

The Rock: 07-17-2022

A year with the master

Title: The man Moses

Scripture: Matthew 5:17-20, Exodus 2:1-10

(Black bible Pg. 760 and ESV)

Theme:

Looking at the Bible again, we see that story continue with Moses and the freedom-identity-mission piece formed right at the outset.

Introduction:

As we get back into the "Why the Bible" again this week, I want to pick up very purposefully with Moses.

I do so, because now that we have looked at the beginning with Adam and eve, and have some understanding of Jesus's worldview, it is good to see the prophet, deliverer and "Law giver".

Again, we did not get to where we are with the Bible by accident. We learned that last time. Just like our history, and our stoies which defines us. So too with Israel.

Moses too, was a real man who lived at a real time in history, in a real place that we can find on a map. Egypt, and we discovered in our first reading that he grew up in the palaces there.

Yet, he is also a vital part and person in the life of Jesus. Why? We are going to discover that he is the one who gave the Law to God's people.

He was the great deliverer, again pointing us forward to Jesus as the ultimate deliverer of His people. His story is found in Exodus.

We also see God's grace. We see people's faith and we see redemption / salvation all the way back in the second book of the Bible.

A familiar storyline, and it should be. Remember, God in His grace saved us, by faith and redeemed us through Christ's death and resurrection.

-Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

No new inventions here, just the same story from beginning to end. It reminds me of what Malcolm Muggeridge once said:

"All new news is just old news, happening to new people."

What we find as we look back, we discover that the people of Israel are slaves in Egypt crying out to God for deliverance.

Four hundred years of oppression ends when Moses is called to go back to the place of His greatest failure.

-Exodus 2:11-15 (ESV)

"One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?" He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well."

A murderer, a man with a temper. A man who should have known better, but acted out anyway. What hope for us!

Why do I say that? Well God took that mistake, drove Moses to Midian, where for forty years he learned to shepherd sheep.

A skill set he was going to need now that God said: "Go back and confront Pharaoh"

-Exodus 3:7-8 (ESV)

"Then the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites."

How many times have we found ourselves in that spot where we think we have failed in such a way that God can't use us ever again?

How many times have you done something you know you aren't supposed to do, and feel like you can't even pray to God because He is going to be so shocked that He falls off His throne?

Read your Bible, and you will find that most, if not all of those people God used, were some of the biggest failures at one point or another.

This is GRACE -that wonderful doctrine of GRACE.

Neither Moses, nor the people of Israel are saved because of anything they did. No! It was then, just like it is now -by grace alone.

They did nothing but cry out to God for help. That's it. And He heard their prayer. That's powerful. Not only did He hear, but He acted, in and through Moses.

The Story:

This is so powerful a lesson to take away from this series: "Why the Bible?"

God hears -God listens- God acts!

So many are struggling right now. Life and circumstances are overwhelming. Loss of a loved one, aging parents, a bad diagnosis from the doctor. Not what you might have expected, or thought things would look like.

Yet here we are. The Bible says and shows us in its page; that God hears, God listens, and God acts. Jesus didn't say, "I have come to get rid of all these

things, these stories. No, I came to fulfill them. I AM.

The pure in heart one, the meek one, the one who fulfills all of God's promises:

-2 Corinthians 1:20 (ESV)

"For all the promises of God find their, "Yes" in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory."

It may look bad, you are hurting and wondering if there is any help or hope in this pain and crazy world.

Yes, there is. "I am the fulfillment". All the Law and prophets point to me. The people of Israel cried out to God, He heard, He listened and He answered.

That answer had a name, and his name was Moses. He came and through many challenges and plagues -I leave those to you for homework (Ex 4-13) he brought God's people out of Egypt.

Saved by grace -now the test of faith. Here they are on the edge of the Red Sea, with problems behind and water in front.

But -there is always a but, isn't there. They couldn't get to the faith piece without first going to the grumbling piece. Gotta complain, gotta get mad at

the leader. After all life ain't fun if we don't have something to grumble about.

It is a very unfamiliar story, isn't it? This grumbling thing. Anyway -

The complaining starts with the leader - so even we leaders aren't immune from it. We need to recognize that, and remind ourselves that we are just a broken person leading broken people.

God shows Moses that it is really Him they don't trust and not Moses, and encourages him to get back at it, because he was called to the task.

