

Moses: Man of God!

Overview

I confess to you, I've preached this sermon before. I confess to you, I've preached this sermon in this pulpit. I confess, I don't know how many times I've preached it in this pulpit, but I have a suspicion there might be a few here who have never heard this message.

How many believe that? Say amen. I've got two friends somewhere here. I love this passage and I love to share this.

One of my stories. This is a great story. It's found in Deuteronomy chapter 33.

If you've heard this message before, all of a sudden you're going to say, oh yeah, that's that sermon number 22. We've heard that one before. These are Moses final words to his congregation. They are about to enter into a battle zone known as the promised land, Canaan. But he doesn't get to cross into the promised land. We all know why.

I believe it was a sad day for him. A sad day because they got to cross over and he did not. Only with his eyes did he see the promise.

He never got to enjoy it, but he will. Hebrews 11 says that all of these people through the biblical hall of faith, they all died having not experienced the fulfillment of these promises, but they embrace those promises. And those promises became an inward reality.

So although Moses was not going to go into and get the sand of the promised land between his toes, he knew his Redeemer lives and there would be a day when he would walk in Israel. Amen. That's exciting to me.

But these people before him, his congregation, they get to cross over soon and very soon. So I'm going to read the first few verses of Deuteronomy 33. It says, and this is the blessing.

This is the final word of Papa Moses. This is the last thing that he says to the congregation. He's about to leave the planet.

And this is the blessing. We know that word, right? This is the blessing where with Moses, the man of God, we're reminded that he was not worthy to go into the promised land because of his failure. But he's still called the man of God.

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I'm glad that of all the failures that have happened in my life, at least one per day, I can still be known in heaven as a man of God. The man of God blessed the children of Israel before he died. And he said, The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them.

He shone forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of his saints. From his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yes, he loved the people. All his saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy feet. Everyone shall receive thy words. And Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.

And he was king in Israel when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together. Then in verse 6, he pronounces a blessing over the family, or known as the tribe, of Reuben. In verse 7, he speaks of a prophetic word over Judah.

In verse 8, he commends the tribe of Levi. In verse 12, he includes a message, a prophetic word over the family of Benjamin. In verse 13, he speaks admirably and in a blessing upon the house, the family of Joseph.

In verse 17, he speaks of a continued blessing upon Joseph. Then he goes on in chapter 8, in verse 18, and he says of Zebulun, he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out, and Issachar in thy tents. And he goes on to speak more.

In verse 20, he speaks of Gad, and he speaks a blessing over Gad. And in verse 22, he speaks of a prophetic blessing over the house of Dan. In verse 23, he speaks a blessing over the house, the tribe of Naphtali.

In verse 24, he speaks a blessing over Asher. That was the 12th tribe. So at that point, somebody could have said, Here comes the final blessing.

Here comes the Lord bless you, keep you, keep his face upon you, et cetera. He's going to close now. But as he's about to close, the Spirit of God speaks in a riveting fashion into his soul.

The Lord says, one more, one more promise, one more prophecy over these people. So he opens his mouth, and he speaks these words. To the people who were about to face armies that outnumbered them 10, 20 to 1, every one of those tribes carried a little tin God, a little handmade God, a God that had no reality, no power, but it had the people convinced that they could win.

What brought them the sense that they could win in the battle carrying their little homemade God? Because the devil himself was assisting them. The devil himself was on their side. I did a little typing this week just to remind myself.

I did some research, and I discovered that the God known as Allah was formulated in the mind of a man whose name was Muhammad. Six or 700 years after the day of Pentecost. Allah is a new God.

He's a strong man. And he's got half of the world chasing and following after him. He's got them all carrying swords. He's got them all acting to one degree or another, acting out the stuff that happened on October 7th to those people who were unarmed in Israel. It's behind this Allah that Persia, now Iran, is being tortured immeasurably. And they're shouting Allah Akbar as they cut off people's heads.

The people who were in the streets were saying to the Iran regime, we're tired of your God, we're tired of your religion, and we won't take this anymore. And the bullets were ringing out from Lebanese rifles, from people from Iraq, from all around the Mediterranean, because the top dog of that religious regime could not get his own soldiers to kill their own people. So he brought some people from some other nations who were totally committed to Allah Akbar, Allah, and they're mowing down the people in the streets.

