

August 15, 2021

"This Water"

Dog Days Community Worship Service

Sermon by Pastor Randall J. Questad

Exodus 17:1-7, Hebrews 3:1-4, John 4:1-15

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Moses and Jesus. These two prevalent names in the bible unfortunately are often confused. Make no mistake there certainly are some similarities between Moses and Jesus. First of all, both Moses and Jesus were called by God himself to lead his chosen people from slavery into freedom. During VBS on Friday, the students learned how Moses was called by God's voice through the burning bush. The Lord did not forget Moses after this event. Moses continued to hear God's voice speak to him as he led the Israelites from slavery to the Promised Land. Jesus' call to save God's chosen people was delivered before Jesus was even born. It was an angel of the Lord who told his mother Mary that she would give birth to the Christ, the Messiah, the one who saves. The Lord continued to be with Jesus and to speak to him just as he did Moses. The Lord God spoke to Jesus on the day that he was baptized, and the Lord spoke to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration where Moses also appeared. The Lord spoke to Jesus on Easter as he raised him from death to new life. To add to the possible confusion between these characters, Moses and Jesus even sound the same. They each have 5 letters in their names. Three consonants and two vowels. They each have an "S" in the middle and at the end of their names. The names Moses and Jesus are so similar that they rhyme.

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convinced that this confusion gets cloudier as we age. This was somewhat demonstrated on Friday when I asked the nearly 70 VBS students to look at Trudy's T-shirt which said, "Got Jesus" then look at mine that said, "The Moses Project". I asked the youth, "Who do you like better, Moses or Jesus?" They unanimously and quickly responded "Jesus". Or maybe they just liked Trudy better than me.

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Unfortunately, this water did not end their thirst or their complaining. Their complaining continued through this book of the bible for several more years and we hear their grumbling against Moses in the 20th chapter of Numbers. Their complaints were beyond just thirst now. They complained about the wilderness where they were living. They complained that their livestock were going to die. They complained that the wilderness was not a place fit for growing grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates; and then for their last complaint they said, and by the way, "There is no water to drink". This time instead of the Lord telling Moses to strike the rock, He told Moses, "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you, and your brother Aaron, and command the rock before their eyes to yield its water.

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The Holy Spirit has drawn you to this place today to receive a drink of "this water". The water that Jesus gives freely and abundantly to you again on this day of rest. A day of rest not only from your work, but a day to set our differences aside and simply be quenched by the living water of God's word that never will leave you thirsty. Amen

August 15, 2021

"This Water"

Dog Days Community Worship Service

Sermon by Pastor Randall J. Questad

Exodus 17:1-7, Hebrews 3:1-4, John 4:1-15

Dear friends in Christ, Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from his son, Jesus Christ. Amen

Moses and Jesus. These two prevalent names in the bible unfortunately are often confused. Make no mistake there certainly are some similarities between Moses and Jesus. First of all, both Moses and Jesus were called by God himself to lead his chosen people from slavery into freedom. During VBS on Friday, the students learned how Moses was called by God's voice through the burning bush. The Lord did not forget Moses after this event. Moses continued to hear God's voice speak to him as he led the Israelites from slavery to the Promised Land. Jesus' call to save God's chosen people was delivered before Jesus was even born. It was an angel of the Lord who told his mother Mary that she would give birth to the Christ, the Messiah, the one who saves. The Lord continued to be with Jesus and to speak to him just as he did Moses. The Lord God spoke to Jesus on the day that he was baptized, and the Lord spoke to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration where Moses also appeared. The Lord spoke to Jesus on Easter as he raised him from death to new life. To add to the possible confusion between these characters, Moses and Jesus even sound the same. They each have 5 letters in their names. Three consonants and two vowels. They each have an "S" in the middle and at the end of their names. The names Moses and Jesus are so similar that they rhyme.

