

Place: Lurgan Baptist 30:6:2013

## MOSES, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

Reading: Exodus 4:18-6:13

### 5. DYING TO SELF

In a certain church was an old deacon, who was suspicious of anything new. A dried up old die-hard was he, sitting in judgement on all who refused to be ruled by his view of Scripture, acid of temperament and barren of soul. To this church came a young man with the fresh dew of God upon him, a young man of vision, gift, charm, and one who possessed an unusual grasp of Scripture and a great measure of wisdom. His ministry was blessed of God to the salvation of souls and the edification of believers. But inevitably perhaps, some of his views did not square with this old man who ruled the deaconate. For years that deacon did in all in his power to discourage, oppose and criticise the young pastor. One day another member of this church asked the young preacher how he managed to put up with this deacon. “*William,*” was the startling reply “*I died to John five years ago.*” This young pastor had grasped the secret of the believer’s death with Christ. Do you recall the words of the Lord Jesus ?  
“*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*”  
( Jn 12: 24 )

My .... *dying to self is not easy, sure it isn't ?* G. Campbell Morgan testified that on one occasion as he waited before

the Lord, he sensed God asking him, “*Do you want to be My servant or do you just want to be a great preacher ?*” His response was “*May I not be both Lord ?*” After struggling in his own heart, he said to himself, “*God may want me to be an unknown minister in an obscure setting.*” And, with this in mind, he prayed, “*O Lord, my greatest desire is just to be Thy servant.*” Of course, we know the rest of the story. The Lord also made him one of the greatest preachers of all time. *Dying to self is not easy sure it isn't ?* It’s saying no to self. It’s setting ourselves aside so that God may work through us. Is this not the place to which Moses was brought ? Do you recall how he raised those excuses and the Lord dismantled them one by one ? And now slowly, thoughtfully, and perhaps painfully he now gets ready to obey the Lord’s calling. You see, he is about to enter the third and final period of his life. Moses lived 120 years before he died, ( Deut 34:7 ) and those 120 years can be divided into three periods of 40 years each.

The first 40 years he spent in Egypt in royalty as the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter. The second 40 year period he spent in Midian where he lived in obscurity and quietness as a shepherd. Now he is about to embark on the third and final period of his life the great work of liberating Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Now this large chunk of Scripture from ( Ch 4 to Ch 6 ) is all about “*Dying to Self,*” and I want to suggest to you this .... that when we die to self at least five things will happen. When we “*die to self,*”

### (1) RELATIONSHIPS WILL BE EXAMINED

Do you see the first thing that Moses did when he eventually yielded to the will of God ? The text says, “ *And Moses went and returned to his father in law and said unto him, let me go.* ” ( 4:18 ) He did not drop his present job irresponsibly and head for Egypt. This passage throws light on,

**(a) HIS VOCATIONAL POSITION:**

Do you see that Moses seeks permission ? You see, when he married into the home of Jethro he put himself under the authority of the tribal customs of Jethro. One of those customs demanded that any member of the tribe should seek and obtain permission before starting out on a distant errand involving prolonged absence from the camp. So he goes to Jethro and says, “ *Let me go .....* ” ( 4:18 ) Now doing the Lord's will was not dependent on Jethro's permission, but it was an act of courtesy which Moses owed to Jethro. My .... Jethro,

Had taken Moses in while a fugitive from Egypt:  
Had given him a daughter to wife:  
Had provided him with a home for forty years:  
Had given him a job, taking care of his flock:  
You talk about a father in law:

Do you not think it would have been highly discourteous and ungrateful of Moses had he gone down to Egypt without notifying his father in law ? Moses took the time to inform the older gentleman and how wise and gracious that was. *You see, to be a Christian is to practice Christlikeness and Christ ever thought of others.* And that

holds true for your employer as well. You see, your employer has made an investment in you, he or she has provided you with employment, allowing you to make a living while some of you have considered God's plan and will for your life. How unwise therefore for you to vacate your position rashly saying, “ *God has called me to be somewhere else.* ” Now I want you to see the way Moses went about this. Moses said, “ *Jethro, may I go ?* ” And Jethro replied, “ *Shalom, Moses peace be with you. Go with my blessing.* ” My .... isn't that a bit different to the way people handle God's call today ? Often believers say, “ *God is calling me,* ” and before we know it, they have been accepted by some Bible College who may want to boost their numbers. Do you know something ? The elders of the assembly are often the last people to hear about it. The only time they hear about it is when someone is looking financial support. So the supposed “ **Call,** ” is never put to the test by the elders. ( Acts 13:1-2 )

