

The life of Moses

Moses' Testimony

Exodus 18: 1-12

Chapter 11

Chapter 11

MOSES' TESTIMONY

“When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt; Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, And her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land: And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh: And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God: And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her. And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh,

who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God.”

(Exodus 18: 1 – 12)

I trust the Holy Spirit has been guiding your thoughts as you have been studying the life of the man Moses. Frankly, we will not do justice to this study in this small volume. In the next few lessons we will look at some general conclusions that Moses came to as he was used to make God known to the people of that day and to us today. The task that God had given Moses had been a very difficult one. He was required to stand before the people of God and before Pharaoh himself and give testimony to the greatness of the true God of Heaven. In obedience Moses had done all that God had asked him to do. It had been a very demanding task. There had been great hardship and many trials along the way. Many times Moses had wanted to give up and quit. The people themselves had protested and complained and several times even threatened to kill Moses. Now in chapter eighteen of the book of Exodus we find Moses telling the story of all these events to his father-in-law, Jethro.

As we think back over the events that we have studied in the book of Exodus, I am struck with just how difficult the journey had been for

Moses. He had been required to leave his family and home. He braved the wrath of Pharaoh. The people of Israel became very angry with him when Pharaoh had increased their work load. Imagine the stress Moses, the leader, was under when the people were facing the army of Pharaoh with the Red Sea at his back. The people were sure that they would be killed up until the time the Lord delivered them. The joy of deliverance was very short lived, however, because in just a few days they faced death by thirst at the well of Marah. There they murmured against Moses and a little later in chapter seventeen we read that they were ready to stone Moses because again there was no water. That is where God gave them water from the rock. Now most recently in chapter eighteen, they had to fight the people of Amalek. In chapter eighteen we find that Moses' father-in-law, Jethro has come to bring Moses' wife and children to him again. Moses sits down with Jethro and begins to detail all that the Lord had done. Scripture reads, "*and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them.*" Moses could have complained bitterly about how hard his life had been but he chose instead, to praise the Lord for all that He had accomplished for the people. I believe that Moses had learned that he had a choice about the attitude of his heart. He could complain about his hardships and grow bitter or he could praise the Lord for his deliverance and grow better. It is

important for us to realize that we have the same choice. We can become angry and toughen to the things of the Lord because we feel that he has been unfair to us, or we can become tender to the Lord, look to Him and let Him make us better. The truth of the matter is our trials can make us better or bitter. They can make us tough or tender toward the things of God. Moses chose to praise the Lord before his father-in-law and as a result he grew better in his relationship with the Lord. We have the same choice. If we choose to let the Lord make us better we will know the peace and the joy of God. We will move in confidence through our lives trusting in the goodness of God. If we rebel against God and become tough and bitter we will experience misery, sadness and defeat. We all have moments of lapse but we should recover and react in trust when the trials come. In life there are emotional ups and downse. The first reaction to a test or trial sometimes will be hard and negative but we must not allow the Devil to drive us away from the Lord. At those times we must consciously choose to lean on the Lord for strength. Satan will infect our hearts with his bitterness if we allow him to. We must be on guard at those times.

Now the context of chapter eighteen of the book of Exodus is the arrival of Jethro, the father of Moses' wife to the camp of the children of Israel. Moses comes out of the camp to greet them and bring them back to his tent. Scripture tells us that *"And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake."* As they sat in the tent Moses told

him what God had done for them. He could have told the story from the point of view of a sufferer. They had surely suffered greatly. He told him, *“all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them.”* Moses chose, in his testimony before Jethro, to emphasize the goodness and glory of God. He did not emphasize the trials. He emphasized the triumphs. Have you ever heard someone tell of how God worked in their lives, and the person seemed to be overtaken in the burdens that he has had to endure? The problem with this person is that the emphasis is on themselves. The emphasis should be on the Lord. We should say, “Listen and let me tell you what the Lord has done.” This should be what we stress. The choice we make is the key to giving God the glory or putting the emphases on ourselves and our own suffering. One way will make us better; the other will make us bitter.

Notice please the result of Moses’ positive choice. We read in verses nine through eleven that *“And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.”* Later the Scripture tells us, *“Jethro, Moses’ father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God.”* The result of Moses’ testimony in that Jethro

rejoices and blesses the Lord. His fellowship with Moses is made more pleasant. Jethro grows much closer to the Lord God of Heaven. All this good came because Moses chose to let his trials make him better and tender toward God and not bitter and tough to the Father's will. Moses came through a great time of trial and testing and was a blessing to his father-in-law because of his recognition of God's hand in his life. In chapter two of Exodus, Jethro is called by another name. There he is known as Reuel. The word Reuel means, "Friend of God." Because he could see the very evident hand of God in the life of Moses and the Children of Israel he rejoiced in his faith and became an even better friend of God. Could that be said of you? Has your trial made you better or bitter? Would your testimony through your trial make another person rejoice and worship God? Would it cause them sadness and discourage their faith in God?

