

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Famous Last Words: Moses - Man of Sorrows**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - August 3, 2014**

Our famous last words today settle on the last words of the great leader, law giver and prophet, Moses. We know that he is great because he was with Christ on the night of His transfiguration when Jesus was revealed to be God's beloved when he was transfigured between Moses and Elijah. He is the greatest of all leaders of the Jewish people and therefore great in our history as well as Christians.

After wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, the people of Israel came finally to the plains of Moab on the east side of the Jordan River opposite Jericho.

Moses was 120 years old, "his eye was not dim or his natural force abated" (Deuteronomy 34:7), and he was profoundly loved by all the people. He had been their deliverer, their general, their lawgiver, their advocate before God, their prophet, their guide, their inspiration, their judge, and their pastor for over 40 years. Now he had become also a song writer. I think the closer you get to God the more impelled you feel to write songs! In Deuteronomy 32, we read his last song and some not so famous last words:

**Deuteronomy 32:1-7**

"Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak,  
and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.  
<sup>2</sup> May my teaching drop as the rain,  
my speech distill as the dew,  
like gentle rain upon the tender grass,  
and like showers upon the herb.  
<sup>3</sup> For I will proclaim the name of the LORD;  
ascribe greatness to our God!  
<sup>4</sup> "The Rock, his work is perfect,  
for all his ways are justice.  
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,  
just and upright is he.  
<sup>5</sup> They have dealt corruptly with him;  
they are no longer his children because they are blemished;  
they are a crooked and twisted generation.  
<sup>6</sup> Do you thus repay the LORD,  
you foolish and senseless people?  
Is not he your father, who created you,  
who made you and established you?  
<sup>7</sup> Remember the days of old;  
consider the years of many generations;  
ask your father, and he will show you,  
your elders, and they will tell you.

Let's stop for a moment and put all this into perspective with a brief history lesson.

**A brief history lesson**

- Moses leads the people out of slavery in Egypt
- Leads them to the promised land
- The Jewish people reject the promise choosing instead to not face the giants of Canaan
- And are sent to wander till this generation passes and various events of disobedience and faithlessness occur and profound miracles happen including bread from heaven
- Moses receives the law on Mt. Sinai
- And the people find themselves north in Moab where they are positioned again to enter the land promised to them by God

So now at the end of the story, I see an old man with a straight back, a strong bronze face, clear eyes, and snow white hair climbing Mount Nebo. And as he climbs, the camp of his beloved Israelites gets smaller and smaller on the east and on the west beyond the Jordan, and the Promised Land stretches out larger and larger. I see him atop the peak of Pisgah facing west, all alone with God, at the end of one of the greatest ministries the world has ever known, the wind blowing his white hair, and tears of regret flowing down his face. And I ask myself, "My God, how many conquests of joy have I forfeited through disobedience?"

You see this moment so filled with drama and passion is because the consequences of Moses' disobedience so many years ago would keep him from entering the Promised Land. Moses and his people had gone through a great deal together and now they were about to take on a grave and terrible task; to claim the promised land and to complete the task of utterly destroying utter evil.

### ***Deuteronomy 3 – Utterly Destroying Utter Evil***

As the unique people of God, Israel's exploits were not her own doing but God's. God was the commander-in-chief. He gave all the orders, and he himself fought for them (Joshua 6:16; 11:20; 23:10). When they acted against his orders, they were defeated (Numbers 14:39–45). Therefore, we must understand Israel to be the weapon of the Lord, the instrument by which he accomplished his historical judgments on the nations. The destruction of the nations of Canaan was not just to make a place for Israel; it was a judgment on the wickedness of those nations. Moses warned Israel in Deuteronomy 9:4,5:

Do not say in your heart after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, "It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land," whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you.

Remember, Abraham's life and the sacrifice of his only son that we spoke of last week was a foreshadowing of Christ. Now too we see Moses' status as the deliverer from bondage and slavery, the defeater of death and bringer of hope and promise. We can see Moses as a kind of savior.

### ***Moses – a Kind of Savior***

Remember our quote from last week and why it is that we are looking at these famous last words.

***"It is significant that the words of prophets both ancient and modern inevitably point us to Christ"***

### ***Man of Sorrows***

Moses lives with this one regret, an incident that grieved him all the days of his life:

#### ***Deuteronomy 32:48-52***

<sup>48</sup> That very day the LORD spoke to Moses, <sup>49</sup> "Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel for a possession. <sup>50</sup> And die on the mountain which you go up, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died in Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, <sup>51</sup> because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel. <sup>52</sup> For you shall see the land before you, but you shall not go there, into the land that I am giving to the people of Israel."



### **Numbers 20:8-13**

<sup>8</sup> "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle." <sup>9</sup> And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him. <sup>10</sup> Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" <sup>11</sup> And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "**Because you did not believe in me**, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them."

Like the forefathers of those who eventually ended up in the Promised Land, Moses' problem was that he failed to trust in God. Moses' problem wasn't that he misinterpreted God or thought that since he'd hit the rock before that it was okay to do it again. Rather, Moses was utterly rejecting God and trying to take control. He struck the rock *twice* when God just said to speak to it. Moses was usurping God's place. He said to the people, "hear now, you rebels: shall *we* bring water for you out of this rock?" The emphasis is technically mine, but it was already there. Moses didn't say "God will bring water out of this rock for you." He (with Aaron, evidently) took God's place and assured them that *he* would do it for them.

Verse 12 is pretty revealing as to the nature of Moses' crime:

**"Because you did not believe in me."**

Here is the crux of our message today: Disobedience is an expression of unbelief. And belief is everything. Jesus said it in no uncertain terms.

### **John 6:29**

Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

### **Acts 16:31**

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

**John 12:44**

And Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me.

**John 20:29**

<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

It is so fitting to remember these words this morning. Our disobedience in the smallest of things prevents us from experiencing the 100-fold blessing of God. God's will is not compromised, but our participation in it is. Even the best have failed God. That is why Moses is only a kind of Savior. He had his own sin to pay for He could not pay for himself *and* the people. The rest of us

So Moses will die, and the people will live. Judgment and grace are interwoven. In some sense Moses was bearing more of the suffering of his people than was his personal due. He foreshadows that future Son of Yahweh who would indeed offer a blameless life for the sin of us all. In the book of the old Testament prophet Isaiah we read in 53:4-6.

**Isaiah 53:3-6**

He was despised and rejected by men;  
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.  
<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.

**Jesus: Man of Sorrows and Sinless Savior**

Would it have eased Moses' pain and disappointment, we might wonder, if he could have known that one day he would stand in the land on another mountaintop and have a conversation with that very servant about the sacrifice *he* was about to accomplish?

**Psalms 32**

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.  
<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.  
<sup>3</sup> For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
<sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah  
<sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not cover my iniquity;  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"  
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah  
<sup>6</sup> Therefore let everyone who is godly  
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;  
  
<sup>10</sup> Many are the sorrows of the wicked,  
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.

<sup>11</sup> Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

“Well done good and faithful Servant. Because you believed in me come, enter into the joy of your Master.”