*The second reading for today continues the comparison of Moses and Jesus. The author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus was faithful to his heavenly father, just as we are told that Moses was faithful in all of God's house. But then the author quickly draws a clear line between Moses and Jesus and tells us that Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses. While Moses was faithful **in** God's house, it was God who **built** the house and Jesus is God.*

We are still tempted today to favor Moses over Jesus. We like the idea of keeping score of what we can do for Jesus rather than simply receive the gifts that he gives to us. We confuse what we can learn from Moses about what we are to do and not to do with what Jesus has done for you. The names Moses and Jesus become blurred together and it can become difficult for us to separate what Moses did and what Jesus does. I am

convinced that this confusion gets cloudier as we age. This was somewhat demonstrated on Friday when I asked the nearly 70 VBS students to look at Trudy's T-shirt which said, "Got Jesus" then look at mine that said, "The Moses Project". I asked the youth, "Who do you like better, Moses or Jesus?" They unanimously and quickly responded "Jesus". Or maybe they just liked Trudy better than me.

Today in the first lesson, we learn another of the many stories of Moses. This once again, like the parting of the Red Sea, deals with water. The Israelites that Moses had been called to lead were getting thirsty and started to complain to Moses. This was not the first time Moses heard them grumble and complain and it wasn't the last. They demanded of Moses, "Give us water to drink." Usually if a child makes a demand like this, the reply might be, "Not until you change your attitude." or "Say "Please" and then we'll see if you get any water." or "I'm really tired of hearing your complaining, you don't deserve any water, you can go to bed without." Moses delivered the Israelites' demand to the Lord and the Lord unconditionally delivered water to his complaining chosen people. The Lord told Moses to strike the rock with his staff and they would be given the water that they asked for.

Unfortunately, this water did not end their thirst or their complaining. Their complaining continued through this book of the bible for several more years and we hear their grumbling against Moses in the 20th chapter of Numbers. Their complaints were beyond just thirst now. They complained about the wilderness where they were living. They complained that their livestock were going to die. They complained that the wilderness was not a place fit for growing grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates; and then for their last complaint they said, and by the way, "There is no water to drink". This time instead of the Lord telling Moses to strike the rock, He told Moses, "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you, and your brother Aaron, and command the rock before their eyes to yield its water.

I still get to help load cattle onto trucks once in a while. We have things set up better for loading livestock than when I was younger and working with my dad. When the hogs or cattle complained about where we wanted them to go, I confess that we didn't just show them a staff and expect they would listen better. And the animals who grumbled against our directions received a greater amount of encouragement from the staff that we had in our hands. Moses unfortunately didn't listen to the Lord's directions any more than the people listened to him. Moses was told to take the staff and this time speak to

the rock. Instead, in Moses' rage of listening to the complaining people didn't just take the staff but used the staff to hit the rock and he didn't hit it once, he hit it once more time for good measure. Even though he struck the rock twice in anger, it worked. Even though Moses disobeyed the Lord, water came out of the rock and the people's thirst was again quenched. But Moses' disobedience prevented him from entering the Promised Land.

Whenever we are reading stories of Moses, we should be seeing stories of Jesus. The gospel from John that you just heard records a story of water, a woman and Jesus. This time it is Jesus who is thirsty, and he demands water from the woman, just like the Israelites did in the wilderness. Jesus said, "Give me water to drink." The woman questions why Jesus, a man, would ask for water from a foreign woman. And this is even before Jesus learned about her past of many failed marriages. Then Jesus begins to reveal who he is and tells her the difference between the water that comes from her ancestors' wells that doesn't put an end to thirst and the living water that Jesus gives that ends thirst in this life and into eternal life.

The woman wants to have a taste of "this water" so that she doesn't have to ever come to the well to draw from the well and drink "that water." She believes there is a difference between the water Moses gave to the Israelites in the wilderness and the water Jesus gives to all his believers. There is a clear difference between the temporary quenching of thirst of "that water" from Moses and the eternal quenching of thirst of "this water" from Jesus.

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