

MOSES, A MAN OF PRAYER  
Ex. 32:11-14

Intro: In these Sunday night services we have been thinking about certain subjects which relate to our lives as Christians--subjects of a practical nature.

We have talked about what we need to know about God, about the divine inspiration of Scripture, and about salvation--specifically, assurance.

Then we talked about the Word, and how we need it in order to grow as the children of God.

Tonight I want to begin thinking about prayer.

We might talk about different kinds of prayer:

- 1) Worship--of God as a Person.
- 2) Thanksgiving--for all of His blessings.
- 3) Confession of sin.
- 4) Petition--presenting our personal requests.
- 5) Intercession--prayer for others.

Several weeks ago, when we were studying the Psalms on Wednesday night, we noted these five kinds of prayer in the Psalms.

But I am not going to follow the different kinds of prayer. INSTEAD, I WANT TO CONSIDER CERTAIN MEN OF PRAYER IN THE BIBLE, HOW THEY PRAYED, AND WHAT IT WAS ABOUT THEIR PRAYERS WHICH MADE PRAYING EFFECTIVE. This will not be extended, but I do want to take a few examples from the OT and from the NT.

Tonight we will begin with Moses.

I am starting with Moses because of a passage you will find in Jer. 15:1 where Jeremiah is told,

"Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people. Cast them out of my sight, and let them go."

The statement indicates that if the the prayers of anyone could help Judah at this time it would be the prayers of Moses and Samuel. This verse made me curious to know more about Moses and Samuel as men of prayer!

Cf. also Psa. 99:6,

"Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those who call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them."

There are many examples of Moses' prayer for the people of Israel --before and after they were delivered from Egypt. He prayed for

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them at the Red Sea. He prayed for them when they had no water. He prayed for them when they were confronted with enemies. BUT THERE WAS NO TIME WHEN HIS PRAYER WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN IN THE PRAYER WHICH WE ARE GOING TO CONSIDER TONIGHT. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME ISRAEL HAD BEEN GUILTY OF IDOLATRY SINCE LEAVING EGYPT, AND GOD WAS READY TO DESTROY ALL OF THEM EXCEPT MOSES.

From Ex. 32:14 we can say that it was through Moses' prayer that they were spared. Much could be said about the man, Moses, and undoubtedly this affected his prayer. BUT LET US LOOK TONIGHT AT HIS PRAYER, AND SEE WHAT WE CAN LEARN ABOUT PRAYER.

(Briefly summarize the background with Moses in the mount receiving the Law from God.)

Now the prayer:

I. HE REMINDS GOD OF HIS PURPOSE IN REDEEMING ISRAEL (v. 11).

This gives evidence of the understanding Moses had of his own work. Cf. v. 7 where the Lord said to Moses, "Thy people, whom thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt," and see how Moses turns those same statements back to the Lord in v. 11.

This goes all of the way back to the time when God called Moses when Moses had been in the very area where he is now with the children of Israel. Cf. Ex. 3:4-8.

How wonderful it is for us to be reminded in times of need that the whole work of redemption was brought about through a divine purpose which God had--not as a work which we had planned.

Cf. Rom. 8:28.

Even with all of the trouble Moses had had with the Israelites, his heart was so full of the purpose of God that he could not even accept, "I will make of thee a great nation." See v. 10b.

Prayer was never meant to serve our purposes independent of the purpose of God. Therefore, we must never lose sight of that which God is seeking to accomplish--both ultimately and immediately!

This will give us great boldness in prayer, and great confidence in the face of difficulty, as it did Peter and the early church in Acts 4:23-31.

II. HE REMINDS GOD OF HIS PERSON--HOW THIS WOULD REFLECT UPON HIM (GOD) (v. 12).

Moses was always jealous for the glory of God's Name.

Possibly Joshua had learned this about prayer from Moses because this is the way he prayed when they were routed at Ai:  
 "O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. And what wilt thou do unto thy great name" (Joshua 7:8, 9).

Even as the Lord through Joel is seeking to get His people to pray aright He puts words in their mouth:

"Why should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2:17b).

Even at Kadesh-Barnea (later) God was ready to do the same thing with Israel as in Ex. 32 (destroy the people and make a nation from Moses), but again Moses was concerned about what the nations would say about God, i.e., that He had to destroy them because He could not bring them into the land (cf. Num. 14:16). HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE NAME OF GOD.

Do you suppose that this was a part of what the Lord had in mind when He said,

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (Jn 14:13)?

How it must delight the heart of God when we are moved to pray because we are jealous for His glory!

But let us notice v. 13.

### III. HE REMINDS GOD OF HIS PROMISES (v. 13).

We have no right to expect God to do anything which He has not promised to do--BUT, OH, THE PROMISES OF GOD! Are we getting acquainted with the promises of God?

Read this verse carefully, and you will notice two interesting peculiarities:

- 1) Moses does not say, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel! This is indicative of Moses' faith as he lays claim to what God had made Jacob--not to what Jacob was in himself. This shows Moses' understanding of the grace of God!
- 2) If you will compare Gen. 22 with Gen. 13 and 17, you will find that Moses here puts the oath before the promise, but it was the promise which was given first.  
 Cf. Heb. 6:16, 17:

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consola-

tion, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

Whenever there are such changes in Scripture there is obviously a purpose, an emphasis that is being made. Moses was laying claim to the greatest truths which are established in the Word of God. They were truths which had to do with the salvation of all men, truths which God could not turn away from.

Therefore,

Concl: "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." See v. 14.

We perhaps cannot fully explain such a statement, but one thing it surely means is that it was all-important for Moses to pray. God responded to his prayer, and changed His course of action because Moses prayed!

How the prayers of man fit in with the purposes of a God who knows the end from the beginning will continue to be a mystery to us, but the encouragement to pray is certainly here.

What we need to see is the prayer, and how Moses prayed. Since the OT was written "for our learning" (Rom. 15:4), it would be difficult to find a more instructive passage on prayer. Let us go to God in the full confidence that, in ways which we cannot understand, God does move in answer to prayers like this one of Moses.