

NBC Devotional
February 14, 2024
“Strong and Mighty Moses”

This week we celebrate Ash Wednesday, when we remember that God created us from dust by His own breath. During these next 40 days, we honor the fasting and preparation Jesus endured in the wilderness before beginning his public ministry. It’s a season when we ready ourselves for the heartbreak of Good Friday and the celebration of Easter morning.

The story of Moses has something to say to us about our Lenten journey.

It’s an incredible story, one that many people could likely recite from memory with a Bible nowhere in sight. Strong and mighty Moses who led his people across the Red Sea!

Moses wasn’t always strong or mighty. He was born into a hostile environment, where an increasingly threatened Pharaoh decreed that Hebrew infant boys must die. In desperation, Moses’ sister hides him in a papyrus basket, and floats him down the Nile River. He is claimed and raised by Pharaoh’s own daughter.

As a young man defending a Hebrew slave, Moses kills an Egyptian. Pharaoh determines to kill him in return. Moses runs away to the neighboring territory of Midian, where he stays 40 years.

While Moses is hiding, Scripture tell us that “The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out . . . and God remembered his covenant with Abraham.” (2:23-4)

In Chapter 3, God finds Moses in the wilderness of Horeb, the mountain of God. The word Horeb actually means waste or desolation. After four decades of self-imposed exile, Moses was in likely his own personal wilderness. God pursued him there and called him by name. “Moses, Moses . . .” (3:4)

God commissions Moses. He declares that He will end the suffering of the Hebrews and bring them into a good and spacious land, a land he has promised their covenant fathers. Incredible!

Moses isn’t having it.

Six times, God reassures Moses of his call. Six times, Moses protests or declines. Finally, he says to God, “Please, send someone else.” (3:13)

I’ll freely confess that I have had more than one occasion to resonate with this Moses! Even when the God who names me, the God who sees me, the God who pursues me, the God who declares He will deliver me from bondage is calling . . . sometimes I just want to say, “No. Thank you for thinking of me, but . . . no.”

God doesn’t give up on Moses, and he doesn’t give up on us. He sends Moses a companion for the journey. Moses and Aaron partner with God to set the people free. Some moments in the journey were excruciatingly painful for Moses. Eventually, he grew into the emboldened Moses who held his staff up to part the sea.

However, in the beginning, he was the frail Moses. The Moses who implored God to choose someone else. Who tried hard to give up on his calling before it even started. The Moses who understood very well that he was made from dust.

As we begin our Lenten journey, let us remember that though we are made from dust, we know understand our hope: God's power is made perfect in our weakness.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Dr. Bonnie Perry