People who got wounded were carried by their friends to the hospital. And where did these Lebanese and Iraqi, these import guys go? They went into the hospitals and they killed the people in their beds. Then the word occurred to them, wait a minute, some of the people didn't get carried to the hospital because the word was out, it's not safe in the hospital.

And so these people who were wounded in the streets were taken to their homes. And this last week there were knocks on the door and these guys from all around the Mediterranean who were committed to this Allah burst in. And if they found somebody in that house who was wounded, they slit their throats right then and there.

There was nobody safe in that country. And yet here are the people in Deuteronomy 33 being told go in and face that kind of whatever. And it was a frightful thing that they were facing. And Moses was saying to them, I can't be there, but I want you to know something. There's no God like your God. There's no one like the God of Israel who rides upon the heavens to help you.

He rides in his excellency on the sky. Now I've looked in every commentary that I have access to. I have printed commentaries that are in books like this. And then just like anybody else, I can go on the internet and I can discover what the old, old, old stages of the book have recorded. And as they would say, this is what I see here. And I can't find anybody to do this. So I'm gonna have to write my own commentary because here's what I see. He rides on the heavens to help you. In other words, here we go.

Some of you are gonna say, I remember this part. Here's somebody of the house of Israel, of the people of Jacob, or today, it's you. And here you are in your difficult moment and you cry out to God, help me.

And the promise of Moses is wherever he is, he will ride the heavens in a cloud chariot and he will come to wherever you are. He rides on the clouds to come to you. And here's where I wanna write my commentary.

I thought from reading the scripture that the Psalmist had it figured out. Where can I go to escape your presence? If I go up in the heavens, you're there. If I end up in a bed in hell, you're there.

No matter where I turn, you're above me, you're below me, you're by left to my right, you surround me. So wait a minute. Moses said, when you're in trouble, ask him to leave where he is and come to where you are.

And the promise he has is he will ride the heavens. He will come swiftly to wherever you are and he will rescue you. How do you take that? Somebody would say, an agnostic, an atheist would say, oh, okay, okay, okay.

I found a problem in the Bible. No, David has discovered a problem that he has and occasionally you might have. Have you ever been in a place where as a Bible believer, a person who would sing with great joy, and he walks with me and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own, and the joys that we share as we tarry there, no one else has ever known.

That person has been at times, David. Was I lacking in faith? I don't believe so. But I have been trapped at times and I've screamed out.

I literally, on the basement floor of our house in London, on Magnolia Crescent, when I found out that one of my kids, I don't even wanna finish the sentence. You can finish it. A dirty scoundrel hurt one of my kids and forced the other two to watch.

And I ended up, Nicholas, on the concrete floor of my basement with my deacon board standing upstairs, not knowing what to do with this, there passed the man of God. When screaming down the stairs, because see, I got a message, I'm sitting with my board in the church, and the phone rang, and it was my little wife saying breathlessly, David, you gotta come home. I said, what's wrong? She said, just come home.

So when I walked in the door, I had no idea what I was facing. And as she broke the story to me in about three sentences, I went berserk. I ran down the stairs and I collapsed on a concrete floor.

Why did I go? I didn't wanna be comfortable. I didn't wanna be on carpet. I didn't wanna bury my face in a pillow.

I felt like a piece of dirt. I'm laying on the concrete floor and these were my words. Dear God, where were you? Where were you? Bad things like that don't happen to good people.

Yes, they do. Yes, they do. It's a very elongated story.

I wanna tell you, I just wanna be totally transparent. I did not handle the whole thing well. I'll just tell you tidbits.

April's sitting here, she'll remember. I came up the stairs like a Roman soldier looking for a spear, a sword, or as an American Marine looking for a hand grenade. I was gonna execute justice.

I was gonna find this dirty rat and I was gonna make him sorry. And my deacons actually tackled me and I ended up on the floor screaming and they're holding me, they're holding me and I'm screaming these words, murder, murder. I wanted to commit murder.

He's above me, he's below me, he's to my left, he's to my right. I'm surrounded by him. Where was he and where is he now? The following day, we went to another city where this ugly thing had taken place.

