

Desert Survival Series Pt 28- Moses the Servant of God

by Don Courville

The discipline of durability is necessary for service and ministry, and can be developed through prayer, trust in God, contentment, and gratitude.

Duration: 32:40

Scripture: Exodus 16:3, Numbers 11:1-34, Matthew 6:13

Topics: "Desert Survival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of durability in our lives. He starts by highlighting how in today's society, we are concerned about the longevity of the things we buy. He then transitions to the story of Moses in the Bible, specifically focusing on Numbers chapter 11. The preacher emphasizes how Moses faced challenges and felt defeated, but God provided him with support and encouragement. The sermon concludes by highlighting the need for believers to rely on God's strength and endurance in the face of difficulties.

Transcript

We continue today in our Desert Survival series on Moses, the servant of God. We'll be in Numbers chapter 11, if you'd like to turn there. The title for our message for today is The Discipline of Durability.

The Discipline of Durability. Let's bow for prayer. Father, we ask your blessing on your word.

Speak to our hearts. Holy Spirit, you opened us up to receive that which you have for us. For it's in Jesus' name that we ask it.

Amen. Many years ago, there was a little boy. The little boy lived, what his name was, I don't know.

But we'll give him the name of Paul, Jr. We'll call him P.J. P.J. was just like any other little boy, I suppose, just full of life, love to do things, run around as any little boy does. But P.J., as probably any little boy, would sometimes get in trouble. Mom would say, P.J., would you take out the trash? And P.J. might say, sure, Mom.

And off he goes. He forgets all about it. He comes back in and Mom says, P.J., you take out the trash.

Well, no, Mom, I didn't. And Mom would say, OK, P.J., come on, let's go in the bedroom. We're going to have a talk.

And they'd go in there and have one of those famous powwows, those little conferences where the powwowing is all on P.J.'s bottom. And the years go by and he goes through these little lessons. Dad says, P.J., I want you to mow the grass.

And P.J., sure, Dad. And he goes off, forgets to mow the grass, comes back. Dad says, did you get the grass mowed? Well, no, I forgot.

Well, let's go have another little conference. And so the years go on and he has these conferences, but they become fewer and fewer, for he learns that it's more important to obey than disobey. Now, I want to pick up on that little story later on.

We're going to find out the application for that message at the end. But now I want to talk to you, first of all, about this discipline of durability. In our day and age, one of the things that we're concerned about when we buy things is how long will it last? Just how long will it last? We buy a car and pay a lot of money for it and we don't think it lasts long enough for what we have to pay for it.

Get a washing machine, you want it to last. You get a product, you want it to last. We're in a day when things don't last very long, it seems like.

Quality seems to be going down. And in the area of pastors, the ability of pastors to endure doesn't seem to be as long. Some time ago I read that the average of new pastors in a church is about a year and a half, 18 months.

Pastors are church hoppers, what they call church hoppers, and we have people that are church hoppers too. They go from church to church, something happens they don't like, they go to another one. They get disgruntled there, they go to another one.

And so they're church hoppers. And preachers, they can't take the pressure and they run from the problems. Durability, the discipline of durability, we need that.

It's easy to run, if you want to be a runner all your life. Now Moses learned that Egypt was a mirage. Egypt represented the world.

It was a mirage. It didn't hold anything that satisfied him. The position of Pharaoh was vanity.

He didn't want it. It didn't appeal to him. And not only that though, but when he stepped out to do what he thought God wanted him to do, he found that his own people didn't want him.

And so he ended up being rejected and going out into the desert. And when he went out into the desert, it meant it was all over. It was the death of his vision.

It was the death of his self. It was the death of his way. It was all over.

And he went out there and found a new life, living as a shepherd. And the years went by, about 40 of them as a matter of fact, and one day he was out there in the desert and he went up on the mountain. And you remember, he came face to face with God.

And at the burning bush, he met God. And that bush was his cross, because at the cross, he saw that he was over, that Moses was finished completely. But also he saw that Moses was going to live again.

And he saw his vision again. And he found out that for him to live was Christ. And now instead of his way, it was going to be God's way.

And he learned the discipline of durability. He stuck it out and he learned that the discipline of durability is the training ground for service. And because he stuck it out and he went through the lessons that God wanted him to go through, God was able to use him.

You know, we have our basic training. In our days when I went into the service, I went through basic training. And one of the things basic training is designed to do is to see if you can make it.

