

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

July 2, 2010—The Jesus Way—Moses

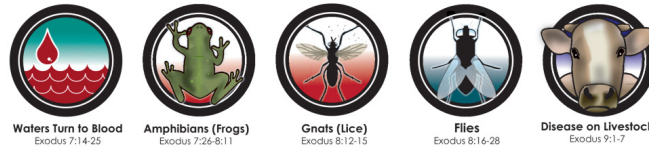
6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts—Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<p>“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” —Jesus (John 14:6)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ways of Jesus <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Abraham—A faith life b) Jacob—A man who wrestled with God c) Joseph—From slave to ruler d) Moses—God’s friend, a man with a purpose 2) He Wrote the Book <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Moses is the writer to whom the first five book of the Bible, the Pentateuch, are attributed. 3) Moses in the Wilderness 4) Moses Living the Good Life in Midian 5) God’s Preparation of Moses 6) God Begins the Hard Work in Moses—at 80 years old <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Scripture records this as the first direct action by God for 400 years b) Moses’ assignment from God—the burning bush—Exodus 3:1-10 c) Moses’ objections: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) I’m a nobody—3:11 ii) I don’t know your name—3:13 iii) What if they don’t believe me or listen to me?—4:1 iv) I’m not an eloquent man—4:10 7) Moses—God’s Friend...It Didn’t Begin That Way (Exodus 33:11) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) God’s wrath—4:13, 14 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Moses’ hesitant response (1) Only after God’s anger “burned against him” b) And again, God’s wrath—4:24 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Moses had failed to circumcise his son c) Moses’ growth It is interesting to note that, as the story progresses, we find that Moses makes his

own speeches and does not need Aaron to do the talking for him. Once he has accepted his inner calling, his speech problem vanishes.¹ [compare Exodus 4:28-12:51 with Exodus 13:1 and following...Moses begins to speak for himself.]

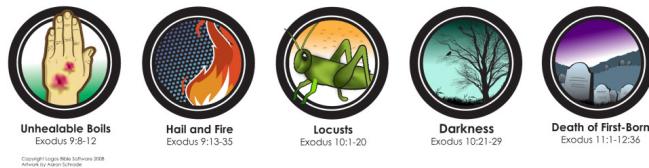
There is a dark side to this matter of spiritual growth, for it will not be denied. If we insist on turning it aside, once we have been called upon to make this inner journey, it may turn negative and destructive. The same process that can lead to wholeness and consciousness can also poison us and destroy us if we try to avoid it. Many people find themselves in Moses' predicament: only when they are forced into their journey, out of fear of the consequences if they do not go, do they begin their process of...development.²

8) Freedom for Israel

- a) Conditions in slavery—3:9; 5:1-19
- b) God's promise (and intent) for Israel—3:8
- c) Demonstration of God's power
 - i) The plagues



The Ten Plagues of Egypt



- ii) Plunder of the Egyptians—12:35-36
- iii) Leading Israel by cloud and fire—13:21-22
- iv) Parting the Red Sea & defeating the Egyptian army—14:1-31
- v) Food and water in the desert for at least many hundreds of thousands of people—15:22-27, 16:1-21 (two years after the exodus there were 603,550 able-bodied men over 20, excluding the Levites—Numbers 1:2-3, 49)
- vi) Gives laws for the good of the people—20:1-23:33
- vii) Instructs Israel how to build His temple so that he can dwell with them—25:1-31:18

9) Israeli response

- a) Exalt God immediately after Pharaoh's army is destroyed—15:1-18
- b) Complain about leaving Egypt—16:2-3
 - i) Less than 2 months after leaving slavery (16:1)
- c) Make a covenant with God (after God provides food and water)—24:3-8

¹ *The Man who Wrestled With God.* 96-98.

² *Ibid.* 96-98.

