

The Reluctant God - Part 9

by G.W. North

The sermon explores Moses' leadership, the significance of heartfelt giving, and God's provision for His people amidst their complaints.

Duration: 45:17

Scripture: Exodus 10:1-2, Exodus 10:28, Exodus 11:1-2, Exodus 12:1-2, Numbers 10:33, Numbers 11:29

Topics: "Moses"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher talks about Moses and his encounter with God. He emphasizes Moses' humility and how he was chosen by God despite his own feelings of inadequacy. The preacher also shares a story of a man who experienced a miraculous healing after a serious accident. He then discusses the importance of everyone striving to be like Moses and the desire for God to have a company of people like him. The sermon concludes with the mention of the ark of the covenant leading the Israelites on their journey to find a resting place.

Transcript

If, he said, have you got to do it? No, there were the compulsory offerings, they came later. But he starts with, oh, surely my people who've responded to me so far will want to give more and more and more. No, he said, say no, no, no, don't bring, we don't want any more of that.

But God said, look, here's a way that they could keep on giving. They could keep on offering. Don't want any more of their gold and all that business.

They can keep on giving that. If anybody wants to bring an offering, he starts on the voluntary offerings, not the obligatory ones. In other words, he's talking on heart level.

Is it true these people in their hearts have really, really given unto me and want to? Moses, I've devised the way. I've always had it in mind. Tell them they can do this.

Tell them they can do that. Lord, I want to give you more. More should thou have, Wesley would have us sing, if I had more.

Well, this is the way God met them. Wouldn't it be wonderful to go right to that Leviticus book? But we won't go through it, we'll pass over it. Strangely enough, the continuity from the end of Exodus is in numbers.

Leviticus, well, the laws governing the offerings and all sorts of things to do with the priesthood and, of course, that had to do with the children of Israel. Now, I'm aiming at a place tonight to conclude this series. I mean, for this time, we could have stopped on so much detail.

But, you know, dear old Moses, I suppose he might have thought that after nine months or so of moving, ten months pretty well, on the 28th calendar days, after getting this thing really going in Israel, oh, I suppose he might have thought, wow, this is wonderful. We've got the tabernacle, I've got Aaron, I've got him, I've got Bezalel and Aholiab, I've got a people whose heart is willing. Oh, he must have thought, well, you know, I know he must have thought it.

Of course, you can say, how do you know? Well, simply because he was the man he was. He must have thought, this is going to be great now, Lord. You see, a man who has a heart like Moses had never thinks evil of people.

You know that, don't you? I mean, you know whether you think evil of people, don't you? Then you'll know whether you've got the right kind of heart. Never thinks evil of people. Gossip was never in his lips.

He never talked behind people's backs or anything like that. He wouldn't either run people down or listen to other people running them down. So with a heart like he had, he would have thought, well, now, this is marvellous.

It's going to be great. Oh, God did some marvellous things. He spoke to him, all sorts of things.

And you must read this for yourself. I'm just catching on the points that have to do with Moses. And he deals with them in, they're going to move.

He gets them in marching order. They're setting out for the promised land. And look at this.

Verse 33 of chapter 10. They departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey. And the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey to search out a resting place for them.

How about that? The ark went to search out a resting place. Think of it. Let it get into your heart, you people who think you're going on a wilderness journey.

Here it is. And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day when they went out of the camp. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord.

Let thine enemies be scattered. Let them that hate thee flee before thee. When it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.

And when the people complained, Amen. What do you think of that? Good old Moses. He's a real leader.

The last things that God had instructed him in, if you can look in the earlier chapter, chapter 10, for instance, or the earlier part of that chapter, he's saying, Make thee trumpets of silver. Behold, peace shalt thou make them, that thou mayst use them for the calling of the assembly and for the journeys of the camp. And then all sorts of things.

Talks about blowing an alarm. Hallelujah. Rise up.

On we go. He's a fighting man now. He's got them into shape.

Glory. They're on the move. He's got a wholehearted people behind him, you see.

So he thinks, and he's going to move. Glory. God's going to find us rest.

There goes the ark. Blows the trumpet. Come on.