And if you can't make it, they don't want you to fail out there on the job. And maybe a critical situation where your life or maybe several other lives or hundreds of lives may be at stake, they don't want you to crack up then. They want to find out before then and weed you out.

And so basic training is a process of weeding out the real soldiers, those that can really stand the pressure and stand the heat of the battle. And those that can take it, they are the ones that end up being the troopers. And those of us that can take it, we are the ones that what the Lord calls his disciples.

So the basic training in the Christian life reveals not only the disciple, but it also reveals the coward, the drifter, those that are just willing to drift along. Now, one of the hardest disciplines that the Lord puts us through is the discipline of durability. For in that discipline, we have to learn how to keep on keeping on when it seems like even those that we're serving do not appreciate us.

This goes with Moses and our lesson for today. And it, of course, it went with Jesus. They both served those that didn't appreciate them.

They both served those that complained against them. They both served those that would not support them and even oppose them. Now, I want to ask you a little question and we'll answer it at the end also with the story of P.J. What happens to those who don't endure? What happens to Christians that don't make it? What happens to those that just fall away by the wayside? What happened to these in this lesson here that didn't make it? Now, let's look at Numbers 11 and see.

We start off Numbers 11 and verse 1 with complaint. And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord. And the Lord heard it, and his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burnt among them and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.

Now, there's complaint. You know, complaining leads to the snowball effect. You start off a little bitty snowball down the hill and you get it going and it gets bigger and the more it goes, the bigger it gets.

That's the way a complaint is. And especially if you tell it to somebody else, it can soon ruin a whole church. David said, I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed.

Now, I want to ask you something. Who got burnt? The Bible says that those that were on the outside of the camp were the ones that were doing the complaining because they were the ones that got burnt and they didn't like it. Everybody else started complaining.

Hey, we don't like this. Well, the cure is in verse 2. The people cried into Moses and when Moses prayed into the Lord, the fire was quenched. If you've got a complaint, pray.

Take it to God. Take it to Him first. Go through the proper challenge of authority.

If there's something you don't like, go to God and God will tell you to die to it and let Him take care of it. Now, that's the complaint. Verse 2 is the cure.

Verse 3 and 4, let's get into the cause. And he called the name of the place Tabareth because the fire of the Lord burnt among them and the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting. And the children of Israel also wept again and said, who shall give us flesh to eat? Now, the problem was they had bread and they had water, but they wanted a little meat.

We want some meat with our bread. What they had really was what the Bible calls a lust. Looking away from God and looking to other things is what you call lust.

Looking for something or to something that you shouldn't have is getting into the area of lust. Now, Paul taught us in Philippians 4, 11 through 13, the principle of contentment. He said, I've learned in whatever state I am to be content because he learned that God was sovereign, that God could take care.

So he said, I've learned how to be abased and I learned how to abound. It doesn't matter whatever state I'm in, I'm content because God is in control. Well, these boys, they wasn't content because they thought things were out of control.

And anytime you and I start to complain or do complain, we're saying, God, things are out of control or God, you don't have a hold on things. Now, verse 5, it goes on to say that they and their complaint were saying this, we remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic and the okra and the black eyed peas and the greens and the cornbreads and the grits and all that other health food. We forget all that stuff.

We just, we've, oh, it tastes so good to have some more of that southern fried chicken. Oh boy. And you know what they're doing? They're dwelling on their lust.

Whenever we get a lust, the Bible teaches us we're to die to it, to turn from it. The Bible says there's no temptation taking you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above that you're able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape.

They were not looking for a way to escape. They were not looking at the blessings. They were not remembering their freedom.

No, they were dwelling on their lust. Dwelling on your lust weakens durability, opens up the avenue for the flesh to take over in your life, opens up the avenue for the devil to move in and run your life. They say, we remember the fish, but isn't it funny? They didn't remember the famine.

We remember the cucumbers, but isn't it strange how they forgot the cruelty? We remember the melons and the misery. No, we don't remember the misery. We just remember the melons.

They forget the misery. We remember the leaks. Oh, but they forget the labor from daylight to dark and the mud pits, the slime pits, stomping mud, making bricks for Pharaoh.

We remember that and this. We remember the onions, but they forget the oppression. We remember the garlic, but they forget the garrisons of the soldiers that stood around them with their spears, watching them to make sure that they did not escape, to make sure that they showed up to work, to make sure that they worked hard enough.