I know that's gonna leave you mystified. That's not a part of the story, it doesn't matter. It happened in another city and so I went to that city and there was somebody who said, I saw him with your children.

He lives on the seventh floor or whatever it was. I'm not proud of this. I ran to the seventh floor.

I didn't take the elevator. I was a man on a mission and the devil was trying to foul me up. When I got to the door, I didn't knock on it.

I kicked on it with all my might and a little lady opened the door and when I thrust the door, I pretty much knocked off her feet and I stepped into a room and there sat a man and I won't repeat the things that I said to him. I said, you're gonna pay and the woman starts screaming, no, no, you did it again, you did it again. It's her husband and he's done this so many times.

He's sitting comfortably on a sofa. I marched across that room. There was nothing he could have done to stop me.

If he'd had a gun, I would have taken the bullet and I still would have run his neck. He had nowhere to go. I had the strength of Atlas.

I could have broken him in half. I grabbed him and I lifted him off that sofa and as God is my witness, that's the only time in my life I've heard a voice. I heard these words, do it.

I heard those words, do it. And God, when we sing amazing grace, it means something different to everyone in the house. You know that.

And what happened to me in that very moment, Erica, was amazing grace. Where God in a more powerful way, I did not hear a voice, but I had a compelling thing in here that said, no, no, you leave it to God. And I threw the man down on the sofa.

And I stormed out, I called the police and they came to investigators. The devil was still at work. I told them what we knew.

I told them that we had witnesses. He said, what are you gonna do about it? I said, I almost killed him a half hour ago and I still might do it. He said, you'll go to jail.

I said, what about him? He said, there's nothing we can do about him. No eyewitnesses. And he said, a lawyer in a court will tear your kids to shreds.

Is that what you want? And then he went on and he said, is it right you're a pastor? I said, yes. He said, well, love your enemies. I invited him to close the door from the other side.

I was ready to take him apart. And for the next couple of months, I didn't sleep well. I beat the living daylights out of my pillow nightly.

I suffered immeasurably in here. And I came on Sundays and sang songs with the people. Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion.

And everlasting joy will be their portion. But inside I was tormented and a deacon from our church, who's now gone to be with the Lord, called me and said, Pastor Dave, can we go? I wanna take you out for lunch. He took me for lunch.

He said, we're going for a drive. I said, I got things to do. He said, no, you don't.

We're going for a drive. And as we drove along, he said, Pastor, I was there with you that night in your house. And he said, you were tormented.

I said, yes. Do you think you're past it? I said, well, of course I am. He said, you're not.

You're not past it. Pastor, you're not the man in your pulpit that you used to be. He said, I hear anger.

We all hear anger. He said, Pastor, you've got to find it in your heart to get rid of that. He wouldn't hurt me anymore if he'd slam me with his fist.

But the Bible says, faithful are the wounds of a friend. And that day, that man was a friend. I could not see what was going on in my own heart.

I thought I dealt with it. But what the people were seeing was the tip of the iceberg. I was tormented.

And I was not going to make it in the ministry because an angry man cannot fulfill the calling of God. And so then I began, because that man had said, get your act together. I began the process of going to my office at five o'clock every morning.

And I would kneel down a posture that I hoped would indicate the posture of my heart. At times I laid down in that pathetic little cold office. And I cried out to God and I said, I know what I've got to do, but I can't do it. And it took me months. Every morning I went to my office faithfully and I cried out, I want to forgive him. I want to forgive him, but I can't.

Help me, dear God, help me. And then I would begin a prayer. And I couldn't get the word, I couldn't get out the word forgive. Couldn't get it out. Until one morning I said, I want to forgive. I screamed, I screamed, I want to forgive. I want to forgive. And suddenly, amazing grace, how sweet the sound. It saved a pathetic preacher like me.

I walked into that office that morning, a lost man, a blind man. But I left that office that morning, a man who was free of torment. Because I actually got the words out of my mouth. I forgive him. And I promise you, the moment I said those words, I forgive him. I literally felt something lift off of me.

And I jumped to my feet and I lift my hands up to the ceiling of that pathetic little schoolhouse principal's office. Lifted my hands up like that and I screamed, I'm free, I'm free, I'm free. But I wasn't yet.

