

## "Moses 1: This is where everything begins"

We have begun the journey of another new year. 2016 has become "a part of our life". The year we walk in today will also become "a part of our life". And so, what I would like to confirm here is that neither 2016 nor 2017 is "the entirety of our lives". They are only years out of the many we live through in our lives.

Yet we sometimes boast in victory, or fall deep into sadness as if the year is our everything. NO, not even a year, at times a single day can make us feel like victors in life, or on the contrary failures in life. But as we know, that single year, that single day is not the entirety of our lives.

In the Bible, there is a man named Moses. He lived for 120 years. His life can be simply divided from birth to 40 years of age, from 40 to 80 years of age, and from 80 to 120 years of age. These 120 years make up the life of Moses. Within each of these 40 year increments were many occurrences, and within them, failures. When these failures happened, Moses being but only human, may also have been disheartened. But after they had passed, he came to understand that there was reason to each of his failings. That is because his life consisted of 120 years, not the first 40 years, next 40 years, or the last 40 years.

On Christmas and New Years, we had special messages, but we have now returned to our message series, "Life's Crisis Management" in which we have looked into the lives of those written of in the bible, comparing them to our own to seek to seek wisdom, and learn from their mistakes. And today, let us look into the birth of Moses and his first 40 years of life.

One Hebrew man married one Hebrew woman, and the woman was soon with child. She gave birth to a boy. When the cry of the baby boy

was heard, God put his plan to motion. This plan began with the cry of a frail baby's birth. Do you know that the moment you came into this world crying, is the moment God's plan for us took motion?

They saw their child as a "fine" child. In the first place, most baby's faces are similar to one another at birth. They are small and shriveled up, and if I were to say so myself, they are cuter after some time. But to the birth parents, any child of their's is precious. To a parent, their child is the cutest.

But the situation these parents were put under was quite harsh. It was a time 400 years from the time of Joseph, and there were millions of Hebrew slaves in Egypt. The Hebrew people were increasing in number and the Pharaoh felt threatened by this.

Therefore, Pharaoh ordered the midwives, **"When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." (Exodus 1:16)** Fortunately, when this child was born, the midwives feared God rather than the Pharaoh, and let the boy live. And so, the Pharaoh proceeded by giving the order, **"Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live." (Exodus 1:22)** How could parents ever throw their own child into a river? Of course there is no such order today, but if there was, what action would parents take for their child? It is not hard to imagine.

These parents were just the same, and hid their child for 3 months. But it is not easy to hide a living human, especially when they are a new born baby. Yes, a new born child will cry with all its strength. No matter if it is during an important ceremony or during the climax of a movie, the child will cry loudly when it must.

These parents were desperate. They did not wish to let go of their child. There was no way they could let him go in a river. Yet he grew bigger every day, and so did his cries. There was nothing they could do. So they tearfully placed him down on the Nile river.

This is how the life of Moses began. He was saved by the will of those who cared for him, not by his own wish or effort, and continued to grow. Moses had been taken in by the Pharaoh's daughter, and although he was born with the social status of a slave, he grew up receiving the kingdom of Egypt's royal education. **"Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action."** (Acts 7:22) Regardless of his social status, the kingdom paid for all of Moses' living and school expenses. And no one at this time knew that he would become the one to disrupt the ways of Egypt.

Today, we are here in this worship service. Because we have life, we are able to come here. We may act as if we have lived to today with only our own strengths. But we have all grown up having been taken from our mother's womb and given the necessary sustenance, given the necessary care each day to live to this day. If there was no one to care for us during those times, we would not be here today. Moses was just the same. It would not have been strange for him to be killed after birth or drowned in the Nile. Through the love and compassion of many others, he was able to live.

Today, we will be looking onward from Exodus 2:11. Moses grew up. In the passage we will look at today, he is roughly of 40 years of age. It must have been about the time he was no longer of youth, had some life experience, yet still had much physical strength, and could work most vigorously.

But one day he went out and saw his own people working in hard labor. He saw a Hebrew man being beaten. Although he grew up in Egypt, the blood that flows in his veins is Hebrew. He was angered by what he saw, and seeing that there was no one watching, he killed the Egyptian man, and hid his body in the sand.

The next day he went out and saw two Hebrew's fighting. He tried to settle their conflict. But one man said, **"Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?"** **Then Moses was afraid.** He had looked around to make sure he was not seen yesterday, but what I did must have become known. And although he had done this to protect a fellow Hebrew man, but he feared hearing this from another Hebrew man. (The fact that a Hebrew man is living in the palace must have been known to the people) When the Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh to Midian.

This event is written about it Acts 7:23-25, **"When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not."**

He had lived under the blessing and favor of the Egyptian kingdom. He may have thought that he had an ability beyond anyone else because of his experiences and education.