You know one thing about backsliders? They're always ungrateful for what they do have and unwilling to go on with what God has given to them. Now here they are. They're free out in the desert.

They're free. There's no more bondage and slavery. They have their food laid out on a snow-white powder of dew in the morning.

The manna comes down. They have honey out of the rock, water out of the rock. God himself is providing out of his very being for their nourishment.

And what are they doing? Complaining. Verse 6. Now our soul is dried away. There's nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes.

Something else about backsliders. They don't delight in Christ and in his beauty and in his ability to take care of him. Backsliders don't delight in his word.

Backsliders like to compromise truth and go for convenience instead of for what is right and what conviction of their heart tells them. Backsliders just don't delight in the Lord. And the Bible says, they said our soul is dried away.

We're not satisfied with the provision of God. We got to get off and get into the world a little bit. They're wanting to go back into the world, the place of imprisonment.

The place where they were delivered from. And that's just what it is like for a believer. If we have been delivered from sin's power and sin's passions and sin's prisons and we are freed by Christ and then we want to go back, we're a fool.

And what happens when we go back? We get into a lot of trouble and some of us don't get back out again. We get back into sin's enslavements and we lose our freedom again. Even though our soul maybe has been bought by Christ and the blood sills our soul, we go back to bondage.

No more do we have a testimony of the freedom of Christ. Life is hard. Life is cruel.

The rules apply to all of us. Now, something else about Backsliders says in verse 7 that the manna was as corander seed and the color thereof as the color of bdellium. And the people went out about and gathered it and ground it in mills or beat it in a mortar and baked it in pans and made cakes of it.

And the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. Backsliders go through the motions, but their heart isn't in it. They went through all the motions, but inside they were grumbling and complaining.

And what's the consequences? Verse 10, then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families. Every man in the door of his tent and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly. Moses also was displeased.

The consequences of complaining or not enduring was there's the weeping of the people, the wrath of God and the weakening of Moses. We're going to see how Moses is weakened down. Then when you get

to verse 11, it says, and Moses said unto the Lord, wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant and wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? What happens to the leaders? What happens when, when, when we complain and the leaders bear that burden? What happens to the leader? The pastor, when we complain, when we backslide, here's what happens.

Side two, as a nursing father, bearing the second child and unto the lamb, which thou squarest unto their fathers. I never noticed this, but you know what they were doing the most by their lack of durability. Notice when we complain what we do to our leaders.

He said, Lord, pastoring this flock of people is an affliction. How would you feel if you heard me praying and I'm saying to God, Lord, pastoring this flock of people is a pain in the neck. Now it's not, I enjoy pastoring you, I love you, but what would you think? That's how Moses said, man, Lord, these crybabies, they're driving me up the wall.

Lord, this is an affliction. Notice also, you're not blessing me. Moses was saying, Lord, pastoring these people is a pain in the neck, it's an affliction, and you're not blessing me, I'm not in your favor.

Have I not found favor in your sight? Lord, this is a burden. You've laid all this burden on me. What would you think if you heard me praying? Lord, this is a real burden.

It's a blessing, I enjoy it. But suppose, here's Moses praying, Lord, this is a burden. It's supposed to be a real joy, that's his vision, that's what God raised him up to do, that very thing, and he comes back and says, God, the very thing that you raised me up to do would be the joy of my life on earth.

It's a burden, it's breaking me and bending me down. He thought his job was a burden, then verse 12, he complains. Have I conceived all this stuff? He goes into a complaining routine.

And then you go to verse 13, not only that, not only is he complaining, but now he's beginning to get disillusioned. Whence should I have flesh to give all this people? Are they weeping to me saying, give us flesh that we may eat? See, they want us to meet with their breath. He's getting a little disillusioned because God's done all kinds of things.

He says, where am I going to get meat to feed all these guys? Lord, if I go to every supermarket in the country around here and buy all the meat, all their meat departments, there's not going to be enough. There's not enough meat. He's getting a little disillusioned.

Maybe a little discouraged. Why is he getting discouraged? Maybe even he's going into the state of despair because look at verse 14. He goes, I am not able to bear all this people alone because it is too heavy for me.

He's despairing. Lord, I'm carrying all this load alone. That's why we sang this song, tell it to Jesus.

I must tell it to Jesus. Tell it to Jesus alone. But not only that, Moses was going into the state of defeat because he says in verse 15, and if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee out of hand.

If I found favor in thy sight and let me not see my wretchedness. Isn't it funny the solutions we come up to for our own problems. Lord, here's the solution.

