

**“I Have Shown It to You”
Deuteronomy 34:1-12
Sermon #76
22nd Sunday After Pentecost
34th Sunday in the COVID-19 Pandemic
11.1.20**

Deuteronomy 34:1-12 CEB

34 Then Moses hiked up from the Moabite plains to Mount Nebo, the peak of the Pisgah slope, which faces Jericho. The Lord showed him the whole land: the Gilead region as far as Dan’s territory; **2** all the parts belonging to Naphtali along with the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, as well as the entirety of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea; **3** also the arid southern plain, and the plain—including the Jericho Valley, Palm City—as far as Zoar.

4 Then the Lord said to Moses: “This is the land that I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I promised: ‘I will give it to your

descendants.' I have shown it to you with your own eyes; however, you will not cross over into it."

5 Then Moses, the Lord's servant, died—right there in the land of Moab, according to the Lord's command. **6** The Lord buried him in a valley in Moabite country across from Beth-peor. Even now, no one knows where Moses' grave is.

7 Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eyesight wasn't impaired, and his vigor hadn't diminished a bit.

8 Back down in the Moabite plains, the Israelites mourned Moses' death for thirty days. At that point, the time for weeping and for mourning Moses was over.

9 Joshua, Nun's son, was filled with wisdom because Moses had placed his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to Joshua, and they did exactly what the Lord commanded Moses.

10 No prophet like Moses has yet emerged in Israel; Moses knew the Lord face-to-face! **11** That's not even to mention all those signs and wonders that the Lord sent Moses to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to his entire land— **12** as well as all the extraordinary power that Moses displayed before Israel's own eyes!

The Word of the LORD. **Thanks be to God!**

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God, our Rock and our Redeemer.

Amen.

Honestly, I'm sad to say goodbye to Moses. As a child, I dressed like him for Halloween because growing up in a staunch Southern

Baptist family, you didn't dress up as a ghost, demon, zombie, or anything that looked vaguely "satanic". We had to stick with Biblical characters or animals. Although, I do remember a pair of twins in 1996 dressing up as Bob Dole and the late Jack Kemp. That was about as out there any one was allowed to be.

I always chose Moses. His story resonated with me as a child. A man who was saved by women. A man who defended a Hebrew by killing the taskmaster. A man who had his own insecurities. A man who had his fears and anxieties. A man whose humility drew him closer to the Maker of Heaven and Earth. A man who got angry with a difficult people. A man who made his share of mistakes. A man who knew the LORD face-to-face. A man who went down in history as the ideal prophet, law-giver, and mediator.

Who knew starting with Exodus 1 we would also experience the characters who God would use to pave the way for Moses, most notably Shiphrah and Puah. These two lowly Hebrew midwives, set the example to stand up to tyranny. By the LORD's power, these women set the example to push back on the heretical narrative of "law and order" which kept people enslaved and promoted genocide. Their stories, no doubt, were spread throughout the Jews at that time and I am certain that Moses heard their stories, too. And I wholeheartedly believe that because of their sacrifices, along with Moses' mother and sister's sacrifices, Moses was deeply influenced by their selfless acts. These acts were not out of despair, but from a defiant faith given to them by God!

After Moses' escape from Pharaoh, his return, the miraculous signs, the Passover, the Exodus, the water and manna in the desert, the 10 Commandments, the promise by the LORD to dwell among the Hebrews as they are lead forward, the 40 years that passed by consisting of laws, explanation of those laws, and the purification period of allowing the old generation to gradually pass away before entering the Promised Land, here we are at the end of Deuteronomy, the final book of the Pentateuch.

The old guard has died. They did not believe the LORD could win the battles against other empires they would face as they ventured into the Land flowing with milk and honey. But, a new generation has arisen in their place and they are ready to go in to be led by Joshua. On the other hand, Moses made a costly mistake, too. In Numbers 20, God instructed him to speak to the rock to give water.

Instead, he struck it twice and he didn't trust in the LORD, right then and there, God told Moses: "You will not enter into the land I will give the people."

A new generation is set to lead the people because of God's power. The Promise made all those years ago is transitioning from hope to physical. That is, the people can see with their own eyes what God has been promising them all those years!

But, it doesn't make Moses' loss any easier. The LORD buried Moses somewhere in Moabite country. And if you go into the deep recesses of your mind, Moabite country is where Ruth is from. Ruth, who married Boaz who gave birth to Obed, King David's grandfather.

Maybe Moses' mistake, while costly, is a lesson for us. Throughout our time in Exodus, the Hebrews accepted the convenient lie that Moses and Moses alone brought these people out of Egypt. They attempt to cast blame on him while denying the truth that the LORD led them out and had it all taken care of. At this moment, even though it must be hard for Moses to see the Land and not enter it, God is doing a new thing.

That's been the point all along. That's the point since Genesis 1. That's the point since Abraham and Sara. That's the point since the Hebrews were held in captivity in Egypt. That's the point of the prophets. That's the point in the life of Jesus. That's the point at the end of Revelation. God is always up to something. And yes,

I've said it numerous times, but I have to repeat it aloud to believe it and for you to believe it.

Moses was not the dynamic personality that many people today yearn for to fix their problems. Moses was not the leader who claimed that he and he alone could fix it. He knew that when it got overwhelming, he could be honest with God and that is when the LORD raised up 70 elders to assist Moses to lead the Jews. He didn't write crackpot books on how to make your best life now or the five steps to make our churches the hottest place in town. The Hebrews were not built around Moses' personality. His life and ministry demonstrated that God was always up to something.

The Israelites grieve for a time before they move into the Promised Land. Now, Joshua has been charged to lead the people with courage. Now is not the time to want to go back to the old ways because God has moved these people on to a new chapter of their lives. They are to keep moving forward because God is dwelling with them right there. And as last week's scripture told us, they will see God's backside not because God is running away from them, but because God has blazed the trails ahead and is keeping them safe from the dangerous realities that will overwhelm them if it were not for the LORD God leading this chosen band of people.

I'm not sure where we in 2020 stand in relation to today's passage. I think we are still in the wilderness receiving water from the Rock. However, I've been wrong once or twice in my life. Regardless of where we actually are, just like our spiritual ancestors who heard

these stories as exiles in Babylon, the point of the story is that God is up to something. Things that are a present circumstance do not have the final word. Just because what was has passed away, like Moses, it doesn't mean God has stopped working. God is doing something new and it will dwarf everything else.

Years from now, I hope that you will remember this time we spent in Exodus. I hope you will see and continue to see Moses' story in a new light. I hope that you will take comfort in God's work through Moses' life. I hope that you will remember the heroes Shiphrah and Puah. I hope that you will remember the surprising ways God provided food and water in the desert. I hope that you will remember that God raises up a new generation of people to lead and that the best days are not behind us. I hope that you will remember that God is always up to something.

It's not really a farewell to Moses. The stories of his life inform our faith. He is a small, but important, piece God has given us as an example as we are led by God's glorious presence through uncharted waters.

And in case you need a gentle reminder: We don't know exactly where these uncharted waters lead or what they look like. Leave that to God. Like the end of Deuteronomy, our story doesn't end, but continues on. It's open ended and it may feel disorienting because we want answers and we want them now. Rest assured, through the example of our Savior and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will make it because God's glory continues to lead us to the other side.

Siblings in Christ, believe this Good News!

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.