Jethro came to several important conclusions about God because of Moses' testimony. First of all, he was given assurance of the reality of God. Notice in verse eleven where he says, "*Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods.*"

I believe that Jethro had some understanding of the true God of Heaven before this time. However it was probably lacking and incomplete. Now he is assured of the fact that the God he served was the true God of Heaven. None other could deliver his people after this fashion. He is saying here that before he may have had his reservations, but now he is sure God is real. He now had proof. He is

convinced and no longer is in doubt. Sometimes God lets us go through deep waters. We do not know why God allow us to suffer. There seems to be no “why” to it. His grace brings us through the affliction and later we learn that a weaker brother was observing us in that time of trouble. He saw how we were able to go through, and God revealed Himself to this person in much the same way He did to Jethro. That weaker brother is now sure that God is real. He can say with Jethro, “*Now I know.*”

Secondly, Jethro concluded that God is “*greater than all God’s.*” My friend, I can tell you from first hand experience that God is greater than any other obstacle that Satan can bring across your path. He is greater than doubt, and greater than discouragement. He is greater than fear, and greater than unbelief. He is greater than sin and even our sinful nature. You, who are going through a great trial of your faith, lean on God and make Him your strength. Don’t let Satan make you bitter and complain against God. God is greater. Jethro says that these lesser gods, “*for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.*” The thing that Satan wants to do in our lives is to stop us in our walk for God. God will take you through with rejoicing if we choose to bless and not blame; cry out to Him and do not curse Him; trust His goodness and do not transgress His love. God is greater than anything we face. He gives peace and courage, strength and faith when we cast on Him our every burden and trial. Psalm 37: 5-6 reads, “*Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring*

forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.” God is accomplishing things in you life and he is using you to bring faith and trust into the lives of people you know.

Finally, Jethro was convinced that God is real and wanted to enter his life. Because God is greater than all others, he is moved to worship. *“And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God.”* He offered a sacrifice to God and shared it with the elders of the people of Israel. God was honored by Moses' choice of blessing and not complaining. Moses was built up in the faith. Jethro was led to worship the true God of Heaven and the elders of Israel were able to give testimony of God. Our trials can draw us to the Lord or drive us from Him. When we draw nearer we are blessed and God is glorified. If we allow Satan to make us bitter and draw us away we will become bitter and contaminate all the others who are around us. I remember a lady in the prime of her life who was stricken with cancer. She loved the Lord very much and through her ordeal she drew closer and closer to the Lord. Many people were encouraged by her testimony. She had an aunt who really did not know the Lord. Her reaction was “How could God do something like that to such a young mother?” She let the reality of the trial drive her away from God. The lady with cancer was eventually taken home to Heaven because of the disease. At her home going she loved the Lord with all of her heart and He was as much a reality to her

as any member of her family. There was no fear in her heart even to the last few minutes of her earthly life. Her legacy to her family is one of faith and love to the Heavenly Father. Her children love the Lord and are following Him to this day. There was a choice early on in the illness never to blame God but to lean on Him for strength and comfort. He never failed her. Maybe you are now going through a hard time of life. Make that conscious choice that Moses made to trust the Lord with all his heart. Proverbs chapter three and verses five and six tell us to *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”* Satan will seek to gain the victory over us but we can defeat him as we spend time in God’s word. The Bible is our strength and sure defense. Remember the conclusion that Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law came to? “God is greater than all.” Child of God, let us learn every day to turn our burdens over to the Lord. Seek to give Him glory as Moses did by choosing to see the reality of God in your life and trials. Do not ever let your sufferings make you bitter. Let them drive you closer to the Lord and there by make you better. Remember to be bitter and tough towards God is to be self-centered. To allow God to make you tender is to be God centered. It will be a battle to be sure. Satan does not want you to have that victory. You must make the conscious choice to bring the burden to God and He will give you the grace to honor Him and bring glory to His name. Others, when they see our testimony, will rise up and bless God as Jethro did

when he heard Moses' testimony. Let us pray and ask God for that strength.

TO AID OUR LEARNING:

1. By choosing to praise the Lord for all He had done Moses chose the best way. Why was that the best way?
2. "The truth of the matter is our trials can make us _____ or they can lake us _____."
3. How many positive results can you list from Moses' positive choice?
4. Has there been some one that you can think of who has been encouraged because of how you chose to respond to the trials in your life?
5. God is bigger than our trial. What trial has God shown you that He is bigger than?