

The Testing of Moses

by Zac Poonen

The sermon explores how Moses' tests reveal the importance of selflessness and intercession in our relationship with God.

Scripture: Exodus 32:10-33, Numbers 14:12, Romans 15:1, 1 Corinthians 10:24, Philippians 2:4, James 4:3

Topics: "Moses Life", "Selfless Leadership"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on how God tested Moses twice to see if he would seek his own honor at the expense of the Israelites, and how Moses passed the test with flying colors both times, displaying a spirit of selflessness and intercession. Despite the opportunity to become the inheritor of the promises made to Abraham and the twelve tribes of Israel, Moses pleaded with God to spare the Israelites, willing even to be blotted out from God's book for their sake. This selfless attitude led to God speaking intimately with Moses and granting him the privilege of seeing His glory.

Transcript

God tested Moses twice to see whether he would seek his own honour at the expense of the Israelites. In both cases Moses passed the test with flying colours.

The first occasion was when the children of Israel had rebelled against God through making the golden calf. God then told Moses, "Now let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them, and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation." (Exod. 32:10).

The second occasion was when the Israelites refused to enter Canaan, God then told Moses "I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they." (Num. 14:12).

On both occasions, God told Moses that He would destroy the Israelites and make Moses and his descendants into a great nation. Moses had the opportunity then to become the inheritor of the promises made to Abraham and to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Lesser men might have failed in that test, but not Moses. On both occasions, he pleaded with God to spare the Israelites. On one occasion, he even went so far as to be willing to die and to spend eternity in hell, if only Israel could be saved.

"Moses returned to the Lord, and said, `Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin - and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou has written!'" (Exod. 32:31,32).

Truly Moses had the spirit of Christ Himself - who was willing to be forsaken by the Father on the cross in order that we might be saved. God was so delighted with Moses' unselfishness that thereafter He began to speak with Moses very intimately. "The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend." (Ex. 33:11). God even gave Moses the unspeakable privilege of seeing His glory. When Moses prayed saying, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!", the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." (Ex. 33:18-23).

The most important qualification for a servant of God is that he does not seek his own. Seeking our own gain or honour is so deeply rooted in all of us, that God has a difficult task to free us from it. He arranges our circumstances so that we can see our self-seeking spirit, so that we might judge ourselves and cleanse ourselves from it. He speaks to us through His Word and is constantly speaking to us through His Spirit (if we have ears to hear) urging us to cleanse ourselves from this self-seeking spirit. And yet, in spite of all this, very few make the grade and qualify for God's certificate of approval. Moses was one such. Paul and Timothy were two others. There are not many, but there are a few. The great lack of a spirit of intercession for others, such as even Moses had under the old covenant, is mainly due to this one fact, that almost everyone, at the bottom of his heart, seeks his own in some way or the other. We gain no honour when we pray for others secretly. That's why few believers ever do it.

Here is where we are tested by God - for He cannot commit Himself to those who seek their own.

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