimed truthfully in hostile environments. Be as specific as you can.
- Day 5: To better prepare for the next lesson, read Exodus 7–9.
- Day 6: To better prepare for the next lesson, read Exodus 10–12.