Could I ask, why is it that local churches all over the country have assisted folk who say the call of God is on their life and today, they are not in the Lord's work ? You see, I want you to notice that this plan flowed. My .... when you are in the centre of God's will it flows. It does not have to be forced. “ *Jethro can I go ?* ” “ *Go in peace.* ”

**(b) HIS MARITAL POSITION:**

I mean can you see them ? With his family at his side and the mandate of God in his heart ( 4:21-23 ) Moses willingly sets out for Egypt. They must have looked like

the ideal missionary family. But “ *it came to pass by the way in the inn that the Lord met him and sought to kill him.* ” ( 4:24 ) Moses was struck with a severe illness sick to the point of death. What was this all about ? Well, there is a little matter of obedience in the life of Moses that God’s got to deal with. You see, you cannot use the sword on others unless you use the knife on yourself. My .... Moses had neglected to circumcise his second son Eliezer ( 18:4 ) and the Lord struck him down with an illness that could have taken his life. *It seems that when Moses had circumcised Gershom, his firstborn, Zipporah his wife had been appalled by the ceremony and therefore resisted having Eliezer circumcised.* Moses let her have her way and this way displeased the Lord. ( Gen 17:10-14 ) It was at this time that Zipporah left and went back home to Midian and to Jethro. ( 18:2 ) Do you know something ? *Spiritual compatibility is one of the most important things to consider in marriage.* I mean here is a wife who is not sympathetic to spiritual things and does not have the same spiritual dedication as her husband. What about you ?

Wives, are you spiritually supportive of your husbands ? I mean are you present when they are present ? It amazes when I look down and see husbands who are here without their wives and wives who are here without their husbands. You see, when we “ *die to self,* ” the Lord not family comes first.

## **(2) PARTNERSHIPS WILL BE EXPERIENCED**

I mean can you see old Moses now ? Suddenly he is all alone. Zipporah and the boys have taken the donkey and

headed back to Midian. This exciting family adventure has turned into a lonely solo journey into the unknown, but I want to see how the Lord goes ahead to smooth the path for His servant. For we see here,

### **(a) A HAND THAT WAS OVERULING:**

Look at ( 4:27 ) Do you know what I love about the Lord ? He is working on ten million fronts at any given moment of the day or night. He is the sovereign God the Lord of time and eternity and as I trust Him, He moves people and circumstances like pieces on a chess board to meet needs and advance His plan. Isn’t this amazing ? As Moses was making his way to Egypt, Aaron was making his way to Moses and they at the Mount of God. Providentially, without the aid of tracking systems, without the aid of a mobile or Ipad they met in the “ *mount of God.* ” It was another “ *Jehovah Jireh,* ” moment for in the mount of God the miracle was definitely “ *seen.* ” ( Gen 22:14 ) My .... Do the will of God and you will meet the right people in the right place and at the right time. (a) But there was,

### **(b) A HEART THAT WAS UNDERSTANDING:**

You see, God knew Moses felt lonely in that moment. He knew His man needed some human companionship. And so He sent Aaron. Now Aaron was Mose big brother, his senior by three years. ( 7:7 ) And the Lord sought this brother out and said to him, “ *Aaron, go to Moses side now. He’s on a long wilderness road, heading for Egypt and he needs you right now.* ” I mean, can you see them ?

Have you ever seen that program on Monday nights? “*The Long Lost Family*,” it’s a real tear jerker isn’t it? Well, here’s two brothers and they have not seen each other for forty years and Moses is saying, “*Aaron listen to this. You’ll never believe it. There was I out with the sheep one day, and all of a sudden this bush caught fire and it would not stop burning. So I stopped and stared. And as I got closer Aaron, listen to this God was speaking from that bush and here’s what He told me .....*,” And Aaron said “*that’s great Moses I am with you.*” Do you have a friend with whom you can pour out your heart?

Hudson Taylor had reached a cross-roads actually it was more like a dead end. He was only twenty three years of age and for less than two years he had been working as missionary in China. But that time had been marked by a growing disillusionment with his missionary society and by discouragement caused by criticism from his fellow missionaries. Then there came two more blows. His girl friend in England wrote to him telling him she did not love him, and an order came from his missionary council telling him to stop his work in a certain town. “*My dear mother,*” he wrote, “*my heart is so sad, sad, sad, I do not know what to do.*” At this stage God graciously gave Hudson Taylor a friend. A Scottish missionary twenty years older named William Burns. Burns sensed in Taylor a young man with a kindred spirit and a need for a friend. He encouraged Taylor to rest in the Lord and to trust in His goodness, guidance, and resources. For seven months they travelled, preached, and prayed together, and those months left an indelible mark on Hudson Taylor. Now

