

FROM FEAR TO  
**FREEDOM**



A STUDY ON THE LIFE OF MOSES

**PASTOR'S NOTES - PART 10**

DAY ONE BEGINS

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From Fear to Freedom  
A Study On the Life of Moses  
Part 10: Day One Begins  
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What has been the longest day of your life?

Maybe for you it was the horrific phone call notifying you of the loss of a loved one. The first of many long days to come... I know this has been so for some of you. If this *is* you, my heart goes out to you.

Or maybe it was the long day of hopeful anticipation awaiting to hear the words, "The job is yours!"

For a close friend of mine, her longest day began when her water broke around 8pm that night and it wasn't until almost 10 hours later that her little boy took his first breath out of the womb. It wasn't a full 24 hours... but in the moment, I am sure it felt like 24 years!

For my wife Amy, I can attest that one of her longest days was the 24 hours proceeding the news as to whether or not she passed the bar. And of course she did!

I've had several "long days" that I can remember...

One such day was August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1994, the night we were married. Because in my mind I'm thinking... I sure am marrying up! And if she figures it out today, she's probably not gonna show up at the church!

Another less intense but equally long day happened for me about 10 years ago in New Brunswick, Canada. It was February of that year. And I had an extremely early flight out of Music City to speak at an event in Canada. Due to weather, my flight was delayed several times that day. But I eventually made it past customs and into Canada late into the night. I was supposed to speak at an event the following morning.

I too will say this... this was the last time, and I clearly remember why, our office allowed the local event promoter to secure my hotel accommodations. Ever since this speaking engagement, my office has always secured my travel arrangements. I think you will understand why by the time I finish this story.

Prior to the event, this promoter had contacted our office to say, "We have the perfect place for you to stay. There is a historic hotel here in New Brunswick and everyone loves to stay here when they come to town. It's over 100 years old and you're never going to forget staying here!"

Well... she was right about that. By the time I arrived at the "hotel," it was after midnight. The place looked like that house from the movie I remember watching growing up, Amityville Horror.

I entered the front door, and I immediately heard a dog or two barking. The place was dark, and it smelt like a basement that needed airing out! By this point, the snow had really started falling and my event the next day had already been cancelled. So I have now flown across the country into another country, had two flight delays, to end up not having the speaking engagement and getting murdered in a haunted house!

The desk attendant, which was the lady who *lived* in the house, not a hotel... a house... led me up this dark stairwell to an upstairs room. I'm really thinking, "Someone is going to kill me in this house!"

And oh yea, the lady who lived in the house was also the event promoter of my now-cancelled event!

Once she led me to my room and I entered, I immediately realized two things:

1. The dogs are still barking.
2. There is no bathroom in my room.

That is correct. There was no bathroom. Instead, there was a sign on the bedside desk that said, "Fresh towels are in the shared bathroom at the end of the hallway."

Did you catch that? "*Shared* bathroom!"

This bit of fact is important later in the story!

I do not believe the dogs stopped barking all night. As a matter of fact, at one point, I was eerily reminiscent of the moment at the camp in Ft. Wilderness, WI I shared with you last week of the moment I heard a "sniffing noise" from some animal outside my tent one night. Well, that same animal must have made its way to New Brunswick, because I heard the same noise outside my door that night, too!

And then there was the clanging pipes! When they first started clanging, I had no idea what they were. It sounded like someone was banging pots and pans inside the walls of my room over and again.

And then I realized the pipes had hot water running through them and they were heating this haunted house!

I remember not sleeping at all that night. Between the cold and the barking and the clanging of pipes and the floors squeaking whenever anyone walked... it was a long night.

And then, to top it off really nicely, I finally decided I would get out of the bed in which I could not sleep and go take a shower. So... I walked the hallway to find the shower, and while finally standing there having a hot shower... I saw a shadow.

I proceeded to peek around the shower curtain to see an elderly man standing there in nothing but a towel awaiting his turn to shower... and his little barking rat of a dog was standing next to him drinking water dripping from the bottom of the shower curtain from my shower!

Absolutely one of the longest days of my life!

I wonder... the first night on Moses' journey from the palace to Midian... that had to be one of the longest days of his life. Do you agree?