Now that's a leader. God said, really said, well Moses, as you can no more go forward without the ark of the covenant, or can't go forward without the cloud, neither can you go forward unless you've got these trumpets. Come on.

You've got to go forward as a fighting unit. That's a leader. Glory.

Glory. Glory. You can follow a leader like that, can't you? Somebody who knows there's battle.

Someone's going to lead into it. Someone who can blow the trumpet. Not his own.

Moses hadn't got a trumpet, but God ordered him to make them. Because he'd got to blow the trumpet for the people of God. And it was going to be a silver one.

You know, I used to work once with a man. I'm getting reminiscent now, I mustn't say it. I used to work with a man once.

He didn't look anything like the man that I would have expected. And he came to me, and he got hardly any teeth. And he wasn't, he was just a... Well, you listen a minute.

I haven't finished the story. And he only... He wasn't much older than I was. And I looked down at him just a little, simply because I was taller than he.

I said I looked down at him, not on him. And he said, you know, I used to be the adjutant silver bugler. So I looked at him.

He said, yeah, I used to ride on the horse beside the adjutant. Adjutant silver bugler. I looked at him.

And I said, well, how about no teeth? You can't play a bugle or a trumpet without any teeth. And false ones won't do. See? He said, well, he said, you know, I was the top bugler.

He said, I got fed up with it, so I went down and the teeth pulled out. I thought, oh, what an idiot. He's some stupid... You know, I had his teeth pulled out so that he couldn't be the adjutant silver bugler, whatever an adjutant is.

And I wouldn't know, I never mixed in that crowd. But the whole glorious truth is this, beloved, that God had the silver trumpets made. I would have liked to have been there when they blew them.

Wouldn't you? Hallelujah. So would General Booth. It's a marvelous thing, beloved, to understand that God's going to take you to the promised land, but not unless you're prepared to fight.

I want to tell you this, that in the things of God, there's only rest for fighting men. The others don't need it. They're too lazy.

Here, then, is the glory of the Lord leading us on. Come on, Moses, blow that trumpet. Let's hear it.

That silver note, none of the old brassy stuff, I can tell whether it's sounding brass or silver, and so can God. The silvery note is the note of redemption. That's why I chose the hymn to start with.

I am redeemed. Silver stands for redemption. The redeemed people of the Lord are coming, devil.

Watch it. Get out. That's right.

Amen. Is the devil afraid of you? Is he? That's what God... Now, this tremendous thing, and then in chapter 11, the people complain, and it displeases the Lord. And then in verse 4, the mixed multitude that was among the fellow lusting, they wanted, they started to weep, they wanted fish, verse 5, wanted flesh, in verse 4, they wanted cucumbers, they wanted melons, they wanted leeks, they wanted onions, but I couldn't go with them on the last one, garlic.

Oh, dear. I would never want to go to Egypt for garlic, nor Scotland. This is the thing that God is saying.

What a tremendous truth it is, beloved. But look, they were going after this, and they said, our souls dried away. There's nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes.

And the manna was as coriander seed, and the color thereof was as the color of dillium. And the people went about and gathered it, ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it, and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp at night, the manna fell upon him.

And they complained. They complained with this miracle. They were an absolute miracle people, and they were complaining.

Oh, you know what happened. Moses heard the people weep throughout their families. Every man in the door of his tent, the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly.

Moses also was displeased. And Moses said to the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? Wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight? This is what I asked you for when I came up the mountain, Lord. I asked you to find favor in your sight.

Now look at this. Thou layest the burden of all these people upon them. Have I conceived these people? Have I begotten them? Thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father and bearest the sucking child unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers.

When should I have flesh to give unto all these people? For they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all these people alone. It is too heavy for me.

And if thou deal'st thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight. And let me not see my wretchedness. Oh.

Listen. Great men of God, whom God has chosen to be leaders, they can sometimes get dispirited. They can sometimes get dispirited.

They're not dispirited by the hardness of the way. I tell you the thing that will break a leader's heart quicker than anything, than grumbings and complainings amongst his congregation. I will do it quicker than anything.

I'm telling you. Oh. Oh.