And so he thought that God would save his people through him. He had patriotism. He must have lived for 40 years with complicated feelings looking down from the palace, seeing his brethren work in heavy labor as if they are ants. He must have wished that one day he could save them. He must have thought that God will use what he has

accomplished in Egypt to save his people, and that his people would also cooperate. But such belief and confidence was torn down.

In our human eyes, he may have been at the peak of his physical strength in age. But in God's eyes, it was still not the right time. Because we have the bible here with us, we know what happens after this event. Moses was 40 years too early. The "now" he had in mind was 40 years different from the "now" in God's plan. Yes, there was something Moses needed to learn during those 40 years.

**"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)**

Moses leaned the limit to his power. It does not mean that our passion will come true in the same shape or time that we have planned. For example, there was both the care and compassion of the people around in Moses' birth and growth. He was not born because of his power nor did he grow up because of it. It was not within his power to chose to receive Egypt's royal education. To have received such education in Egypt, which at the time had much of the world's knowledge and information, Moses must have gained much knowledge. But God could not use Moses who had only been taught knowledge; Moses who had just grown up and lived within marble walls.

At the end of last year, I had some time to quietly reflect upon the words of the bible from Luke 5.

It was at the Lake of Galilee. People crowded around Jesus to listen to his words. But then there were some fishermen in their boats washing their nets. Jesus purposefully got onto the boat of Peter and asked to be put out a little from shore teach. After he had finished speaking, he tells Peter, **"Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a**

**catch."** Peter was a professional fisherman. But that fisherman, followed the words of a carpenter, and let down the net he had just washed. Then they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break and the two boats began to sink. Seeing what had just happened, Peter fell to his knees before Jesus and said, **"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (Luke 5:8)** to this Jesus answered, **"Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."** and says that Peter pulled his boat to shore then left everything to follow Jesus.

One question was asked at the conference regarding this event. "Why did Jesus chose Peter?" From looking at Luke 5, it seems clear that Jesus had his eyes on Peter.

We know that **"The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)**. Peter's job was one of physical labor, his skin must have been tanned, and his body must have been strong. But what about his heart? We know of the many mistakes he made from the bible. They were very much like his mistakes. That is because he had genuine passion, yet at times his efforts were of no progress. For a short while his passion would fire up, but he lacked the strength to carry them out. From a human stand point, we would think that Jesus would never chose such person of unstable character. Then why did Jesus chose Peter?

When Peter caught the fish in his net, he said to Jesus, **"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (Luke 5:8)**

For him to say such a thing in this situation seems strange to us. For them to catch enough fish to sink a boat after a night of having no catch, we would think that this is a situation for a high-five. The others with him must have felt the same. But Peter was different. He had

something that no one else possessed. Yes, his sensitivity to the fact that he, a sinner, is standing before a holy man.

Peter was a man whose heart understood the "natural essence" of others. God uses those who understand their place before the Lord, rather than those who believe they have something to offer of themselves. From this raw stone, Peter was shaped. In this way, Peter was a rough chiseled rock. But Jesus put him by his side and changed him into a vessel to be used by the Lord.

In order for God to use Moses to save the Hebrews out of Egypt, God spent 40 years preparing him in the wilderness. And the first thing Moses was made to learn was to break his pride. That is where it all begins. Only when we are broken can God make us a new. And to be broken we must recognize ourselves before God. Yes, that is the realization that we humans are nothing when we come before God.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9 it is written **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."** The **"my power"** written here is **"God's power"** meaning, **"Your power is made perfect in my weakness"** and goes on to say, **"For when I am weak, then I am strong."** (2 Corinthians 12:10)

It's no ordinary thing for Moses to have saved millions of his people from Egypt. For Peter to continue spreading the word to the world after Jesus ascended is no easy task. God did not make them overcome their obstacles with just experience and knowledge of an average 30 or 40 years of life.

To accomplish such things, they required not "their strengths" but "the strength of God". And God uses our weakness rather than our glorious

career or educational background. What is necessary for this? It is for us to know our weakness before God.

**"Education of this world make us smarter. But God's education puts us in vain"**. God cannot use a vessel that is not in vain. When we look in the bible, we see that God has used those who have been educated by God.

Moses stood up to do something in passion. But the only one who stood up was him, and no one else around. He provoked Pharaoh's anger, and ran to the wilderness. Yes, through these things God tried to teach him something very important.

Yes, this was the first 40 years of his 120 year life. As I have said previously, his life does not end in such setbacks of that time. There is a meaning to such setbacks, and are of absolute necessity for the future.

Dear brother's and sister's in Christ, there may be those of you who are currently experiencing a trial. Some of you may be thinking, "if only now" or "if only this does not happen". I am sure that there will be times like these in this new year. We must do everything we can in such cases. But we must also remember that when we are faced with something that does not go according to our plans, there is a message from God behind it. If and when we are able to know this message from God, we will see that we have received something far greater than what we ourselves had planned.

Let's pray.

Translated by Shirah Vogt