

4.19.15

Introduction: Moses Funeral

Moses was born in 1940 (Not Moses the leader of Israel).

But Moses, our dear friend who went to heaven about a week ago.

In 1958 he was involved in a workplace accident in a lumber mill...the surgery that followed went wrong and he suffered brain trauma.

The trauma did not impact his thinking...he was sharp and funny...but it impacted his brain/body connection...so for the next 56 years he suffered a great deal physically.

He did however work a job near where he lived for decades and even won a national award a few years back.

For many years he would roll to church in his wheelchair every Sunday morning.

He would arrive early and stay late...he would park himself near the West wall and greet people who came by to see him.

He could not see well but he could recognize people by their voices.

He was a joyful soul...he would keep a toothpick perched in the corner of his mouth and pull it out, with his crippled hand, when he wanted to say something.

I realized this past week how much I miss the sound of his voice

I would say "Hi Moses" he would say "Hey Terry" with a certain musical quality, almost a laugh in his voice.

I can hear it in my head but I can't reproduce it.

At his memorial here a week ago Saturday I heard stories from family and friends who had known him for much longer than I had...he was amazing.

I thought about how his long life (75 years) was done...he had finished his race.

I thought about: 2Cor. 4:17 **For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.**

His troubles did not seem light or momentary when lived out day by day...or hour by hour...but suddenly...as I realized his race was run...they did seem that way to me and they actually were that way to him at that moment.

The weight of glory...the final experience of our salvation is so heavy that our earthly troubles are featherweights in comparison.

Moses had a life that I would consider full of heavy and long troubles...but now, where he stands they have been turned into light and temporary ones in comparison.

Turned that way by the substantial weight of the reality of God he is experiencing in full right now.

We live in the land of faith, he lives in the realm of sight.

Our ability to see things are they really are now...depends on faith.

To see our troubles as being light and momentary compared to the heavy weight of glory requires faith.

*This faith allows us to live in ways that align with what is real and true...to live wise not foolish lives...joyful not bitter lives.

Someday...faith will not be required...sight will take over.

This does not mean that faith now is not real...it means that everyone, everywhere must live by faith because that is the nature of life now.

It is also true that our faith can grow, should grow, must grow...it is not static.

Exposition:

Mark 4:35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" 39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

*Called a Nature miracle and for some reason people have trouble believing that this could or really did happen.

*Nothing except an unfounded presupposition would allow anyone to say this could not happen.

*The circular reasoning goes like this: Miracles like this do not occur...this appears to be a miracle...therefore this did not occur.

*Science by definition cannot prove miracles are impossible, nor can philosophy, and of course history and experience are solidly in favor of miracles.

*This happened, and the story is told like an eyewitness would tell it...

*We don't remember in great detail every event of our lives...but think of some event that was monumental in its impact on you...not a trauma, those can do different things to your memory.

*But think of something amazing, important...you would remember vivid details about the event.

*Mark (likely writing down the memories of Peter) mentions the position of Jesus in the boat, the fact that other boats were nearby, that Jesus was asleep on a cushion.

*These are "pointless" details which are telltale signs of an eyewitness account.

*Galilee is in a basin surrounded by mountains and the storms that come upon the lake are notoriously sudden and violent.

*Jesus stayed in the boat after teaching from it and didn't want to return to shore, he told his disciples, "let's push away from shore and go to the other side of the lake."

*He had been dealing with people in difficult situations, handling opposition from leaders, teaching, healing...exhausting work...physically, mentally, spiritually exhausting.

*He needed to get away from people and rest...as they traveled across the Lake he was so exhausted even a violent storm would not wake him.

*Sometimes this story is communicated as Jesus being so serenely peaceful...he was sleeping in such deep trust, that even a storm couldn't disturb his rest.

*I don't think so, this is a picture of man being so exhausted in mind and body that even a storm could not wake him.

*There have been soldiers who have been able to walk and sleep at the same time...so exhausted.

*He was exhausted...such that the storm couldn't wake him.

*It took the rudeness of his friends to do so.

*And rude they were.