You just kill me and it's going to take care of everything. Now the Lord didn't. I like that poem.

Let me read it to you. I've read it many times. But if you think you're beaten, you are.

If you think you dare not, you don't. If you'd like to win but you think you can't, it's almost as if you won't. If you think you'll lose, you're lost.

For out in the world we find success begins with a fellow's will. It's all in the state of mind. If you think you're outclassed, you are.

You've got to think high to rise. You've got to be sure of yourself before you can ever win a prize. Life's battle doesn't always go to the swifter or faster man, but sooner or later the man who wins is the man who thinks he can.

You see, Moses was being defeated. The ones that he was serving were beating him down. Now God did two things as a result of that.

One, he built Moses back up. If you look in the next few verses, I'm not going to go through everything, but in verse 16, the last thing he got, he said, you're going to get some men. I'm going to give you 70 men out of the elders.

And he said that they may stand with thee. You see, a man of God can stand, but he can't stand alone. And then he said also in verse 17, that they will bear the burden of the people with thee.

A man of God can serve God, but he can't serve and bear the burden alone. And then also in verse 18, he says now, Moses, I'm taking care of you and I'm going to take care of these people too. You know what he does? God says, I'm going to give you flesh.

And he brought in the quails and they piled the quails, piled all around and they got meat. And the Bible says that as they put it in their mouth to eat it, before they even got it chewed up, God just struck them with a plague. But God said, Moses, I'm going to take care of you and I'm going to take care of this people.

Now in verse 18, the reason God was mad was because these people, they were doubting. They were doubting the provision of God in verse 18. You know, they said, who shall give us flesh to eat? They were saying, who is going to provide for us? It was anyone who has been providing for us.

But they were doubting the provision of God. Verse 20, they were despising the presence of God. If you look at verse 20, that even a whole month until it comes out of your nostrils, it shall be loathsome unto you.

I'm going to give you meat, all right? You want some meat? That you have despised the Lord, which is among you. You know what happens when we don't endure? We doubt the provision of God. We despise the presence of God.

When we don't endure, it's filthy. Who is among you? And it wept before him saying, why came we forth out of Egypt? And not only did they doubt the provision of God and despise the presence of God, but they despised the deliverance of God. They said, why did you bring us out of Egypt? Why did you save me, Lord? You put me through all this misery.

It was better that I go back and be unsaved. Was it? In the state of being unsaved, if you die, you don't have. But the devil can really do a number on us sometimes.

But that wasn't the worst thing he did. You know the worst thing that came in that group of people? Not just doubting the provision of God and despising the presence of God and despising the deliverance of God, but they almost destroyed the prophet of God. They almost destroyed Moses.

Do you realize how weak we are? Pastors, evangelists, teachers, we're no stronger than you. We have the same God. We've got to measure faith.

All we have is a gift, a spiritual gift. But we can be destroyed. Not only can we destroy you, but you can destroy us.

Now, maybe I'm sharing some things that I share with other people around the country. I've been to God for 10. I need to share some of these things with you that I'm sharing with other congregations, how they can build their pastorate.

But you know what they almost destroyed in the life of Moses? They almost destroyed his faith. They did. Who's going to give him this flesh? Well, Moses knew that God was, but his faith was being hammered away at him.

If you'll look down at verse 21, 23, Moses said, the people among whom I've got their 600,000 footmen. And God said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole lot. Shall the flocks of the herd be slain for them to suffice for them? You know, he's going into all this thing and looking at himself anymore.

He's not looking at God because he's been weakened and battered down. His own dear ability is being destroyed. And God comes out to Moses and God says to Moses, is the Lord's hand so short? Verse 23, is the Lord's hand wax short or grown so short? Is my ability to supply shriveled up? Moses, where's your faith? Moses is, he was, he was really knocked pretty hard.

Moses, come on, look at me. Don't look at those people. Look at me.

I'll take you through there. Well, they almost destroyed the flock of God. They almost destroyed his faith.

You see the discipline of durability is the training ground for service. We all need it because I serve you and you serve me. We all have our spiritual gifts.

I need your gift. You need mine. I need yours.

We're not indispensable. I'm not indispensable. You're not.

Never doubt the importance of this discipline. It is vital. We need it.

We have to endure it because you're important. Your endurance may make the difference. And my endurance and your neighbors making it to Christ, your children making it, whatever.

