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**Presentation Transcript**  
**Moses Bites the Bullet**  
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The old man made his way up the side of the rocky hill with surprising agility. His stride was that of a man many years younger. From a distance, only his brilliant white hair gave away his years. The wind was hot and dry. The sun was bright. As he ascended the mountain, he could see distant landmarks shimmering in the desert heat. He had been called and commissioned to lead God's people for forty years, and now God had revealed to him that his phase of the work was at its end. Now it was time for him to sleep the sleep of death – to pass from life to life in the resurrection. The last few days had been hectic. So much to be done briefing his replacements, writing job descriptions, finalizing details, finishing his last book. It was important that things go well. He wanted a smooth transition of authority.

When the old man first learned of God's judgment, he was apprehensive for those he had been called to lead, but God had shared with him who was to succeed him, and God's choice gave him a measure of comfort. Yet no one ever really wants to give us the reins. At this time, of all times, it was particularly bitter." It would have been easy to give in to it," he thought. "After all I've been leading God's people for four decades. It would seem only fair to let me finish." The old man stopped himself in mid-thought. "This won't help," he said to himself. "True, I had hoped to do this one last thing, but God said no to my request, and He's always right. I have followed him too far to stop now."

As he threaded his way a concentration of rocks along the steep mountainside, he stopped to look into the shimmering distance to reflect. Thoughts of his farewell sermon flooded his mind in a flashback. "I know how rebellious and stubborn you are," he told them. "You are defiant rebels today while I am here. What will you do when I'm gone?" He had been awfully strong – perhaps too strong. But then, someone had to tell it like it is. That lot had fallen to him for the last forty years.

He continued climbing again. His thoughts wandered back to some of the more intense occasions during his ministry – his audiences with kings, the miracle God performed to save His people, criticism of rebels, and the confrontations with them. The corners of his eyes wrinkled as the

corners of his mouth turned up slightly. Finally, the weather beaten countenance broke into a smile. He chuckled within himself. While there was nothing humorous about it at the time, looking back, it struck him funny that when things were going well, God always referred to the children of Israel as “My people.” But when they were acting stubborn and rebellious, He called them “your people.”

After climbing for some time, he stopped and looked back over the distance he had covered. The huge throng that had been on hand to honor him at his departure had grown small in the distance. He appreciated their concern. It felt like victory to him. It certainly had been a different story when he'd begun his work at first. Some of this crowd's parents had made life more than difficult for him.

After reaching the top of the mountain, he looked across the river valley below, and he scanned the lush vegetation growing on the fertile land before him. Tears filled his eyes. Here, at last, was the goal of forty years right before him – forty years of trials, forty years of struggle, forty years of hardship, forty years of criticism, forty years of betrayal, forty years of frustration. Forty years! How long and how short it had been. As his old eyes looked into the distance before him, he understood that this was a monumental moment in history. After forty years of wandering, Moses was looking at the Promised Land. While, he was excited to see it, the sight brought an aching sadness to his heart. He wished with all his heart that he had not lost his temper at Maribah. He remembered that day when God told him and Aaron, “Because you believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall *not* bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”

It was ironic. The previous generation of Israelites had been destroyed in the wilderness, and were not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of unbelief. Now, after forty years of faithful service, he found himself excluded for the same reason. He had besought God to change his mind and let him have this one last wish – an old man's heart's desire. But the answer was always and finally, “No.” He didn't like it, but he accepted God's decision. “That's in the past now,” he reminded himself, “and nothing can be done about it.” At least had agreed to show him the land, even though he couldn't enter into it. For that, he was grateful.

As he looked through eyes that were not dim, he could just barely make out buildings in Jerusalem thirty miles away. He could easily see the Dead Sea and beyond, the blue Judean hills. As he strained to see across the miles, God performed one last miracle for this old man. He opened Moses' eyes supernaturally, and as the scripture says, “showed him all the land of Gilead to Dan and Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far as the uttermost sea, and the south to the plain of Jericho, the City of Palm Trees, unto Zoar.” Moses was called of God at 80 years of age to lead Israel to freedom. He was 120 years old when he died.

This presentation is about the man, Moses, who forsook fame and wealth in Egypt to follow God into the desert – who was accused by men of being arrogant, and yet was judged the most meek man whoever lived by God. He was a prophet. He was a type of Jesus Christ. He wrote more of the Bible than the apostle Paul. And his character, under extreme trial, endured to the end. Why did God not allow Moses, after all his faithfulness, to enter into the Promised Land? Was it too much to ask?

