

## When Moses Had a Meltdown

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ...

In the time that I have with you this morning I want to draw your attention to our first reading from the book of Numbers...

And before I begin, I should point out that the book of Numbers (is the fourth book of the Old Testament) and it simply gets its name (Numbers) from the census taken that counted all of the men in the 12 tribes of Israel (who were 20 years of age or older - and were fit to fight) for the land of Israel...

and so it was that the men were divided up into equal divisions (or numbers) with God in the middle (giving instruction from the Ark of the Covenant) and Moses leading the way through the desert...

Now, even if you haven't read the story from Scripture you probably know that (what should have been a simple journey through the wilderness) took them 40 years of wandering through the desert before they reached the Promised Land... and along the way the Bible says that the Children of God complained, they argued, they blamed Moses, they blamed God, and they kept looking back to how good they had it in Egypt...

Now you also have to remember that Moses never raised his hand (and said, "*I'll do the job – I'll lead God's people out of Egypt*)... and he never asked to be in charge... In fact, if you do know the story, you may remember that Moses never wanted to get involved at all... when God first appeared to him, Moses came up with all sorts of excuses why he wasn't fit for the job - and he complained that he wasn't good at public speaking (and so God gave him Aaron to help him)... but it wasn't like Moses signed up for this, or even wanted to get involved – but the Bible says that Moses was *chosen* by God for the task... and it became his calling in life...

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And so, in our reading this morning the Israelites are complaining, and it's hot, and the people are tired and moaning – and it says that Moses has had enough and he's also angry with God – and so he says to God in verse 11, "*Why do you treat me so badly?... what have I done to deserve this?... and why are you making your people's problems my problem?... are these my children?... NO!...*"

And then he finally says something that most of us can relate to... he cries out to God and says, "I can't carry them alone – they're too heavy for me" ... in other words, he's saying, "I just can't take it anymore – I've had enough" ... in our day we might say that Moses was having a 'meltdown' ... and he had reached his breaking point...

Have you ever felt that way?... ever feel like God has given you too much to handle?... or He's given you a load that feels too heavy to carry on your own?... ever feel like giving up and getting yourself out of a situation that seems to require every ounce of your patience and your faith – and yet, all you to seem to get in return are more complaints, more headaches, more aggravation... ever find

*yourself in a situation like that?...*

And I would imagine that if it weren't **you** who was involved in all of this – you might even say to someone else, (or you might say to a friend) "why don't you just walk away?" or "get out of it" or "let someone else take care of the mess – that's not your problem" ...

But sometimes – things do tend to become **our problems** (whether we like it or not) – don't they?... or they become what the Bible seems to romantically refer to as our 'calling' in life... or our 'crosses to bear' ... and perhaps we'd walk away from them too if only the words of (singer Sara Groves) weren't so poetically true - when she refers to, "the things too heavy to carry, yet impossible to leave behind"...

It's the reason why we find a 60 year old woman who feels she has no choice but raise her 3 grandchildren on a fixed income all by herself (while their mother is off living it up somewhere) ...

Or why a family must give up large pieces of their own life to care for a loved one who is sick, or why we end up helping our children when they get in trouble (time and time again)...

And it's always easy to (look in) and say to someone else, "but that's not your problem – why are you worrying about it?" –

and in some ways they may be right – but some things in life are not always so easy to leave behind... not always so easy to ignore (at least if we're going to have peace within ourselves)...

And I'm sure even Moses wondered to himself, "*Oh, what's the use?*"... or "*why am I even doing this?*"... "*These people are crazy, all they do is complain, they're never happy – and what do I care if they ever get to the Promised Land?*"...

But like it is for us – when you're given a cross to bear -sometimes you just can't walk away... we'd like to (and I will admit that there have been a few days when I wanted to do that with the renovations) – but we all know – sometimes we can't...

That's why I've always found comfort in Jesus words – where he knows the challenges in life first hand and says to us in Matthew 11:28, "*Come to me all of you who are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest – for my yoke is easy and my burden is light*" ...

which reminds me of a story about Sunday school teacher who asked her class, "*Who can tell me what a yoke is?*"... A little girl said, "*Something they put on the necks of animals.*" ...Then she asked, "*and what is the meaning of God's yoke?*" All were silent for a moment, when the hand of a 5-year-old little girl finally went up and said, "*God putting his arms around our necks.*" ...

and maybe that's why our burdens tend to get the best of us, why we allow ourselves to burnout from time to time – could it be that we also forget to turn to God (to see what answers He might provide) – and when I say turn to Him – I don't mean just yell at Him – but actually listen to God... in fact, that's what Moses finally did – as he was having his own meltdown - and it says that not only did God send Moses some help (it says God sent him 70 people to help him along the way)...

now I'm sure some of you are probably thinking to yourself – “but I'm not Moses” and you're right – and maybe God won't be sending you 70 people to help out around the house, or help raise a child that's not yours, or give you the constant support you'd like as you care for a loved one who is sick – but that doesn't mean God won't be there (and won't help you along the way)...

that's why I am a firm believer that there is a lower power that's sole purpose is to get us to doubt God, and turn away from Him, and to make us believe that our burdens are greater than His blessings – but I want to close with something that might give you a slightly different way of looking at things – and might help to

remind you that even burdens can be turned into something more powerful if we never let go of our Father in Heaven's hand...

and from what I've read about in nature that's exactly how it is for the oyster... not unlike us – something irritating comes into the oysters life (something as small as a grain of sand)... and when that grain of sand comes into his mantle - nature teaches us that it covers the grain with a certain substance and makes a pearl... and what is so special about the pearl – is not only that it looks beautiful – but for those of us in the know – we understand that it's also a beautiful symbol of victory over burden... especially those of us who are going through it now...

and although none of us in our right mind would ever go looking for burdens to come into our lives – the truth is that they do (and God knows that – and the Bible teaches us that they do) but the Bible also teaches us that God is there to help us turn those burdens into pearls of wisdom, into expressions and understanding of His care and love for us, and ultimately – into symbols of victory... which in the days ahead you will witness in that sanctuary...

So if you've come here this morning carrying your own burden – let me be the first friend to remind you that you're not alone, you're not going to fall apart – and God already knows what you need from Him even before you ask...

May we all leave here with a stronger faith than when we arrived this morning, may we all be comforted by His presence and His love, and may we all be ready and willing to see our burdens *turned into* pearls of victory...

In Jesus' name we pray...

**Amen!**