He got dispirited. Mind you, despite his great exaltation by the hand of God, this man was still a humble man. He wasn't grasping after power.

And he got to a place where he saw his utter wretchedness. I cannot carry on any longer like this. I'm at the breakdown point, Lord.

Ever thought about it? A congregation breaking the man of God. Terrible, isn't it? God was angry. Moses was displeased.

Here it is, 16. The Lord says to Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them. And bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

And I will come down and talk with thee there. And I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them. And they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

And say unto this people, And so on down through. Verse 24. Moses went out, told the people the words of the Lord, gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle.

And the Lord came down in a cloud, and set them both unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders. And it came to pass that when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. I'd like to say this about the gifts of the Spirit of the Lord at this point, if I may.

That when God gives a gift of whichever sort it is, it isn't a five minute wonder. A man doesn't get tongues, interpretations, prophecy, or what it is, just as a sort of an initial kind of evidence thing. It comes and it doesn't cease.

Then you'll know that God's really given it. It's not just an emotional phase. It's there, and it remains there.

Amen. I'd like to witness to that. Hallelujah.

What God gives, He gives. He's wonderful. Hallelujah.

He doesn't give it in one hand and take it away with the other. He's not a man that He should repent. And it's so glorious.

The point I want to make, though, is about Moses, for he's our subject. Not the gifts of the Spirit, nor yet the children of Israel. Only their lives are bound up together.

Here it is. This man. He wasn't trying to claim anything.

He wasn't clamoring after position. God says, look, I'll come down and I'll do so and so and so and so. He talked with him, told him what he was going to do.

You gather the people together. And then he came down again, verse 25, and spoke to Moses again. Moses, are you sure you want me to do this? Moses, you said this burden's too great.

I called you, Moses. I called you. Do you know, I believe there comes a point in a man's life where if he will go through the breaking point, God will do even greater things with him.

I believe that. Have I ever told you the story of a great man of God named Menzies? Must have been a Scot with a name like that, mustn't he? He was a friend of a friend of mine. We knew this dear man very intimately.

We were very young. When I say young in our thirties, because when you're ten, you think thirties, ever so old. He told me of a man, this man Menzies.

He said he was the greatest man he knew. He used to be a builder. And he was up very high on scaffolding in London, and he fell off.

They picked him up, rushed him to the hospital. He should have been unconscious. They put him on a bed in emergency, rushed him into an operation.

And he heard the surgeon say, poor devil, pretty well every bone in his body is broken. They did their best. They put him in intensive care as they knew it in those days, as much as they could.

And in the night, God came to him and he said, get up and walk round your bed. He got up. He walked round his bed, and he was whole.

He was whole. Walked out of the hospital. They had him report at first every month, and then after that, every year, they wanted to see this miracle man.

So would you, wouldn't you? Disbelieving medical profession. Well, not everybody, of course. It's innate in them.

They're trained to believe nothing. Am I right, Jack? Absolutely. Trained to believe nothing.

You've got to diagnose it yourself, you've got to find out for yourself, you don't rely on anything. Believe nothing. I know.

I've got a friend called Kelly for nothing. He taps my brains for a lot, and I tap his for a lot too. They may not even know it while I'm doing it, but that's it.

He, yeah, so he reported. But my friend told me this. He said, this man after that, he'd been a man of God before, but God did this miracle.

He used to go out to his work every day. He lived alone. He was a bachelor.

And he said, God used to meet me at my door every night when I came home. And I would go in. He said, I'd perhaps have a meal, perhaps I wouldn't.

And there I'd be alone with the Lord, he said. And he said, one night the Lord came so powerfully. He said, when I didn't know I could go any further, I said, enough Lord, stay thy hair.

And he did. When you get on intimate terms with the Lord, as a Moses got on intimate terms, you can talk to the Lord in a wonderful way that others can't. I hope you know that.

This was one of the secrets of this man Moses. God allowed him to say things to him that nobody else could say. And God did what Moses said.

Twice Moses stopped God from wiping out the children of Israel. Twice. He said, I'll start again with you Moses.