***“Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”**

*The original form is more rude than the NIV...**"We are going to be destroyed for all you care."**

*So Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth allows himself to be subjected to the exhaustion we feel and he puts up rudeness like this.

*He got up from his prone position and rebuked the waves.

Mark 4:39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

*Then he rebuked his apprentices.

Mark 4:40 He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

*He had hoped they would have more advanced faith by this time.

*However the storm brought out more fear than faith.

*They would get there someday...but not on this day.

Mark 4:41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

*It is difficult to imagine how they could not have been completely changed by this experience.

*However it is comforting for us to realize that individual experiences, no matter how grand, do not by themselves change our hearts completely from fear to faith.

*For the disciples as for us, it would take the cumulative effects of many choices and experiences over many years to bring about that kind of transformation.

*However this narrative is not merely to comfort us in our struggles with fear but to compel us to become people dominated by faith.

*We are encouraged by their weakness...we have it as well.

*Be we must be challenged by the Lord even as they were...**"why are you afraid, do you still have no faith?"**

*This is not just a "slap" on the face...for them or us...it is a call forward to something more than they and we currently experience...an invitation to have a different level of faith.

*Remember this was written to a church being persecuted for their faith.

*They were facing storms that threatened their lives...and some would lose their lives.

*It is not hard to imagine what kind of effect this story would have had on Christians facing the wrath of the Roman Empire...it would have been a great encouragement to them.

*As it has for countless Christians through the centuries.

*Do you think those Christians facing such fearful opposition would read this story and assume it meant that Jesus would rebuke the Roman Army and make them stand down like he did the waves?

*How do you imagine they would apply this to their own situation? What is the most appropriate application for them and for us?

*Is there some inherent promise here that Jesus will rebuke every storm in your life and make the wind and waves be still?

*Either subjectively...where you will "feel" peace in place of emotional anxiety

OR

*Objectively...he will remove all the causes of anxiety in our lives. (physical, relational, vocational problems)

***Was their lack of faith the result of them not believing Jesus would calm the storm, or not having confidence in Jesus in the midst of storm?**

*The difference in the answer to that question is profound.

*The first answer assumes all storms are caused by a lack of faith and if real faith is present then all storms will be removed from our lives.

*The second answer assumes that God has purpose even in the storms and if real faith is present we will see God calm the storms or not...but in either case he will be present and active in our lives.

*Later on, these very same men will experience storms of persecution that will take some of their lives and test the others to the limit.

*The difference was that by then they had become people who were ruled by faith and not by fear.

*I don't know that the persecuted church of the time of Mark's writing of this gospel would assume Jesus **would** stop the storm of persecution but I imagine they assumed that he could if it fit his purposes.

*So if this passage does not promise relief from the storms of life...what is its point?

*Faith...faith that is supposed to be growing throughout our journey.

*The clue is in the question "Do you **still** have no faith"

*The expectation is clear that they had the opportunity to have the kind of faith that would weather a storm...trust God in the midst of a storm.

*The indication here is not..."Do you not have enough faith that I will stop every storm & keep you from drowning?"

*"But can you not yet trust me in the midst of a storm?"

***The Disciples were afraid twice in this narrative, with two very different results:**

1. The storm...they were not really afraid of the storm, they were afraid of what the storm would do to them...drown them...kill them...they were afraid of death.

2. Jesus...they were afraid in the presence of his power over the storm.

*Fear as awe.

*Both fears were related to their lack of control...they are not in charge of outcomes.

*They could not protect themselves from the wrath of the storm...their own death.

*They were small and helpless in the face of the power revealed by the Lord.

***Fear or stress like the disciples encountered causes a cascade of physical/emotional responses:**

*Fight/Flight/Freeze/Faint

*It is how God has wired us and in the best case scenario the chemical cascade that comes with stress/fear is very useful.

***However, Fear like this can shut down our brain's higher functioning...**

*The part of our brain that controls what is called executive functioning goes mostly dark.

*Executive as in the command and control center.

*Question: If this is true, the disciples were overwhelmed by fear...then why were they rebuked for their lack of faith?

*If it was a chemical response that they could not help, why is the Lord being so unreasonable?