In the life of Moses, there's a lot to learn about how God deals with us – why He lets bad things happen, why He doesn't always give us what we want. Let's contemplate some of the things that happened to this man.

We see that Moses had a bad temper. He could be violent – not the picture of the most meek man who ever lived. We know that he was born of Hebrew parents while they were slaves in Egypt. To save his life, because the Egyptians were killing all the male babies, he was put in a reed boat by his parents when just an infant and hidden in the Nile shallow, where he was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter. So he grew up in the court of Pharaoh, raised as an Egyptian prince. She adopted him. He later became a general of the Egyptian army and he had a brilliant military career as a young man.

Now let's pick this story up from what Paul tells us in Acts 7, and verse 23.

**Acts 7:23** – *Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel.* He's getting to that age where he's starting to realize that he's not going to live forever and there are a lot of questions he has, so he goes to visit the Israelites, because he knew he was one.

**V-26-29** – *The next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, "Men, you are brothers. Why do you do wrong to one another? But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.*

So he had killed an Egyptian – an impetuous murder – and he didn't realize that this Hebrew slave saw him until the man revealed it to him. He was afraid that he was going to be killed for killing an Egyptian, so he fled for his life from Egypt – went to the desert and lived in Midian as a herdsman. So he went, at forty years of age, from prince and general in Egypt to herding goats in Midian. And there he married a woman named Zipporah, and he lived there for forty years till he was eighty.

At this point, Moses has a life-altering experience. We pick Paul up in verse 30 of Acts 7:

**V-30** – *And when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush – in the wilderness at Mount Sinai.*

**V-33** – *Then the Lord said to him, “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have surely seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.”* So God had been paying attention to what was going on there. He was an empathic God. He understood their situation. *This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, “Who made you a ruler and a judge?” – this man God sent as both ruler and deliverer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after he had shown them wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.*

So that’s how Moses was introduced to the God of his ancestors. He probably believed in the Egyptian gods up to that point. And God told him that he was going to lead Israel out of slavery. And he didn’t want to do that. Rather than fame, he craved anonymity at that point. So he was more humble than before – not like the princely general of his youth, not a climber, not political any longer. He ran away from all that in fear for his life.

He knew what the Israelites were like, didn’t he? Here he saved a guy’s life, and because he’s been so abused, he’s not the least bit appreciative of what Moses did for him. So he wasn’t seeing things the way God wanted him to. So he tells God, in Exodus 4:1:

**Exodus 4:1** – *But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, “The LORD did not appear to you.”*

And then, in Exodus 6:9, we see that this concern was accurate and justified. It says in verse 9 of Exodus 6:

**Exodus 6:9** – *So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of cruel spirit and bondage.*

Sometimes, people who have been abused are very angry. These people were. But, in spite of his apprehension and in spite of the way the Israelites treated him as an outsider, he submitted himself to God and he led Israel for forty years.

Now, we all know the story. We know the ten plagues, and the Passover, and the parting of the Red Sea, and the amazing exodus from Egypt. And we can pick that up in Exodus 14.

**Exodus 14:9** – *And the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh – all the horse and chariots of Pharaoh – his whole army – and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them camped by the sea, before Baalzephon. And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid. And the*

*children of Israel cried out to the LORD. And then they said to Moses, “Because there are no graves in Egypt, you’ve taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us to bring us up out of Egypt?” Of course, they wanted to go, right? Until things got difficult. “Is this not the word we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than we should die in the wilderness.’” And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid! Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians, whom you see today” – that whole army! – “you shall see no more again forever. The LORD will fight for you and you shall hold your peace.”*

I can’t help but think about what’s going on in our country today and how panicky some people are. What we really need to do is just stand still, keep our mouths shut, hide and watch, because God is going to do what He’s going to do. It’s going to be part of His plan and, in the end, it’s going to be good for everybody.