Every time, or both times, Moses said to God, no. And God didn't because Moses said no. I shouldn't try it unless you know what it is to go up the mountain with God.

Don't try experiments. You'll disappoint your heart. The Bible is not to be used as a sort of a book in which you can go and think you can have a dip and try this and try that.

What a glorious truth though is here. All right, Moses. Do you really want me to take the spirit that's on you and put it on others? No.

You can say, well, look at him. He's distressed. He's broken.

He's down. He's talking about his wretchedness. But I tell you, when a man like Moses talks about his wretchedness, he's probably talking of something far greater than what you talk about when you're in your heights.

For God said, all right. And he showed what was in Moses. He took the spirit that was on Moses and put it on these other 70.

And they were away. Crawling into a new space. It was marvelous.

They were prophesying. They were moving. But let me ask myself a question.

When everybody in the room asked me if God took the spirit that's on you and put it on other people, what would they be when you began to see what you really are? And you know you are impressing others. You know that, don't you? Your spirit is affecting others. You do know that? If God should say to me, I'll take the spirit that's on you and put it on all these others, would I have to say, oh, Lord, no, don't.

Don't, Lord, don't. But Moses could stand there and say, yes, Lord. All right.

And you know, he was just a man, like you. But he'd gone through with God. So humble.

And you know what happened? Two of these 70 hadn't come out to the tabernacle. And the spirit of the Lord came on them in the camp. The spirit of Moses came on them in the camp.

I know it was the spirit of the Lord that was on Moses. And came on them in the camp. And they started to prophesy.

Somebody ran out. Well, let's read it ourselves, shall we? It's here. Oh, it was Joshua.

No, there ran a young man, verse 27, and told Moses and said, Eldad and Medad, to prophesy in the camp. Joshua, the son of Nun, the son of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My Lord Moses, forbid him. And Moses said unto him, Envious thou for thy sake.

Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and the Lord would put his spirit upon them. Yeah. He had no envy in his heart.

What a man he was. Oh, he said, I want everybody to be like this. And that really is what every true man of God moves to.

I want everybody to be in this. Wouldn't it be wonderful if God had a company of people like this? I think it would. What does it do in you to read these things? What work starts in your heart and mind? Lord, show me.

I want to go on. Well, so that wasn't bad enough, and I think I'm going to finish with this next chapter for tonight. Better do that, because I've been already scolded once today that I didn't preach long enough last night.

And as this is the last occasion, I'm going to steal a little more of your time, because this is as far as I thought I would go upon this occasion. In chapter 12, as though what had happened wasn't bad enough in chapter 12, when all the, chapter 11, all the people had turned against him, his own brothers and sisters did in the next chapter. This is the thing a man of God's got to put up with.

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married, for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it. Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.

Do you know, that's the verse that convinces me Moses was very meek. Only a meek man could have written that about himself. He just had to be to put that in.

If not, he was as proud as anything. He was the meekest man on all the earth. He wouldn't have put that in except the hand of God had been on him.

Go on Moses, write it down. It's true. And the Lord spoke suddenly unto Moses and unto Aaron and unto Miriam, Come out you three unto the tabernacle of the congregation.

And they three came out. And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both came forth.

And he said, Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so.

He is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth even apparently, not in dark speeches. And the similitude or form of the Lord shall he behold.

Wherefore then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them. And he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle.

And behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow. And Aaron looked upon Miriam and behold, she was leprous. And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my Lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us wherein we have done foolishly and wherein we have sinned.

Let her not be as one dead of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. And Moses cried unto the Lord saying, Heal her now, O God. I beseech thee.

And the Lord said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days, let her be shut out from the camp seven days. And after that, let her be received in again. And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days.

And the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again. Pretty bad when your own flesh and blood turn against you, isn't it? Hasn't the Lord spoken by us too? Jealousy. Now listen.

When God raises up a leader, forbear to speak against him. That's true. That isn't to say he isn't to be loving and prepared to talk and all that sort of thing.

But when God, and you know that God has raised a man up, put his spirit upon him, and when he has known something of this passage into God, and when he does know the glory of the Lord, and when God has used him, and you know God has used him, you be careful. You be very careful. Touch not mine anointed.