***Because Jesus knows how we are made...** he made us...we do not have to merely "obey" stress responses or emotional responses.

*We have the opportunity and responsibility to "train" ourselves over time.

*Lest you think this is less than a Christian view...look at 1 Tim. 4:7

***1 Tim. 4:7 "...train yourself to be godly."**

*The Greek word for "train" is where our word "Gym" comes from.

*You go to a gym to train yourself...specifically your body, reflexes, brain, heart, lungs, muscles.

*We will come back to this.

*The response of the disciples to one "fear" event...a storm with the potential to drown them...was the result of them not having enough of what they experienced in the second "fear" event...confidence in power of God.

***But Terry, how in the world do we not "obey" the stress chemicals? If our brains are overwhelmed...they are overwhelmed...**

*Once water has breached a dam, its true the water cannot be controlled.

*However, it is possible to build a bigger dam before the flood comes.

***Let's look at the purely physical realm:**

*Is there a way to counteract the stress/fear response or do the chemicals always have to win?

*Heard an expert on Stress response speak last week...he described this process, that I've heard briefed many times...of the sequence of events that occur in a fear/stress event.

*He then told us how we can counter the natural fear response.

*Ready for it? The answer is...**training**.

*How do people become equipped to handle stressful events and situations? Combat, firemen, etc?

*They train...they build mental, physical, emotional...automatic reflexes that kick in when the stress chemicals (fear response) comes.

*The training is what builds a bigger dam, that allows for good responses to situations that potentially overwhelm them.

Ch Ofsdahl AF jump training:

*Trained and trained so that certain things would be reflexive when everything becomes chaos.

*His first jump, a free fall...wind, roar of engines, mind overwhelmed with chemicals.

***"Trust your training"...he jumped...reflexes kicked in...reflexes developed through training.**

FAITH: "MAGIC" OR "TRAINING"

*"Neither, its grace."

*Yes, is it grace in cooperation with training or grace that like magic brings increased faith?

*It is unfortunate that we often detach faith from real life such that we are at a loss as to how to actually apply it.

*"Have faith", or "grow in faith"...seems to be a sort of "magic"

*We don't have any control or choices in the outcomes...it happens or it doesn't happen.

*We don't really know what it is or how we get more of it...we just know we need more of it.

*"Have more faith"...what exactly does that mean?

*If you are told to have more faith in a person what does it mean?

-It means to trust them when they do things or don't do things you don't like or understand.

-Means you assume other than a character flaw when there is miscommunication.

-It means you keep moving towards them in relationship and communication when you are feeling otherwise.

*How does this faith "happen"?

*It's not magic...its training.

*It happens through time, choices, experiences, correct thinking.

***1 Tim. 4:7 "...train yourself to be godly."**

*Training is a word that implies holistic efforts...nothing magic or overly spiritualized about it.

Train:

1. Mind
2. Emotion
3. Will (choices)
4. Body

*How does an athlete train for a game?

*They don't just expect to behave a certain way in a game unless they have trained to respond that way in practice.

*The same is true for a pianist or a surgeon.

*So, why did Jesus rebuke them for not having faith in the midst of a crisis situation?

*Because they had many experiences prior to this that should have been developing their faith to the point that at the moment of crisis...their training should be able to kick in.

*So it is ridiculous to expect a pianist who has not trained to be able to perform in a concert and it is equally ridiculous to expect a Christian who has not trained in godliness when put to the test to respond in godly fashion.

***Look at the example of Jesus himself.**

-He was brilliant at age 12 but for 18 more years he subjected to the demands of family and work life.

-He fasted and lived in solitude for a month and half after his baptism...even though he was operating on a short time schedule.

-He spent a lot of time alone, often praying all night before meeting the needs of people.

*This was him showing us the reality and necessity of training for godliness.

"Our mistake is to think that following Jesus consists in loving our enemies, going the "second mile," turning the other cheek, suffering patiently and hopefully--while living the rest of our lives just as everyone around us does."

*To have faith does not mean that we try to behave as Jesus did when he was put under pressure...when its "game time."

*To have faith means that we behave as Jesus did all the time...trusting God in the day to dayness of life...training.