But then, because of the faithlessness of the people, they didn’t get to go directly to the Promised Land. God took them around in the desert for forty years of wandering. Have you ever camped in the desert? Or, maybe at the beach, where there’s sand? Not a lot of fun, actually. And there was the incident with the Ten Commandments, where Moses went up the mountain, and as soon as he was gone, they started building idols. There was the issue of the water coming out of the rock, because they wanted water and Moses got upset about that. There was the *manna*. They complained that they didn’t have anything to eat, and they got *manna*, and they didn’t like it. There were a number of rebellions and wars. We can read about the construction of the tabernacle and Moses talking face-to-face with God. These people had seen the ten plagues come in succession – ten of them, one after another, just like Moses told the Egyptians they would come. They saw the death angel’s work on the night of the Passover. They didn’t complain about the gold and jewels that they took from the Egyptians when they left.

But then, not long after this astounding huge miracle, they came to Marah, only to find that the water there had turned poisonous. So rather than wondering what God was going to do to save them, they started complaining to Moses. “You brought us here to kill us! You’re not a prophet! God doesn’t care about us. We’re all going to die!” But then God healed the water, and all of a sudden, everything was hunky-dory. They were happy again. They all saw this miracle. They all drank that water.

But then they ran out of food. And what do you suppose they did? It was though they had developed amnesia. They were sure God was going to starve them this time. They knew it was all a trick – a conspiracy – to get them out in the desert, where He could kill them off. Verse 3 says:

**Exodus 16:3-4** – *And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, where we sat by the pots of meat and ate bread to the full. For*

*you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill us – this whole assembly – with hunger.*

Terrible! Terrible! Woe! Woe! Woe! Lots of water, but now no food. What are we going to do?

He brought us out here to starve us. Then, right then, they told Moses he was not a prophet. *But the LORD then said to Moses – verse 4 – “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out to gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them whether they will walk in my law or not.”*

**V-6-8** – *And then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, “At evening, you shall know the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning, you shall see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your complaints against Him.”* Notice Moses’ attitude here in verse 8. *Moses said, “This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning, bread to the full. For the LORD hears your complaints, which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us, but against God.”*

He’s not taking it personally. And he’s standing up for God. He’s humble. He knows he’s nothing. “What are we? We’re nothing.” But he’s not letting them call out God.

Then there was the incident we mentioned earlier about going up to the mountain to receive His law. While he was up there talking to God face-to-face – something no one else in that whole crowd ever did – in Exodus 32:1, it says:

**Exodus 32:3-5** – *So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand, he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molten calf. And then they said, “This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”* You saw what happened at the Red Sea, but here they have this false god. *And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation, and said, “Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.”* You know, they do it every time. They create pagan practices and they call it godly.

**V-7-11** – *And the LORD said to Moses, “Get down, for your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. And they have made themselves a molten calf and worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, “This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”* *And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and indeed, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore, let Me alone that My wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them, and I will make of you a great nation. I’m going to start over and we’re going to start with you and your kids.”* *And then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said, “LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people, whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?”* So Moses turns it back to God – you know, “I didn’t bring them out. You did.”

**V-14** – *So the LORD relented from the harm He said He would do to His people.*

Now, here's Moses standing up for people to God – face-to-face with God. God could just blink an eye and Moses would be nothing. So he's going face-to-face with God for people that had been nothing but hateful to him the whole time. All he ever got from them was grief and yet, he was not vengeful. He spoke on their behalf and asked God not to kill them all. Of course, he hadn't yet seen what they were doing. He was still up on the mountain.

**V-15** – *So Moses turned and went down from the mountain and the two tablets of the testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides – on one side and then the other they were written.* And there, we can use the phrase, caught them with their pants down, so to speak.

**V-19-24** – *So Moses anger became hot and he cast the tablets out of his hand – when he saw what they were doing – and broke them at the foot of the mountain. And then he took the calf, which they had made, and burned it in the fire – verse 20 – and ground it to powder. And he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it. And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you brought so great a sin upon them?” So Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people – that they are set on evil. For they said to me, ‘Make us gods that shall go before us. As for this Moses – the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt – we do not know what has become of him.’ So I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf come out.’”* It may have been at that point that Moses cast down the tablets of stone and broke them. His brother tells him that he threw it in the fire and a calf came out! He left out the part about engraving it and all of that – collecting the gold from the people and declaring it a day of God. So that temper tantrum that he had cost him another forty days on the mountain fasting. Back-to-back forty-day fasts. Right?