Listen to this, here's what the people say just a few short weeks into freedom, with Pharaoh's pressing in upon them:

-Exodus 14:10-12 (ESV)

"When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been

better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

Amazing! 400 years of slavery, and a few weeks into freedom and because it gets hard, they are ready to go back. Then comes the conversation between God and Moses:

-Exodus 14:13-16 (ESV)

“And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.”

By faith! Step out and into a new reality. You have been saved by grace out of your bondage of slavery. Now, by faith, step into the Red Sea, parted for you and cross over into new life.

Where they were then brought to Mt. Sinai and given the Law. The very Law that Jesus came to fulfill. The Law that defined for them how they were to live now that they were God’s people.

Notice the order here. Saved and called to be God's, first. Stepped out in faith, second. Now, because they were called or saved by God's grace and through faith, they are now being given instructions on how to live, as His people.

The Law, with all of its iotas and dots does not save. It never has and never will. There is, and always was, an order. Jumping ahead we see that the Pharisees always got it backwards.

That's important for us to see. If our righteousness is going to be better than the Pharisees, we need to remember this. Following all the rules is not what makes God happy and then you are saved.

We can't do that! God saves us / calls us by grace and it is through faith we believe. In other words, when we get that feeling in our hearts and thoughts in our head that the Bible is true and we ought to believe it, that is God calling through the Holy Spirit.

Grace. Now we have to exercise that faith and say, yes, I believe. Then we do what is right, not to be saved, but because we are saved!

You see the difference. That shows the world that there is a right way to live and a right order to follow.

The Bible defines that. It gives us the story, the framework and worldview we are to operate out of. It is unchanging, unyielding and stable -in an unstable world.

Why? Because God does want what is best for us. Yet, there is a particular way to accomplish that, and it is not our way, but His way.

None of the Law or the Prophets will pass away -change - go away until everything is fulfilled.

-Matthew 5:18 (ESV)

"For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

This is one of the answers to, "Why the Bible?" This story, if you are in Christ, is now your story. It is the guidebook for living, that is found in the law and the prophets.

The Old Testament predicts Him

The New Testament reveals Him

The Acts of the Apostles preach Him

The Epistles explain Him

Revelations expects Him

We learn how to live as Christians, by learning about how the people of Israel lived as "called out ones" in this world. By grace, through faith.

As out of step as this book may be with the ways of this world, it still is the Truth. Jesus said none of it will pass away until God's plan is complete. That happens when Jesus returns and makes all things new.

So, when that question is asked: Did God really say? We can, with confidence respond: Yes, He did.

Is that hard? Yes. Does it put us at odds with those around us? Quite often, yes it does.

But it takes the whole Bible to make a whole Christian. God desires to conform us to His Son Jesus.

-Romans 8:28-30 (ESV)

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also

justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

What that means, is that we have to learn to die to ourselves and live for Jesus. In doing that though, we actually are becoming more ourselves than we could imagine. Because, we are allowing God to grow us as He has designed us to be, for His glory and our benefit.

That takes a life-time. It will never happen overnight. So, let's not be hard on ourselves in all of the ups and downs, as well as our own self-doubts.

God is for us. He is for you, and not in some goofy self-help prosperity way. He is legitimately for you and is always working on your behalf and for your benefit.

I know that, and can say that because of Jesus! He said, "I have come to fulfill it all". Not one dot, not one iota will go away until I've fulfilled all of the Father's plan.

According to the prophets, His second coming is what we are now waiting for. You see, by saying, I have fulfilled the Law, Jesus, for the first time, is pointing directly at Himself as the promised one of God, as the Truth. (More on that in a couple weeks.)

Thus, the challenge of verse 20:

-Matthew 5:20 (ESV)

"For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

They knew the Law and were perfect in obedience to it. But Jesus exposes their failure, and at the same time gives us the key to success:

-Matthew 23:23 (ESV)

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."

In other words, they mastered the letter of the Law, but missed the heart of it.

It really is a heart matter. Do what it says, but do it with a tender heart, with love that draws people to Christ. Do so in a way that extends grace, and encourages faith.

Moses, that great Law-giver was a real person, and yet at the same time, his

life and ministry as prophet and deliverer points us toward someone.

Just as Adam and Eve in their failure pointed us toward someone. All of it recorded in the Law and prophets.

This book, The Bible, is at the same time, history, it is mystery, and it points us always to divinity. That person, whom this love letter is all about: Jesus.