The entirety of this long journey, as we discussed several weeks ago, very possibly could have taken Moses hundreds of miles from Egypt, most likely Thebes, Egypt, which today is Luxor, Egypt, across the wilderness of Shur, across Sinai, which is Saudi Arabi today, over the Red, or more appropriately as we have discussed, the *Reed Sea*, and into where I believe the nomadic people, the Midianites, were living at the time.

I cannot imagine the long conversation Moses had with himself that very long first night...

"I was the "fine child" hidden by my mother for three months. I was the baby boy taken "out of the water." I was the one adopted by the daughter of the man who wanted me dead at birth! I was the one given a unique access into the world's most elite and dominate family.

I was the one God chose to redeem His people.

And I blew it!

I got ahead of God! I stepped *outside* His will in my attempt to *do* His will.

And now... here I am hundreds of miles from home living, once again, as a foreigner in a foreign land.

One day turned into 2, and then 3, and then 4, and then 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 100, 200, 300, 500, 1,000 days, 2,000 days, 3,000 4,000, 5,000 days, and 7,000 days, 10,000, 12,000, 13,300, and then 14,610 very long days.

14,610 days is 40 years.

40 years is a long time y'all... a really long time.

Imagine what has happened in your life the last 40 years. Those of you not 40 yet would, I presume, define 40 as "very old." But for those who have lived longer than 40 years, as have I... think back, whatever your age, 40 years ago!

40 years ago this month, I was 15 and had just gotten my drivers permit and my first job stocking groceries at Safeway Grocery on Rodney Param Rd. in Little Rock, Arkansas.

I remember thinking at 15 that 40 is old.

Think about it: In the span of 40 years, America has had 10 different presidents:

Richard Nixon  
 Jimmy Carter  
 Gerald Ford  
 Ronald Reagan  
 George H.W. Bush  
 Bill Clinton  
 George W. Bush  
 Barack Obama  
 Donald Trump  
 Joe Biden

40 years ago we didn't have battery operated vehicles, the ethernet, or personal computers. It has been less than 40 years that we have had cell phones.

40 years ago, the world didn't even know names like Lebron James, Michael Jordan, LL Cool Jay, and Taylor Swift.

40 years ago, there was no Apple computers. No email. No internet. No doodle dogs.

40 years ago, there was no Tennessee Titans.

40 years ago, the most popular song on the radio was by Prince, "When Doves Cry."

40 years ago, the highest grossing film at the box office was Eddie Murphy's "Beverly Hills Cop."

40 years ago, the Boston Red Sox had not yet won the world series.

40 years ago, the idea of purchasing an item while sitting in your living room and having it delivered to your house the next day was inconceivable.

40 years is a really long time.

That seems like a lifetime ago.

That's because it was.

40 years *is* a lifetime.

And this is exactly how long Moses lived as a nomad. I presume during this time he thought such thoughts as:

“Is my life over?”

“Is this all my life will be?”

“Is this all for which I was made... to serve my father-in-law by taking care of his animals hundreds of miles away from my home, my adopted home, and my people?”

Scripture tells us that Moses spent the next 14,610 days taking care of sheep.

Imagine the conversation that has gone on in this man’s mind for 40 years. The man once considered to be a “fine child” and so set apart by God that those closest to him put their very lives in danger to protect his.

40 years is a long time. But as the saying goes, “What a difference a day can make.”

On the morning Moses awakened, Moses had no idea the end of the “40 years” have come.

On the day the bush caught fire, day one of a new life began.

This is the day God chose to speak to Moses:

### **Exodus 3:1-9**

#### **1. God will speak when God is ready to speak.**

While looking at sheep, and rocks and mountains while too searching for green pastures and waters, Moses must have over and again replayed the entire first 40 years of his life in his mind.

And I too presume Moses had tried to forget it all; forget the palace; forget the smells of royalty; forget the royal treatment; forget the murder; forget the cover-up; forget the “Oh no I’m caught!”

And after 40 years it is possible that Moses has even forgotten that Jehovah God has chosen him for greatness. Desert, dry, dirt, and dust has a way of exfoliating the past right out of one’s mind.

And then... everything changes. God speaks.

And when He does, I too should listen.

God did not speak to Moses for 40 years. Or if He did, we do not see any evidence of such.

40 years. 40 years y’all!