William Burns was not the only reason that Hudson Taylor became a man of God but he was an indispensable factor. Do you know something? As we “*die to self*,” it’s possible to make room for others in a life of service. Moses and Aaron, Daniel and his three friends, Christ and His three intimates, Peter and John, Paul and Timothy, becoming one in the work of the Lord. Do you have such a friendship? *Remember the best way to find such a friend is be such a friend.* Now do you see what happened when they told the elders of Israel of God’s purpose? “*They believed.*” ( 4:30 ) They responded just as the Lord had told Moses they would, back at the burning bush. ( 3:18 ) The scene was now set for one of the greatest showdowns in history. Now are you getting this? When we “*die to self*,” (1) (2)

### **(3) WORSHIP WILL BE EXPRESSED**

Have you ever wondered how Moses must have felt that day as he stood before Pharaoh? He is now a man of eighty years of age, he is the man that some believe had been chosen to actually be the successor of Pharaoh and to be the man taking the position that the man before whom he stands now has taken. So there on the throne of Egypt is the Pharaoh, he has his crown on with the serpent, he has his double gold bands on his arms, and standing in front of him is the man who perhaps would have taken his place. Now the command comes from God through His servants, do you see it ( 5:1 )? Now what is that? In essence that’s the request to worship? Worship! What is worship? A. W. Tozer said, “*Worship is the missing jewel in the evangelical church.*” The English word

“ *worship*, ” comes from “ *worship*, ” and that word simply means to attribute to someone worth, status, value. My .... to worship God is to willingly acknowledge His worth, His status, His pre-eminence, His greatness and His glory. To worship God is to be overwhelmed by our consciousness of who God is. Now here was a request for worship. Do you see here,

**(a) THE PATTERN IN THEIR WORSHIP:**

1. Worship was to be Based on Sacrifice:

Do you see ( 5:3 ) ? You see, worship will always revolve around the person of Christ, the great sacrifice which all the animal sacrifices represented in type. Do you recall how the Book of Hebrews puts it ? “ *Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.* ” ( 10:19-20 ) My .... if the person and work of Christ is not central in your worship, its not worship.

2. Worship was to be Filled with Joy:

You see, the word “ *feast*, ” does not speak of sorrow but joy. William Wilson in his Old Testament Studies said the word means a “ festival or occasion of great joy.” Israel would have great joy. Is it not joy to be liberated from bondage ? Is it not joy to be sheltered from judgment ? Is it not joy to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb ? My .... have we lost the sense of joy in our worship ? No-one has analysed our joy better than Dr. G. Thomas. He spoke of the joy of *Retrospect*, as we look back over life’s pilgrimage and see the mercies of God. He spoke of the

joy of *Aspect*, as we look at the present. He spoke of the joy of *Prospect*, as we look forward to the future. Now as we come together as God’s people should we not looking in all three directions ? (a)

**(b) THE PLACE FOR THEIR WORSHIP:**

“ *The wilderness*, ” ( 5:2 ) You see, Israel in their worship was make to sacrifices of animals, and these animals were held as sacred with the Egyptians. ( 8:26 ) Therefore to sacrifice in the land would cause many problems. Of course Egypt speaks of the world system and we cannot worship with the world without corrupting our worship. How can we worship with congregations who deny the great doctrines of the faith ? How can we join hands with modernists without compromising our belief ? There must be separation in worship not only doctrinally but morally.

**(c) THE PRIORITY OF THEIR WORSHIP:**

I mean, how important was it that Israel worship God ? Well, they were to worship God, “ *lest he ( God ) fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.* ” ( 5:3 ) Its either worship or judgment and it is still the same today. Men will either bow down in worship or they will fall down in judgment. I wonder do we need to be reminded of the priority of worship nationally ? Our nation has turned away from God and as result judgment has been pressing on us more and more. Do we need to be reminded of the priority of worship corporately ? Do you need to be reminded of the priority of worship personally ? Now listen when we “ *die to self*, ” (1) (2) (3)

#### **(4) HARDSHIP WILL BE EXPECTED**

Shouldn't faithfulness to the Lord bring blessing? We would like to think so. But my .... for Moses it brought difficulty. We might say he went from the burning bush to burning trials. Have you ever had one of those days that started out bad but only got worse as the day wore on? Did you notice that phrase in ( 5:6 )? "*And Pharaoh commanded the same day .....*," Notice,

