

Moses on Behalf of Israel



The Ministry of Intercession (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again today as I continue to share with you on the ministry of intercession, one of God's keys that solves the unsolvable.

In my talk yesterday I spoke about Abraham interceding on behalf of Sodom. We saw him in the posture that typifies the intercessor, the one who stands in between. Abraham standing before the Lord, standing between God and the object of God's just wrath, which at that moment was the city of Sodom.

In particular, I singled out three features of Abraham's character and relationship with God. First, his intimacy with God; second, his boldness; and third, his conviction of God's absolute justice, both positive and negative. Positively, that God would spare the righteous; negatively, that God would judge the wicked.

I also pointed out two aspects of God's character revealed by this incident. First, that God responds to the prayers of his servant; and second, that God delights to show mercy if we pray.

Today our lesson on the power of intercession will be taken from the life of Moses. We'll begin with an incident where Moses had been up at the top of Mount Sinai, communing with God, receiving from God the revelation of God's purpose and God's plan for the future of Israel. At a certain point in this communion between the Lord and Moses, the Lord changed the direction of the conversation and He told Moses that while Moses had been up at the top of the mountain, the Israelites down at the foot of the mountain had turned aside from the way that God had set before them and had gone into idolatry, and had actually made a golden calf and were worshiping it at that very moment while Moses was up there with the Lord at the top of the mountain. The Lord's attitude was, "Moses, let Me alone, I'll destroy this people and I'll make a greater nation out of you." We'll read now the words that describe the incident, beginning in Exodus 32:7-14:

> "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, 'Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of

> Egypt, have corrupted themselves.'"

Let me point out something that's almost comical in the midst of this intensely serious situation. Neither the Lord nor Moses would accept responsibility at this point for Israel. Each of them was so disgusted with Israel. The Lord said to Moses, "Your people, whom you brought up." A little later on we'll see that Moses said to the Lord, "Thy people, whom Thou broughtest up." So, as it were, Israel was in such a state of degradation that neither the Lord Himself or Moses wanted to be identified with them. All right, I'll go on reading now. God goes on saying to Moses:

> "'They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, `This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!" And the Lord said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. 'Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them, and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."

Note those words, "Let me alone." I'll come back to them in a little while. Now we have Moses' response:

> "Then Moses entreated the Lord his God, and said, 'O Lord, why doth Thine anger burn against Thy people whom Thou hast brought up from the land of Egypt... [Notice Moses said, 'Lord, they're not my people, they're Thy people whom Thou hast brought up from the land of Egypt.'] ...with great power and with a mighty hand? 'Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth?' Turn from Thy burning anger and change Thy mind about doing harm to Thy people. 'Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, Thy servants to whom Thou didst swear by Thyself, and didst say to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever." So the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people."" (NAS)

Let's pick out now the main salient features of this tremendous incident, this outstanding example of the power of intercession. I've already pointed out that neither God nor Moses, at that moment, wanted to be identified with Israel. God said to Moses, "Your people, whom you brought out." Moses said to God, "Thy people, whom Thou hast brought out." And then I've also noted that in verse 10, the Lord said to Moses, "Let me alone that My anger may burn against them." Have you considered that? That God, in a way said, "Moses, if you'll step aside, I'll act. But if you remain there before Me, I can't act." You see, that's the whole faith of the intercessor, that the intercessor's presence between God and the object of His wrath restrains God's wrath. Just imagine Almighty God saying, "Let Me alone." But you see the marvelous thing about Moses was that he wouldn't let God alone. He stayed there, he held on.

Then look at the motivation of Moses. God gave him the most tremendous promise. He said, "I'll blot these people out and I'll make of you a great nation." How many people would have been delighted with the prospect of becoming the unique head and founder of that great nation? But Moses was not concerned for his own glory, he was greatly concerned for God's glory; and when he spoke back to the Lord, the first thing he said was, "If you do that then the Egyptians will say You never meant to do Your people good. You brought them out only to do them harm. Think what will happen to your reputation in the earth." So you see, Moses was not concerned for his own glory, but he was greatly concerned for God's glory.

And then notice the basis of Moses' appeal to God. He appealed to two things: God's word and God's oath. "Remember," he said, "Thy servants to whom Thou didst swear by Thyself and didst say to them, "I will multiply your descendants..." That's really the basis on which the intercessor comes to God. God's word, God's oath, God's commitment. He says, "God, You're a covenant keeping God. I trust You to keep that covenant You've made. I believe You won't break it. I'm standing here because I believe that."