---then only *40 days later*---(24:18)

- d) Worship a different god—32:1-6
- e) Renew the covenant—34:1
- f) Turn from God's promise land—Numbers 13:25-14:10
 - i) Moses begs for God to pardon Israel, which He does; however, not without consequence: 40 years in the wilderness—Numbers 14:11-38

10) What's Going on Here?

To work toward wholeness is to live as a free person...But it can be frightening to live as a free person. There is always a part of us that prefers to live the life of a slave to the life of freedom...If we are free we must act in a mature way, accepting responsibility for our happiness or unhappiness, success or failure...It often seems easier to remain a slave. Then we can complain about our condition, blame our failures and unhappiness on others, and avoid the burdensome responsibility of freedom.

This is the way the people of Israel felt...Those people had a slave mentality...To be sure, they did not return to Egypt because God and Moses would not let them, but they remained slaves in their minds nonetheless. They finally perished in the desert...³

11) Now How Shall We Live? Freedmen or Slaves?

We find this same flight from freedom in many areas of life today. In the care of souls, for instance, it is not unusual for a person to reach a point where new and free life may become possible, only to have that person suddenly abandon the whole process, as though the resulting freedom would be too much to bear. The same thing often occurs in marriages, in which one or both partners live in a box. Many marriages are characterized by torturous roles the man or woman is compelled to play in order to maintain a stultifying relationship. It is possible to break out of such fixed roles and stereotypes, but some people prefer to slip back into the old structure rather than to face freedom; it is less frightening than facing the mature way.

Moses became a free man. The whole range of his personality was being expressed in his life...But his freedom was not to be confused with license. Moses was free as long as he served God.⁴

It was a strange thing. Mile after mile my desire to be in the monastery increased beyond belief. I was altogether absorbed in that one idea. And yet, paradoxically, mile after mile my indifference increased, and my interior peace. What if they did not receive me? Then I would go to the army. But surely that would be a disaster? Not at all. If, after all this, I was rejected by the monastery and had to be drafted, it would be quite clear that it was God's will. I had done everything that was in my power; the rest was in His hands. And for all the tremendous and increasing intensity of my desire to be in a cloister, the thought that I might find myself, instead, in an army camp no longer troubled me in the least.

I was free, I had recovered my liberty. I belonged to God, not to myself; and to belong to Him is to be free, free of all the anxieties and worries and sorrows that belong to this earth, and the love of the things that are in it.⁵

³ Ibid. 96-98.

⁴ Ibid. 98.

⁵ Thomas Merton, on his way to join a monastery. Quoted in *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*. 118, 119.

⁶ *The Dark Night of the Soul*. 72.

If we are honest, I think we have to admit that we will likely try to sabotage any movement toward true freedom. If we really knew what we were called to relinquish on this journey, our defenses would never allow us to take the first step. Sometimes the only way we can enter the deeper dimensions of the journey is by being unable to see to see where we are going.⁶

12) Our Journey to Freedom

- a) Sons of Satan, slaves to sin, enemies of God—John 8:34, 43-44; Romans 5:10; James 4:4
- b) Slaves, servants (bondservants) of God—Romans 6:22
- c) Friends with God—John 15:15
- d) Beloved of God—Song of Solomon 7:10-12; Galatians 2:20; John 17:3, 21-24; Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17

The glory of God is man fully alive
--Irenaeus (c. 125-c. 202)

13) A Couple of Final Thoughts About Moses...

- a) Moses was a man of purpose once he fully accepted God's design for his life. Out of his purpose he gained a powerful voice (literally and spiritually) and he became free to do what God had made him to do.
- b) Similarly for each of us, when we know and accept God's design for our lives we, too, gain a powerful voice for God...and we become free.

7:00	Closing Prayer
7:00 – ??	If you would like prayer, please come up front and one or more of us will remain to pray with you.

Further reading:

- *The Bible*
- Au, Walkie and Noreen Cannon Au. (2006). *The Discerning Heart: Exploring the Christian Path*. Paulist Press.
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