##### **(a) HOW THE DAY COMMENCED:**

How did it commence? With the Contempt of God's Enemy: Do you see ( 5:2 )? Now we have got to appreciate something here. We have got to realise something of the presence and impact of a personality like Pharaoh. You see, the Pharaoh before whom Moses stood was an expert on gods. You see, he considered himself to be one. Do you know what he was called? He was called "The Son of the Son." Moreover, Egypt had eighty other gods. So when Moses and Aaron began speaking about the God of Israel Pharaoh said, "*I have the list of gods right here and yours is nowhere on the list.*" Still again, Pharaoh knew visible gods that were successful. Ra, the sun god was a blazing success each day as he made his way across the sky. And Hopi, the Nile goddess, was a success each year when the Nile overflowed its banks. But Moses and Aaron were asking him to obey an invisible God whose people had been in bondage for 430 years. An invisible God of slaves! The idea was absurd to Pharaoh. "*Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord neither will I let Israel go.*"

( 5:2 ) You see, Pharaoh was wanting more bricks in less time and this God was wanting worship. What a picture of God's agenda colliding with the agenda of this world. Do you know something of this practically? My .... if you give priority to God's agenda it will bring hostility from the world. You see, the world wants to silence the voice of the eternal God by getting our focus on the temporal bricks of life. My .... Moses was God's man, with God's message in God's time but Pharaoh continued to say no. Indeed instead of giving the Jews relief from their labour, he made their labour even harder. It's going from bad to worse, for do you see,

##### **(b) HOW THE DAY CONCLUDED:**

How did it conclude? With the Charge of God's People: Do you see ( 5:20 )? Moses could not believe it. Where had he gone wrong? He had taken God at His Word, stood before Pharaoh and repeated what God had told him to say. And now the wheels seem to be falling off the wagon, for the very people he longed to help, were now cursing him for increasing their hardships. "*Why did you come Moses? It was bad enough before you showed up. Now our lives are in danger.*" Have you ever been misunderstood? Has it happened recently? You did the right thing in the right way but someone misjudged you. Are you now living under that cloud, unable to change the minds of those who have turned against you? My .... it's often in those dark moments that we have no-one but God. That's all Moses had for the Bible says, "*And Moses returned unto the Lord.*" Do you see what "*Dying to Self,*" means? It means (1) (2) (3) (4) and finally it means

## **(5) FELLOWSHIP WILL BE EXCHANGED**

“ *And Moses returned unto the Lord,*” is this what you do when the going is tough ? Do you take your burden to the Lord and leave it there ? Can you see here,

### **(a) THE ANXIETIES OF MOSES:**

“ *Lord, why have you brought harm to this people ? Lord, why did you ever send me ?*” “ *Lord, I told you back at that bush that I’m not the man for the job. I’m not cut out for this kind of thing but you kept saying yes you are, you are my choice.*” “ *Lord now I am in trouble with Pharaoh and hated by the people I wanted to help. See I told You I wasn’t the one for the job.*” Why me ? I wonder is there someone here this .... and you are under intolerable pressure and you are saying, “ *Why ? Why me ? Why now ? Why this ?*” Could it be that God is bringing you to an end of yourself so that He can work in you for do you see how ( Ch 6 ) opens “ *Then the Lord said unto Moses now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh ....,*” “ *Then .... now,*” Isn’t that gracious ? Instead of criticizing Moses for asking “ *Why ?*” we begin to see,

### **(b) THE ASSURANCES FOR MOSES:**

You know, the Lord assured Moses in two ways. First he reminded Moses of,

#### **1. The Greatness of His Person:**

The Lord repeated the message of the burning bush. What was the message of the burning bush ? “ *I am,*” do you see it five times in ( Chapter 6 ) ? ( 6:2, 6:6, 6:7, 6:8, 6:29 ) I wonder do you need to get your eyes back on the Lord ? “ *Turn your eyes on Jesus ....,*” do it daily, do it constantly, do it hourly. When events turn against you, when people disappoint you, when dreams die, when your heart breaks look at the Lord and who is He ? “ *I am,*”

#### **2. The Greatness of His Power:**

For after God told Moses “ *I am,*” five times He told him, “ *I will,*” eight times. ( 6:1, 6:6, 6:6, 6:6, 6:7, 6:7, 6:8, 6:8 ) And when the “ *I am,*” says “ *I will,*” there can be no room for doubt or discouragement. Is this God’s message to you this .... ? Is the Lord saying, “ *Because I am who I am I will do what is best for you.*” Robert Morrison, was the first missionary to go to China, and be mightily used there. He is called “ *The Father of Protestant Missions.*” When disembarking from his ship after arriving in a Chinese port, the captain said to him in a sneering manner, “ *So, you think you are going to make an impression on China.*” Sensing, his own weakness yet depending on God’s power he responded, “ *No Sir, but I believe God will.*”

My .... our God “ *is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us.*” ( Eph 3:20 ) Do you believe that ? If you do, will you then trust completely in Him ?

