

Greg Laurie: If God Can Use These Heroes' Failures, He Can Use Yours

I wasn't raised in the church, which means that I never really knew about a God who loved me, cared about me and had a plan for my life. I heard it here and there, but it never seemed to penetrate my youthful mind until one day in 1970 when I heard the gospel articulated a way that I understood. And I believed in Jesus Christ.

Just to think that God in heaven cared about me, loved me and had a plan for my life was mind-blowing. But then I learned that God wanted to use me to serve him.

Every Christian is called to serve God. It is not only for preachers or missionaries or evangelists. And what was the key for the men and women of God in Scripture who changed the world? It comes down to one word: faith. Faith needs to be used. It's like a muscle. If you neglect it, it will atrophy. It has to be in constant use.

Moses was a man who put faith into action. He wasn't perfect, because no person is. But Moses is described in the Bible as "the man of God" (see Deuteronomy 33:1). There was something special about him from the beginning. At the time Moses was born in Egypt, Pharaoh was so wicked that he wanted to eradicate the Jewish people. He gave a command to the midwives to kill any Jewish baby boys who were born.

But God had a plan, especially for little Moses. His mother placed him in a basket covered with pitch so it would float. Then she put her baby in the Nile River, in an area that happened to be where Pharaoh's daughter would go each morning. And almost as if on cue, the baby cried. Pharaoh's daughter heard it and walked over, and her maternal instincts kicked

in. She loved the little baby immediately and wanted to make him her own son.

Moses literally went from rags to riches overnight, from the low-rent district to the very lap of luxury. At this time, Egypt was an incredibly advanced culture. Moses had the finest education imaginable. He ate the finest food. He wore the most amazing clothes. And he possibly was being groomed to become the next Pharaoh.

But inside that Egyptian exterior was a Hebrew heart. Moses knew that he was a Jew, and he cared about his fellow Jews and wanted to help them.

We pick up his story in Exodus 2: "In those days, when Moses was grown, he went out to his brothers and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his brothers. He looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand" (Ex. 2:11-12).

God did not tell Moses to do this. Moses took matters into his own hands. True, he had witnessed an injustice. Maybe he could have used his influence to bring a stop to it. I think his heart was in the right place, but he got a little carried away.

Moses looked this way and that way, but he should have looked up, because the Lord was watching. He thought he had covered it up. But Moses wasn't a very good sinner, because he buried the man in the Egyptian sand. As a result, he was found out quickly. Already his fellow Jews were talking about it. They were saying, in effect: "Who put you in charge? You're not the boss of me. You can't tell me what to do."

Word got to Pharaoh, and Moses became a wanted man. His picture was hanging in all the post offices in Egypt. So he headed for the hills. Moses should have waited for God's timing.

It is not enough to just do the right thing. We need to do the right thing in the right way at the right time. I think sometimes we grow impatient with God and want to take matters into our own hands. We need to pray about things, and we need to trust the Lord and wait on his timing. Moses was way ahead of schedule.

Moses' life has been summed up this way: He spent 40 years in Pharaoh's court thinking that he was a somebody, 40 years in the desert learning that he was a nobody and then 40 years finding out what God can do with a somebody who found out he was a nobody.

Moses went into exile in Midian. He went from being a prince to becoming a shepherd. Once heir to the throne of Egypt, he became a common shepherd to someone else's sheep.

Being a shepherd, as far as the Egyptians were concerned, was a disgraceful position to hold. Moses faded into complete obscurity, and it looked as though he had wrecked everything.

Yes, Moses failed. But he failed forward. Failing forward means learning from your mistakes. If, as children, we burned ourselves touching a hot stove, we learned not to touch a hot stove again. The same is true throughout life. If we learn something is wrong, then we don't do the wrong thing again.

We all fail in life. We all have lapses. Simon Peter, one of Jesus's disciples, openly denied the Lord. But God gave him a second chance. Jesus recommissioned him at the Sea of Galilee and said, "Feed my sheep."

Jonah messed up. He ran from God, but God got his attention, and he was given a second chance.

Do you need a second chance today? Have you messed up in life? Have you done something you're ashamed of, something you deeply regret? Maybe you're saying, "That's it for me. God will never use me."

If God can use someone like Moses, then he can use you. Maybe you've messed up. But God can recommission you. Learn from your mistakes. Admit them. Repent of them.

God gives second chances. {eo}

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