Okay, let's move on. Let's talk about the *manna* now in Numbers 11, and verse 4. It says:

**Numbers 11:4-6** – *Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving. So the children of Israel also wept again.* So the problem started with the people that were following along with them, but the Israelites soon accepted that position and became complainers as well. *And they said, “We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic. Our whole being is dried up and there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes.* Fish, onion, leeks, garlic. Can you imagine a large group of Hebrews down in the pit with tropical heat, tromping mud for Pharaoh's bricks after eating fish, garlic, onions and leeks? No wonder it was rigorous! Now in verse 7, it says: *Manna was like coriander seed.* Have you ever bought a bottle of unground coriander? Each one of them is about the size of a BB – hard to gather, I would imagine.

**V-10-13** – *Then Moses heard the people weeping through their families, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused and Moses, also, was displeased. So Moses went to the LORD, and he said, “Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I*

*not found favor in Your sight that You have laid the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a guardian carries a nursing child – you know, sort of forty-year babysitting job – to the land that You swore to their fathers?' Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, 'Give us meat that we may eat.'"*

He's pretty bold talking to God. He's fed up. He's depressed. He's resentful. His feelings are hurt. He's burned out. He's filled with self-pity. And he's a bit sarcastic with God about this bunch of babies. And he's negative – "I can't do it." He didn't see that he was acting the same way Israel was acting – the abused was becoming abusive. But God had mercy on him. He could understand how Moses felt, and He said:

**V-18-20** – *Then you shall say to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat and you shall eat. You shall eat not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten, nor twenty, but for a whole month – until it comes out your nose, and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt? You want meat? I'll give you meat. I'll give you meat till it comes out your nose!"*

With this group of people, there was no place of refuge for Moses. Even his brother and sister stabbed him in the back. Numbers 12, and verse 1:

**Numbers 12:1-2** – *Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married, for he married an Ethiopian woman. Think about the story. This happened over fifty years before Numbers 12:1, and they still hadn't let go of it. So he said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken also through us?" That's what Aaron said. And the LORD heard it.*

And the Bible is showing us that they were climbers. They envied Moses' authority. They sounded loyal, but they were taking shots at the one above them in authority. If the marriage were the only issue, they would have kept it private, wouldn't they? But they were using it against Moses with the people to advance their own desire for control. You know, some things just never change. So it wasn't too hard to spot what was going on with them. Now it says in verse 3, despite all of this:

**V-3** – *Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.*

So God is telling us here his brother and sister were completely incorrect – as well as all the children of Israel – in their assessment of Moses' character.



**V- 4** – *Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting.” So they came out. And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood in the doorway of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both came forward. And then He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision. I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant, Moses. He is faithful in all My house and I speak with him face-to-face, evenly plainly – not in dark sayings – and he sees the form of the LORD. Why, then, are you not afraid to speak against My servant, Moses?”*

Every time something bad happens, God saves Israel. And when people start talking against Moses, God has his back. He covers for him. Now Moses wasn't perfect, but God still had his back. He picked him. And you can pick through the passages of Numbers and Deuteronomy and see that, for the whole forty years, nothing changes. It's just more of the same over and over again. You know, the spies saw a good land and came back with a negative report. And once again, Moses is insulted, distrusted, ridiculed and resented every sandy step of the way by the children of Israel. His sister accused him of being arrogant when he was humble. He saved their lives and they called him a murderer. It's no surprise that, at some point, he began to burn out a little bit. His perspective became skewed. He was getting nothing back. He lost sight of his commitment to service. I mean, how bad a trial is it when you ask to die? How much self-pity do you feel? Well, Moses was there. That struck at his heart, because his life's goal was to do just that – to bring the children of Israel to the Promised Land, and yet, he was losing it, so to speak.

So let's look at a critical incident. It's in Numbers 20.

**Numbers 20:1-11** – *Then the children of Israel – the whole congregation – came into the wilderness of Zin, in the first month, and people stayed at Kadesh. And Miriam died there and was buried there. Now there was no water for the congregation, so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. Now this had happened before, right? They'd been out of water before and they had seen God do miracles and produce water out of a rock. And the people contended with Moses, and spoke saying, “If only we had died with our brethren before the LORD. Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into the wilderness that we and our animals should die here? And why have you made us come up out of Egypt – same song, same verse – to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there any water to drink. So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, and then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Take a rod, you and your brother Aaron. Gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes and it will yield water. Thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock and give drink to the congregation and their animals. So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock. And he said to them – not what God told him to say and not in the attitude God told him to say it – he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels, must we bring water for you out of this rock?” And then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock*

*twice with his rod and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.*

They ridiculed Moses once again and this time, he really lost it. He forgot that he was God's representative. He forgot that he had to act as a man of God before the people and he did not do what he was told. He spoke ill to the people. He was not under control. He hit the rock more than once in a fit of anger.