A quick recap that gets us to here:

Moses is living the life of royalty until he decides to take matters into his own hands, kill an

Egyptian, and run for his life. He journeys the lonely expedition and settles as a nomad with the Midianites. He marries Zipporah and begins a life of a recluse as a servant to her father, Reuel, who by the way, we read in Exodus 3, also has the name Jethro.

It is at the beginning of this stage of Moses' life when God goes silent. Complete silence.

But here is what is extremely interesting... and a thought at which you may have never arrived in consideration of this story:

As far as we can tell... Moses is not speaking to God either.

Communication is a two-way practice. Moses, we believe as the author of this story, says very little to us as to what happens during these 40 years of his life. We know he marries and has two sons during this time. But Moses reveals to us nothing more.

As so very many people have rightly done, we surmise that God is silent in this moment of Moses' life.

Well... I too would surmise... so too is Moses.

I believe Moses is telling us that, not only has *God* remained silent, during the 14,610 days... Moses too is not talking to God.

And man I can completely relate with this part of the story. Can you?

So consumed with what you have done, that you cannot even talk it out with God?

If so, let me remind you to embrace this truth:

**God is wanting to begin a conversation with me.**

**Such a conversation begins with my willingness to open my heart once again to hear His voice.**

Whether the two of them spoke at all with one another during these 14,610 days, I don't know... But this I do know:

Notice God gives no hints as to what is about to happen with Moses. He did not tell Moses, "In a few months, or a few weeks, or a few days, or even in a few minutes, I will speak to you."

No.

God begins the conversation with a flame!

**Exodus 3:2**





Fill a  
*bottle*  
FOR LIFE



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Imagine that moment. Moses hears a sound... a sound that must have been odd and possibly even terrifying. Moses thought, "Is someone else here on this mountain with me burning something?"

Moses sees the smoke. He feels the heat from the fire. He hears the crackle of branches burning.

And he walks over, out of curiosity, to see what this is?

### **Exodus 3:3**

I also know this to be true...

### **2. God will wait until I am ready to listen.**

### **Exodus 3:4**

I want to propose a thought for your consideration:

What if rather than Moses was waiting on God...  
What if God was waiting on Moses?

Let me explain...

What if God knew something we do not? Something Moses did not even know about himself?

What if, as was the case with my friend of whom I shared his very personal story earlier...

What if God knew that Moses had become so guilt ridden, so internally humiliated, so disappointed in himself that God knew Moses needed time? Time to be silent. Time to be still. And time to become the man God knew he would one day be; the man God had already made him to be?

What if the 40 years was *less* about Moses awaiting the next assignment and instead, was more about God patiently waiting for *Moses* to be best prepared for the assignment God had already ordained him to follow?

### **Exodus 3:4**

I find this to be one of the sweetest and too most empowering moments in the life of any person in all of the Bible.

Moses has failed God. Moses knew it. God knew it.

Look at the passage in verse 4 again. Notice what appears *twice* after the name of Moses in the Scriptures. Do you see it!

**Exodus 3:4**

When Moses hears God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob call his name:

“Moses! Moses!” ... Moses says, “Here I am.”

It’s an all-powerful and all-commanding “exclamation mark!” And it appears twice.

In this critically important monumental moment in the life of Moses, day one of a new year...

God does not whisper Moses’ name! No! Listen... can you hear it!

God calls the name of Moses *loudly*. God says it *commandingly*. God says it with an explanation!

“Moses! Moses!”

When I was here at church this past Monday, I joined the millions upon millions, I presume, of people in America who stepped outside at just the right time to hopefully catch a glimpse of the eclipse. Could you see it?

As I stood in the parking lot at DF and looked up at... unfortunately, the *clouds*...

For a moment, I considered...

... What if, rather than seeing the eclipse, God had chosen this very moment for the sky to split, the trumpet to sound, and the Savior of the world to appear riding on a white horse to take home His bride! How amazing would this have been!

Have you ever wondered why God hasn’t yet orchestrated the moment of all moments for the return of the Christ? I don’t know about you – but I am ready!

Come Lord Jesus, come y’all, right?!

God must know something we do not. He must have a reason for the wait – for the silence of the triumphant sound of the heavenly trumpet that will one day rock the entire galaxy as the Savior of the world once again returns to earth!

We read in scripture where God says that He would have it that no one would perish; that He wants all to be saved.