Do my prophets no harm. Moses didn't say a word. He didn't say, no God hasn't spoken to you.

God's raised me up. No, he didn't do anything to them. God came down suddenly.

Miriam, Aaron, come over here. Miriam, Miriam, she was a leper in her heart, a leper inside, and God brought it all out on her skin. What are you inside? Moses, when Moses said, look I'll take the spirit that's on you and put it on them, and I'll show you the spirit that's in Miriam.

Look at her. Look at her. I'll show you the state of her heart.

Look at it. What does a real man of God do? He says, Lord, heal her. Heal her Lord.

Heal her now. And God said no. Moses could say no to God, and God did what Moses said.

And God said, I want to do this. But Moses said no. Moses said, do that Lord.

That's what I would do. I'd like to heal her now. God said no.

Put her out of the camp for seven days. Let her come in after that. I'm not going to heal her instantly.

I'm not going to do it Moses. But this is terrible. Seven days.

Seven days. She didn't die. She wasn't excommunicated.

God didn't do anything terrible to her. But he let everybody see that he wasn't going to let anybody interfere with his man. That's right.

I raised up Moses. I called him at the bush. I've kept him.

He knows me. I know him. Don't let your evil heart grasp after the things that I've given him.

Don't let your jealousy and envy and pride rise. Let's all walk humbly with God, shall we? I thank God that this man Moses was the meekest man on all the earth. That's one of the great signs of a true man of God.

He's meek. Absolutely meek. Humble, meek.

He's as human as everybody else. But oh, God loves him. Shouldn't we all be moving into that? Shouldn't we all be longing after that? This great and marvelous thing.

I don't know if I was some of you young men in this room thinking of the days when I was young. I used to read these things in the Scripture. My heart is yours.

You've got a wise heart, woman. Won't it make you do something? How foolish you are if you don't get involved in the work of God. There's no wisdom in you.

How foolish if you don't give yourself. Give, give, give. Got the wrong spirit.

Got the wrong heart. I pray that it isn't leprous in his sight. Lest he should make it burst out all over your skin.

Her skin was white. Moses' skin was glowing behind the veil. Glowing, glowing, glowing.

It's the glory of God. Amen. All right, I think I'd better leave it there, don't you? May the Lord take us on and into the wonderful fulfillment of all this.

You'll never be a Moses. Never be a Moses. Whatever you do, don't be a Miriam.

And let the Lord take us right on into all his glory and wonder. Amen. Shall we pray? Father, thank you for every heart that is already abandoned unto thee.

O Lord, we would not rest in anything less than the highest and the best. Here before thee this night we pray one for another. Lord God, of all grace, all power, thank you for being so merciful that thou didst proclaim thy name before us tonight as though we were on the mountaintop.

The Lord, the Lord God, gracious, merciful, Lord we love thee. Let us see thy glory more and more so that we, O Lord, can be filled with it, suffused with it. Hallelujah, hallelujah, blessed Lord.

Lord, we come very humbly and lowly unto thee tonight, full of thankfulness, gratitude, Lord, for all that thou art doing for us. Cannot help but think, O Lord, that thou hast timed this whole occasion. Lord, when we have been facing great needs, then, Lord, thou hast come again, spoken to us again from thy precious word.

Thank you, Lord. Lord, stir up every heart, make everybody willing, lest this night's thinking should stand up before us as a condemnation in that day and that we heard but never did. We listened but never responded.

We heard thy commandments but excused ourselves. Now, Lord, because thou art gracious, merciful, full of kindness, because thou dost give us better the manner every day of our lives, because we are thy people by thine own sovereign choice, and because we are what we are, we come to thee. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Now, Lord, put thy wisdom into every heart. Lest, Lord, that in which we have been existing be found folly and that we may move on in thy great and wonderful will.

Hallelujah. We want to, Lord. So, Father, with gratitude we thank thee that thou hast come to talk to us and let that marvelous spirit that's upon our blessed Jesus be upon us that when he was in all his wretchedness hanging on that cross you could still take of that spirit and put it on us.

The spirit of the unbreakable. The spirit of the undefeatable.

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