**V-12** – *And then the LORD spoke to Moses – in verse 12 – “Because you did not believe Me to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring the assembly into the land which I have given them.”*

Remember he said, “Must *we* bring water out of this rock for you?” So he was taking it very personally at that point. And just like that – after forty years – his dream was taken away. Deuteronomy 3:23 says:

**Deuteronomy 3:23** – *Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, “O LORD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? I pray, ‘Let me cross over and see the good land beyond Jordan and those pleasant mountains in Lebanon.’” But the LORD was angry with me on your account – he’s talking to the people – and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me, “Enough of that! Speak no more to Me on this matter!”*

Now God could have overlooked this breach. He overlooks lots of things all of us do all the time. He overlooked a lot of things Moses did. He overlooked the broken tablets – well, kind of. He made him go back up for another forty days. Why did He take such a hard line here? Do you know? Well, I believe there are two reasons. In Hebrews 3:19, it says:

**Hebrews 3:19** – *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

So Moses was supposed to stand for faith and he lost it *publicly*. God forced him to keep his word on the issue and told the people, “If you lose faith, you can’t go in.” That’s what God told Moses to tell the children of Israel. He lost faith. So, for the sake of the people, God had to be consistent with Moses as well. It says in the Bible that ministers are held doubly accountable. And that’s because they stand up and they preach to people about the law of God. Those of us, who are ministers, have a heavy burden. We have no excuse. We know what it says. And that’s the position Moses was in.

Beside the fact that God had to hold the line on Moses – because He held the line on all of them – now it becomes a trial of faith to see what he could take. Moses had bitten the bullet for forty years. He’d faced all manner of trials. And Moses begged, and he pleaded, and he ached and he

longed, and he was told, “No!” So God is finding out if Moses is willing to submit and follow God’s will that he’s not going to get to come in.

So let’s get to the outcome of this – in Deuteronomy 34:1, it says:

**Deuteronomy 34:1** – *Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho.*

**V-4** – *And the LORD said to him, “This is the land which I have sworn to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it your descendants. And I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over there.’”*

**V-6-7** – *And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Bethpeor, but no one knows his grave to this day. Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim, nor his natural vigor diminished.*

So, because of this trial, God and Moses both know that Moses loved God more than his status, more than his reputation and more than his life’s goal. He gave up his heart’s desire to obey the will of God. To God, it was always more important that Moses cross over into the Kingdom than to cross over Jordan.

How about us? Matthew 19, verse 16:

**Matthew 19:16-22** – *Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may enter eternal life?” And He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? There is no one good but One, and that is God. But, if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” And he said, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honor your father and your mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” And the young man said to Him, “All these things I’ve kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” And Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you have and give it to the poor, and you’ll have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me.” But when the young man heard this saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

This man was obeying God to the best of his ability. He was a faithful Jew. But this man also had a business and had money – maybe an inheritance. Who know? And he put a lot of stock in that. He told him, “You know, you’ve got to get rid of that. Just follow Me. That’s all you need.” And that’s the same kind of test that God put on Moses. Moses’ heart’s desire was to take the children of Israel into the Promised Land. That’s what God told him to do – just like this man was obeying the commandments. God stripped away that heart’s desire to find out if he was really willing to follow God all the way.

In Hebrews 12:6, it says:

**Hebrews 12:6** – *For whom the Lord loves, He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives.*

It sounds scary to think that we have these gigantic flaws, but the point of Moses' life is that God loves us *so* much that He perfects us by rooting them out of us. And for that – for those God loves – it's encouraging. In 2 Timothy 4:8, Paul wrote:

**2 Timothy 4:8** – *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give me on that day – not to me only, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

So it's not a crown like you put on your head that's made of gold with jewels in it. It's a crown of righteousness. Now we don't have that yet. We try. We work at it. There's things we can do to be better than we are, but nobody is going to equal Christ's level of righteousness. So that's laid up for us. That's in our future. There's one laid up for Paul. There's one laid up for Moses. And there's one laid up for you and one for me. We shouldn't fear God's trials, but we should be changed by them.

This is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.