It took more time as I realized that I was saying, God, you kill him. You just go, I forgive him, but you don't have to. And the morning came when I cried out, oh God, forgive him. He has no idea what he did to us. He has no idea. Father, forgive them, they know not. That's what I experienced, Nicholas. I experienced freedom. So what was this all about? He's around me, he's above me, below me, around me, whatever.

You see, your mind can play wicked tricks on you and it affects your soul. Your soul is your mind, your thinking, your emotion. Was I going through emotion? I was. What kind of emotion did I have? I'm beating up my pillow. And in my pulpit, I'm sharing anger. Your mind affects your emotion and that blocks your spirit from truly connecting with God.

And when I finally said, I forgive him, I can't tell you, I can't tell you how special it was. What was the difference? Was God with me that night when that terrible thing, when that tragedy took place? Was God with me? He was. But in my mind, I was filled with troubled thoughts, which crowded my emotion and stifled my will.

So I believe that that verse, he rides on the heavens to help you, is for days that we are so low, we have to look up to see the bottom. The Lord is saying, I'm there with you. I'm always there with you.

I'm there. But if you're so mixed up and so messed up that you doubt, call me and I'll come. How quickly can I be there? Faster than the winds. I'm sorry, I'm gonna come across with humor right now. Somebody tell me how these things work because this thing's driving me nuts. Have you ever seen these things? It says, the advertising will tell you, change your life, it will.

I'm hearing weird noises in there. I don't know if I'm getting a phone call, or maybe that's heaven saying, I'm still with you, Dave. So I hope I haven't lost you. He's always there. Lord, I'm with you always. I will never leave you, I'll never forsake you.

But if you ever get mixed up, if you ever become so trashed, if suddenly you were a beautiful meadow and now you're a plowed up field, if you're drained of everything, don't you worry about that because I'm there. And you call upon me and I'll be there. And by the way, don't rely on your feelings.

But I don't feel God. Trust me, honey, I did not feel God that night. But he was there.

My feelings were tormented by what I sensed was reality. But there's another reality, a spiritual reality. I'm always with you.

And where was he? As I screamed on that concrete, where were you? He was always there. You haven't met all my kids, but trust me, they're more normal than anybody in this room. Are they damaged people? No, by the grace of God, my kids are normal.

In fact, of the three, two have no memory of what went down. No memory, so we don't discuss it. David, you said you'd preach this message before.

I'm hearing some stuff I never heard before. That's because AI calls my preaching rabbit holes. So I went down a rabbit hole this morning.

So you didn't hear the whole thing. Because I would have entitled my message this morning, Make Yourself at Home. And I'll have to finish this on another occasion.

Because I love to preach on my message. Go ahead, make yourself at home. And the follow up to that comment is, as a guest, my question is, make myself at home.

What do you mean by that? How far do you want me to go in making myself at home? Go through all your kitchen cupboards? Look and see what's in your freezer? In some people's kitchen cupboards, they keep their visa bill. Make yourself at home. Oh, let's see where you were.

No, you say, of course not, David. Well, what do you mean by make yourself at home? I wanna preach on that. And that actually is hinged to what I shared with you this morning.

And you say, that sounds nutty. You can't put it together. I can so.

Heavenly Father, I pray that if this touched any person in this place who's struggling with forgiveness, they could be struggling with something that happened 50 years ago and they've never given it up. There's that little dark spot somewhere deep within a cave, a cave in their soul. Heavenly Father, I pray that they, whoever they might be this morning, will be helped by your precious Holy Spirit.

Oh, comforter, Holy Spirit comforter, comfort people this morning. Lord, it may very well be that what I spoke on this morning of what happened to somebody that was so special to me that might have raised up a memory that somebody tried to cloud out and now they're struggling because they didn't really want to hear that this morning. That means that the iceberg is still deep in the water.

Oh God, help people out. I was there. I was there.

I was wounded. I was helpless. And in some ways I was hopeless, but love found a way and you are love.

I thank you, Lord God, for bringing my wife and I out of a very dark place. Thank you, Jesus, for salvaging us. And thank you for reminding me today.

He said, I'll never leave and I'll never forsake. Thank you for that promise. In Jesus' name, amen.