*What Jesus did when he was put in pressure situations was the result of what he did the rest of his life...he lived training to trust.

***Training for godliness...practical examples.**

-When I feel compelled to exalt myself...I will trust him to be enough for (I will hold my tongue...I will shut up)

-When I feel compelled to defend myself and I know I shouldn't...I will trust him and stay quiet.

-When I think I must take an ethical moral shortcut in order to be successful...I will trust him to be enough and refuse to take that shortcut.

-When I am afraid of looking stupid, or being left out, or rejected....I will trust God to be enough and I will press into the relational situation in appropriate and courageous ways.

-I will pray for itty-bitty things in my life and the lives of others.

-I will give thanks, consistently for all things in my life.

-I will ask for forgiveness, I will choose to move towards my spouse, friend first...I will not be petty but I will act like God is real in this situation.

-I will not allow thoughts of jealousy, envy...how others have slighted me, forgotten me...lodge in my brain...I will dislodge them as an act of my will and my faith.

-I will look for ways to bless those who are against me...and tell my feelings to get in the back seat if I must.

*Training to trust is not just..."read the Bible and pray more."

*It is reading the Bible and praying so that you will know how to practice what faith in Jesus looks like in your real world.

*Our Faith is revealed in our responses to life's circumstances.

*Our Faith is built through our responses to life's circumstances.

***So, do we take the advice "trust your training" or not?**

*We **don't** trust our training if by that we mean trusting ourselves...our strength, our efforts, our wisdom, our experience....it can fail us, and it will fail us.

*We don't trust our **ability** to train...

*We **do** trust that training will lead us forward in a more mature faith.

*We trust that training will take us to the place where our reflexes...physical (brain), mental (thinking), physical, spiritual...go faster to faith than to fear.

*God has given us a will...an ability to choose to train for godliness.

*He has given us a physical body with physical responses and reflexes that can and must be trained

*He has given us a mind that is not just a brain...we can choose what we allow to stay and embed in our minds.

*He has connected us as individuals in relationships.

*We can exercise faith in all these arenas, so that when the big events come, we have trained to be prepared.

Conclusion:

*According to Naomi Paget, Crisis response expert, for years our national response to disaster has been: Disaster-respond, another disaster-another response.

*There has been a shift in recent years to a model that is: disaster-respond-evaluate-prepare-disaster.

*I think this is a good description of how we can be Christians for a long time and still have little faith.

*We have a crisis...then we respond to the crisis.

*Then the crisis passes and we wait for the next crisis so that we can respond.

*It seems the Biblical model includes "evaluation and preparation"

*Lots of examples such as: "train yourselves for godliness", "Prepare your minds for action", "always be prepared to give an answer," "be prepared in season and out of season"

*"test the sincerity of your love," "Examine yourself."

*Clearly the biblical model is not just: "crisis-response"

*But there is training involved...and training includes "evaluation (where am I compared with where I need to be?) and preparation (how I get where I need to be?)

Application:

1. If you, or someone close to you is in a storm that threatens to overwhelm you or them:

*You/they don't need a lot of information or advice or facts.

*A ministry of presence is most important at times like this.

*"I don't know what to say."

*Good, then don't say anything...just be there.

*However there comes a time when truth, information is vital to long term recovery and growth.

2. When the initial moment of crisis has passed

*Information, truth, facts, direction becomes critical.

*This is part of evaluation and preparation.

*What you believe about God is important.

*The kind of training you are undergoing is important.

*Move from: Crisis-response-Crisis

*To: Crisis-response-evaluation-preparation.

*Training in godliness is preparation for all of life.

*Training in godliness is not magic.

*Thinking thoughts that are true about God and life.

*Believing those true thoughts about God and life.

*Making decisions day by day that align with those true beliefs about God and life.

*Thinking thoughts that are true requires consistent input...bible intake, and reflection.

*Believing those true thoughts requires consistent prayer, and fellowship with like-minded people.

*Making decisions that align with true beliefs requires a surrendered will.

*This is how faith grows...it grows like a muscle grows...you exercise it.

*Jesus expected his followers to have a better response to the storm than they did...not because he failed to understand the reality of adrenaline, cortisol, and norepinephrine in their bloodstream.