**This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**

**1 Timothy 2:3-4**

Could it be that God's patience even today is on full display as He is desiring, patiently waiting to command the moment for the return of His Son because it is His desire, as Scripture says, for all people to be saved.

God could come back now, and nobody would question that.

God could split the sky wide open right now if He so chose to do so.

And... for every one of us who are believers in Him, we would welcome with open arms the greatest moment in our lives when God takes His church home to be His bride.

Consider the nation of Israel in this moment in time here in the Old Testament. Even though Moses had failed 40 years previous, in year 1 of his life in the desert, the nation of Israel would have loved for God to have called Moses to free them from captivity.

In year 2 they would have wanted the same. In years 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 10 and 20 and 30 and for 40 years... at any time the nation of Israel was ready!

Remember from last week... Exodus 2 says it like this:

### **Exodus 2:23-25**

God knew they were in desperate pain. He knew of their misery for 40 years, heck... for 400 years!

But... God waited. God was silent.

The nation of Israel was so ready for Moses to come and stand before Pharaoh and say,

“Let my people go!”

But as we see time and again in scripture God's plans are not man's plans. God was waiting. There was more to the story than just this one moment in time. God's plans were bigger. And God still had more work to do, patiently waiting, until the time was right for Moses.

Though everyone involved in the story was ready... God must have known something more... something much more needing to happen in the life of Moses... in the heart of Moses... with the man, Moses!

Could this be that this is actually a way that God works? That God is waiting for hearts to be right, hearts to be broken, hearts to be drawn to Him, hearts to be fully ready to fulfill his ultimate plan for eternity?

**The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

**2 Peter 3:9**

Notice what Peter writes here. 2 realities about God:

1. God is not slow.
2. God is patient.

Why? His promise.

**God's promises are often manifested in God's patience.**

Remember His promise we unpacked 10 weeks ago to Abraham:

**The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."**

**Genesis 12:1-3**

**God never forgets His promise.**

**God never forgets His people.**

**God never forgets Moses.**

**God never forgets me.**

So, to God, what's 40 years?

If this is true, then this means...

**There is always a purpose in the waiting.**

In during the seasons of life when God is silent, maybe my prayer is not,

**"God, why aren't you speaking?" But instead...**

**"God, what are you wanting me to hear in the silence?"**

I wonder if there are some here today that feel as though God hasn't spoken, some as though God is not there. Are you questioning, "God, where are you?" Or "God, why are you silent?"

If so, what if you are asking the wrong questions?

**What if, in times of silence in my life, if God is not speaking because my heart is not truly ready to receive the call He has already ordained for my life?**

If this is a way in which God works, it could be that God is waiting to speak to one whose heart is truly ready to listen. I have to presume that over the course of 40 years, Moses listened a lot to himself. I, too, presume he shared the story with his Father-in-law, Jethro. I, too, believe there

were many times when Moses and his wife Zipporah talked about “the days in the palace.” There could have been moments when those who loved him most misled him most.

This is why we have to be so careful the counsel we offer. I don’t know if Jethro or Zipporah contributed to the blame game in Moses’ mind. Haven’t we all been there?

“You should have known better.”

“Why did you do what you did?”

I presume there were times in those 40 years where those closest to Moses verbally condemned him for his past mistakes.

And Moses thought:

“Did I blow it?”

“Did I miss my chance?”

“Did I misstep God’s plan?”

It very well could be after 40 years Moses had finally come to the place where his heart was ready to truly listen. Whether I am fully accurate on this hypothesis or not, what is important...

**Maybe waiting is less about patience and more about an expectant preparation of one’s heart to be fully ready to embrace one’s purpose.**

I can see in my own life looking back over seasons of silence, times when I didn’t hear from God, that God was using the silent moments to settle my attention to come to the end of the voices in my head so that I could hear the crackle of the fire awaiting my attention.

I think for some people, they are never willing to get too close to the fire.

The smell of smoke on their clothes;  
the fear of getting burned;  
the sensation of heat that can be overwhelming.

Moses, though maybe not fully aware, was ready to be all-consumed by God. And this is why when God spoke, he came directly to the fire. And after 40 years, Moses was finally ready for the journey of a lifetime.

The question is:

**When I hear God call my name, will I move to or away from the flames?**