And then notice, as I've said already in regard to Abraham, God responds to the prayers of His servants. The translation that I read says, "The Lord changed His mind." That somehow staggers my own mind. That a man, by his prayer, can cause God to change His mind. And yet the scripture indicated that it's so. God wants us to influence Him. He wants to be changed by us in the direction of His highest will, but He waits for us to do it.

By that act of intercession, one man, Moses, saved a whole nation. That's the power and the possibility of intercession.

Now, we're going to look at another example of the power of intercession in the life of Moses. But this time Moses was not the only intercessor. Moses and Aaron became intercessors

together. I think that's very significant. Because on previous occasions that we looked at, Aaron was really the source of the problem. But thank God Aaron had progressed in this incident to where he was part of the solution. This incident is found in the 16th chapter of Numbers. There had been a kind of rebellion of some of the leaders of the various tribes against the leading or the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Some of the other leaders had risen up and said, "We are as just the same kind of people as Moses and Aaron. They have no preeminence over us." God had intervened at a certain point with a signal judgment and caused the earth to open and swallow up some of the people who had led this rebellion against Moses and Aaron; and then, the next day, all the congregation of Israel turned against Moses and Aaron and accused them of being responsible for the death of the people who had been swallowed up by the Lord's judgment. We'll read on now, from this point in Numbers 16:41-48:

> "But on the next day all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, 'You are the ones who have caused the death of the Lord's people.' It came about, however, when the congregation had assembled against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tent of meeting, and behold, the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. [God visibly and personally intervened at that point.] Then Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly.' Then they fell on their faces. And Moses said to Aaron, 'Take your censer and put in it fire from the altar, and lay incense on it; then bring it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone forth from the Lord, the plague has begun!' Then Aaron took it as Moses had spoken, and ran into the midst of the assembly, for behold, the plague had begun among the people. So Aaron put on the incense and made atonement for the people. And he took his stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague was checked." (NAS)

Let's look at some of the outstanding features of that incident. First of all, I have to say I marvel at the patience and longsuffering of Moses. These people had complained and murmured and disobeyed time after time. Now God was saying that He was going to destroy them and Moses pled with God for them. I think perhaps many of us would have said, "At last, Lord. You've seen what kind of people they are. Go ahead, they deserve it." But not Moses.

That remedy that Moses gives to Aaron, that's a beautiful picture, the censer with the burning coals from off the altar and then the incense on top of the coals going up in a fragrant white smoke. That typifies the praying heart. The praying heart has to be burning like those coals, and as the prayer goes up from a praying heart, it goes up like the fragrant white incense before God.

And then notice Aaron's posture. He took his stand between the dead and the living. That's the position of the intercessor. The one who comes in between and where the white incense went up, the plague stopped. That's a picture of what intercessory prayer can do. Aaron had been part of the problem the first time, now he was part of the solution. Doesn't that encourage you and me? Doesn't that inspire us to think in terms of moving out in faith and becoming intercessors and wafting up that fragrant white smoke of intercession that can change the situation and save those who are doomed to die?

Our time is up for today, but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow's lesson on the power of intercession will be taken from the life of Daniel.

Radio Program

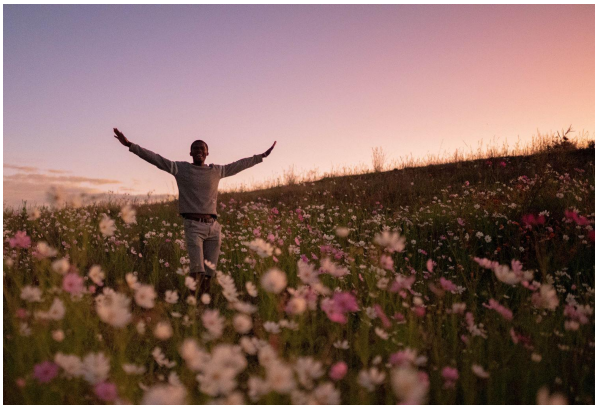
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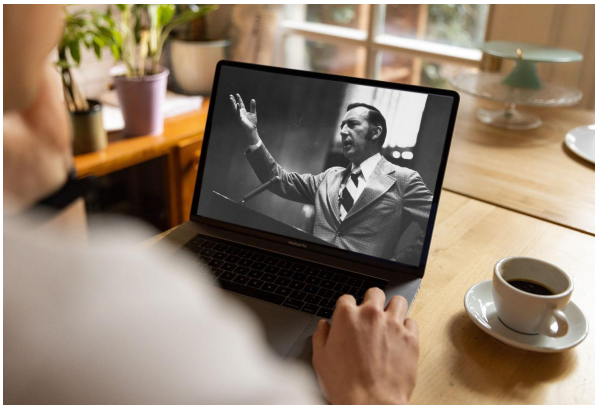
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