And what about Paul's nephew? P.J. was called Paul Jr. because P.J. had an uncle and his uncle was Uncle Paul, the Apostle. One day P.J.'s dad said, son, I want you to listen very carefully because over the years P.J. got enough banking to where, yes sir Lord, I'm listening. Whatever you want dad.

You see when we listen to those that are in authority over us, we're really listening to the Lord. What do you want? He says, listen, there's some trouble. They've taken your Uncle Paul prisoner.

Now I want you to go down to the marketplace with the scribes and the Pharisees and hang around. I heard that some of them would like to do something to Paul. I don't know what it is, but you just go down there and take your yo-yo down there and just stand around there and play with your yo-yo and see what you can pick up.

Now what would happen if he hadn't learned the discipline of durability? He said, sure dad. And he went off the other way and went down to the park and played on the slide and the swing. No, he took off and got his yo-yo.

He went down there and he hung around where those guys were. And he's playing his yo-yo and he's listening. As he listens, he hears them talking about drawing Paul out down to a meeting.

He said, listen, we'll get the captain to bring the prisoner, bring Paul down here and while he's coming down here, we'll jump out and ambush him. But PJ ran back, not to his dad, he ran back to Paul. Paul was in prison.

He went to Paul and he told Paul what was going on. Paul said, guard, take this young man to the captain. The guard took the young man to the captain.

The captain took the young man and took PJ aside and said, what do you want? He says, listen, there's a plot of myth I've heard with my ears. They're going to ask you to let Paul come down to this meeting so they can interrogate him some more, but it's really a trap. They're going to jump out and attack him and kill him.

And he says, son, don't tell anybody what you just told me. And he sent him out and he took Paul and he took Paul and he got to escape and he got out of there. This is in the book of Acts, by the way.

I made it up about PJ, but it's a true story about Paul's nephew. We never know just what our obedience to the Lord will mean in the life of another person. Did you know that Paul's nephew's promptness and ability to listen and obey and respond saved Paul's life? And God used that little boy to accomplish that big thing.

God may do something just as important in your life and mine today. Just as important. We just never know what it is.

And by the way, what happened to those that didn't endure? What happened to those mumblers and grumblers and complainers? Do you know what happened to them? The end of the chapter, it says this, they buried the people that lusted. Verse 34, and he called the name of that place Kibbat HaTalavah, which means in the Hebrew graves of lust. Because there they buried the people that lusted.

Those that don't endure usually get buried in some kind of grave. A grave of false doctrine, a grave of emotionalism, a grave of self-pity, a grave of self-indulgence, a grave of greed, a grave of dissatisfaction and complaining. But you'll be buried in some grave.

Here lies the grave of old man doubt. He didn't believe God in the desert and he didn't make it out. The lesson for you and me is plainly sent.

If we endure, we make it. And if we don't, we will lie in the grave of old man doubt. Excuse the poem, but it's the best I could come up with this week.

Every now and then I write one. So, when things go wrong, as they sometimes will, when the road you're trudging seems all uphill, when the funds are low and the debts are high, and you want to smile but you have to sigh, when care is pressing you down a bit, rest if you must, but don't you dare quit. Life is strange with its twists and turns, as every one of us sometimes learns, and many a failure turns about, when he might have won had he stuck it out.

Don't give up, though the pace seems slow, you might succeed with another blow. Often the goal is nearer than it seems to a faint and faltering man. Often the struggler has given up when he might have captured the victor's cup, and he learned too late when the night slipped down how close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out. The silver tint of the clouds of doubt, and you never can tell how close you are, it may be near when it seems afar, so stick to the fight, when your hardest hit, it's when things seem worse that you mustn't quit. Let's bow and pray.

Lord, thank you for this discipline, for your ability. I felt like sometimes it was more than I could take, the lessons you put me through, the trials, the lows, the weights, but it's all that weight, all that discipline, all the trials, that gives us the weight to keep us down, and the waters and the waves come blasting against us, it's the weight. We have heavy souls, we have meaty souls, we have souls that have been built up, we're not easily discouraged, we're not easily defeated, we're not easily thrown down, because we've learned to endure.

Thank you, Lord, for the message that you've given us. It's from you, and I thank you for it. Lord, there may be one here that's not even in the race, one that's out there on the outer fringes, complaining, and grumbling.

If they don't know you, they would go out and trample the mountain, they don't know Jesus as their Savior. I pray if they want Jesus, Lord, if they just could please, they'd give an invitation for you, in Jesus' name.

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