*Jesus is smart, really smart...smarter than anyone, ever...he understands all this and more.

*He understands that we can train for faith as much as we can train for any number of things.

*His expectation was that through the practice of their faith...they should have responded better in a crisis situation.

*Later they would and this event would no doubt help them be prepared for that time.

*Are you disappointed in how you have responded to a certain situation?

*Do you wish you had exhibited more faith and less fear?

*Don't just live: Crisis-response-crisis-response.

*Move to a different model in your life....add..."Evaluation & preparation"

*The disciples were rebuked for a single response because it revealed an overall lack of life preparation.

*Train for godliness...its not magic, but it is real.

Fear touches all of us:

1. Fear of what others think
2. Fear of being alone
3. Fear of the future
5. Fear of being bored, or ineffective.
6. Fear of death or loss of control

*Fear of some kind dominates much of the foolishness and destructive choices that we see in and around us.

*Faith, not courage is the opposite of fear.

*Faith that believes God is enough.

-What he thinks matters most

-I am not alone

-I no more have to fear what will happen in the future than I have to fear what will happen in the past...he controls it all.

*See, this rebuke was not a slap in the face...but an invitation to a different kind of life.

*It was not going to happen magically, just by hanging out...even if, like these guys, you were hanging out with Jesus.

*It happens by choice...training that involves all of who we are.

SMALL GROUP NOTES
April 18, 2015 **Mark 4:35-41**

Intro:

1. Define faith.
2. Describe what faith in God would look like in a variety of situations such as: a flat tire, an illness, someone shouting at you because you accidentally cut them off in traffic, a pressure situation at work, (other?)
3. Describe the last time you had a "flight/fight/freeze/faint" response.

Read:

Mark 4:35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."
36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. **37** A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. **38** Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" **39** He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. **40** He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" **41** They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Discuss:

1. Do you believe that "real" faith will eliminate all of your problems? Why or why not?
2. Do you believe this narrative was "descriptive" or "prescriptive"? In other words does it describe what happened then or prescribe what will always happen in our lives?
3. Terry said that the question "Do you still have no faith?" is crucial to understanding this passage, why do you think he believes that?
4. The disciples were afraid twice in this story, what were those two "fears" and how are they inter related?
5. What do you think Terry meant by saying that some believe "Faith grows like magic?"
6. How does 1 Tim 4:7 ("**train yourself to be godly**") counter this idea?
7. Describe some ability in your life that is the result of training? What was involved in that training?
8. What does it mean to "trust your training?"
9. Talk about the different ways that Jesus "trained for godliness" in his life on earth.

Apply:

1. What are some specific, practical ways you can apply training to your current life situations?
2. Do you feel like your life model has been "crisis--response---crisis" or "crisis--response---evaluation---preparation---crisis"?
3. What would "evaluation and preparation" look like in your life? (Or what does it look like if it in place?)
4. What are some ways you feel you are affected or even controlled by fear?
5. How would an increase in faith in God be a counter to that fear?

The Gospel of Mark



*"For even the
Son of Man
did not come
to be served,
but to serve,
and to give
his life as a
ransom for
many."*

Mark 10:45

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

2 Cor. 4:17

Mark 4:35-41 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”



**"We are going to be destroyed
for all you care!"**

Mark 4:39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

Mark 4:40 He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

Mark 4:41 They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

**"why are you afraid, do you still
have no faith?"**

Was their lack of faith the result of them not believing Jesus would calm the storm, or not having confidence in Jesus in the midst of the storm?

They were afraid twice:

1. The storm

2. The power of Jesus over the storm

fight
flight
freeze
faint

"...train yourself to be godly."

1 Timothy 4:7



trust your training



Faith & Training

***Our faith is revealed in our
responses to life's circumstances***

&

***Our faith is developed through our
responses to life's circumstances***

Trust your training?

crisis



response



crisis



***Thinking thoughts that are true
about God and life***

Believing those true thoughts

***Making decisions based on those
beliefs***

Bible intake and reflection

Prayer and fellowship

Decisions

***The opposite of fear is faith...not
courage***