

Resonate

BIBLE STUDY

“CSI: UNJUST JUSTICE”

Everyone can look back on their life and name decisions they regretted. Although these decisions may have had consequences, they do not prohibit present and future service unto the Lord. This week we will study a murderer who became one of the greatest leaders ever known in Israel.



Today's Scripture:
Exodus 2:1-10

The Word

He was born special. His parent knew that this baby was not like other children. Of course most parents think that about their little ones. But these parents took great risk in preserving their son's life.

Exodus 2:1-2

Verse 1-2: Most parents when they have a child show the baby off. Why would they hide their son? The pharaoh, leader of Egypt, had decreed that any male child born should be killed. He was concerned about the number of the Israelite slaves living in his land. He wanted to keep a handle on his slaves and killing babies by throwing them in the Nile was the Pharaoh's option for controlling the population. It was a difficult time; not only were the parents living as slaves, but they also were handling the fear of having their son possibly murdered. The mother devised an amazing plot to save her son.

Exodus 2:3-6

Verse 3-6: Pharaoh had ordered that every male baby be drowned in the Nile. Yet, Moses was saved by Pharaoh's daughter bathing in the Nile. The place of many deaths was the place of life for one child, one special child.

Moses was only three months old and had already experienced an amazing miracle of God. But the miracles did not end there.

Exodus 2:7-9

Verse 7-10: The mother of Moses was able to raise her own son. Due to the quick response of the sister of Moses, this brave mother would be able to spend more time with her special child. She would be able to instill in him the ways of the Lord. Later, she would turn him over to be raised in a safe, luxurious place instead of in slavery.

Exodus 2:10

Verse 10: Moses, born into slavery, is adopted as grandson of the Pharaoh. This child became the adopted relative of the very man who wanted him dead. What a turn of events. The Lord's hand is evident in the protection and provision for Moses.

The background for Moses is now set-up. You know his miraculous life and story at such an early age. It was evident that this man was heading toward greatness. But his way to God's calling took a drastic turn as we will find out tomorrow.

For now, I want to leave you with an incredible thought: you are a special child. Moses' parents risked their lives to save their baby. Jesus gave His life to save you. The miracles of Moses' first few months and years of life are no more amazing than yours. Your life is a miracle. The Lord chose to create you. Marvel in that truth.

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord that He created you and that He saved you.

What turn of events in the young life of Moses amazes you?

How can you apply this to your life?

Why is it important to know that our lives are God's miracle?



Today's Scripture:

Exodus 2:11-15; Hebrews 11:24-25; Luke 6:41-42

The Word

Crime Scene Investigation, or CSI, is very intriguing to many people. They want to figure out the "who dun it"? Of course, many people are used to the one hour television

shows so they get their answer in a short amount of time. In reality, CSI takes months and even years before conclusions can be made. That is, of course, if there is no witnesses. With a witness, the procedure moves much faster. In our CSI we will have today, the witnesses give the criminal away.

Exodus 2:11-12

Verse 11-12: Is this the golden boy of yesterday's study? The one who was divinely protected by God? You would think to hear about Moses the Magnificent not Moses the Murderer. But it is true. He killed another man.

Moses had been raised in the household of Pharaoh but knew his bloodline was from the Hebrews. He could have ignored his people, but Moses instead identified with their suffering.

Hebrews 11:24-25

Verse 24-25: Moses knew that the Egyptians were wrong in their treatment of the Hebrew slaves. I am sure that Moses wanted to do something to help them. However, his sense of justice was sidetracked by his own unjust act. He unleashed his own vengeance instead of waiting upon the vengeance of God.

Have you ever taken matters into your own hands? Whenever we decide to take control of the matter, we are in the wrong. Even if our motives are "right", we are still wrong. Our course of action should be set by what the Lord calls us to do, not by our own idea of a quick solution. Look at the big picture: what did Moses accomplish? Was he going to try to kill one Egyptian at a time? His plan was rash and ineffective. Often our plans end up being a waste of everyone's time and energy, leaving more people hurt than helped. That person hurt may be yourself.

Exodus 2:13-15

Verse 13-15: A Crime Scene Investigator loves witnesses because they lead more often to a criminal's prosecution than just circumstantial evidence. A CSI would love this witness. He was willing and ready to condemn Moses.

The whole idea of criminal witnesses agreeing to a plea bargain irritates me. A criminal is given a lighter sentence in order to testify against another criminal. Why should a criminal be trusted to tell the truth especially since all they are interested is getting an easier penalty? It makes no sense. This Hebrew makes no sense to me either. He is beating another guy up and all he wants to do is to threaten Moses. The Hebrew is in the wrong but all he cares about is pointing out the wrong in Moses. While no violence is commendable, Moses was attempting to help the Hebrews. This man was just beating a fellow slave. Yet, at the same time, Moses had a lot of nerve to question this guy considering he had just murdered someone the night before.

The whole game of finger-pointing is wrong. We are so busy looking at the sins of others that we do not acknowledge the sins in ourselves. This whole syndrome could be called “plank eye.”

Luke 6:41

Verse 41: It is time for us to stop comparing ourselves to one another. All we do is prohibit the changes we need to make in our own lives. I think the church is guilty of doing this. We may condemn the sexually immoral, but we do not condemn our gossip. We condemn the divorced, but we do not condemn our degrading tone of voice to our spouse. We condemn teenagers on drugs, but we do not condemn emotional neglect of our children. We condemn abortion or homosexuality or a host of other things, but we do not condemn our own pride. It is time that we take the planks out of our eyes.

Luke 6:42

Verse 42: Did you ever notice the reason to take planks out of our own eyes? It is so we can clearly see to help others. It is not so that we can feel better about ourselves compared to the rest of the world. Instead, it is to take time to look in the eyes of others and speak truth to them in love. “Listen, brother or sister, I used to have a plank in my eye. I know what it is like. But I also know how to be plank free. If you want I can help you. I believe that with God’s help you can change.” That is why planks need to be removed, so we can work with others for life transformation.

Moses did not know this lesson, yet. He could not see clearly. Neither could the Hebrew slave. Both of them were missing out on life transformation. But we know that one was getting ready to experience it. But the removal of his “plank” would be a tedious process, just as it is for you and me.

Up Close and Personal

Confess your sins, your “plank eyes” to the Lord.

Who specific sin have you been judging?

How can you learn to stop condemning others?

What “plank eye” (sin) needs to be removed from your life?

How can you help others to move away from sin and move towards life transformation?

DAY
3

Today's Scripture:
Exodus 2:14-21

The Word

I love old movies. After watching the musical, *A Date with Judy*, I had to look up one of the actors in the film. This young man was so sweet and charming; I wanted to know more about him. His name was Scotty Beckett. After reading his biography, I wish I had not been so curious:

Born Scott Hastings Beckett on September 30, 1929 in Oakland, California, he and his family moved to Los Angeles when Scotty was 3 years old. Shortly after arriving in LA, Beckett's father was hospitalized and Scotty would frequently entertain his dad by singing songs. During one such visit, a Hollywood casting director happened to notice the cherubic youngster and told his parents he had movie potential. Scotty made his debut in *Gallant Lady* (1933) starring Clive Brook and Ann Harding... Scotty appeared in fifteen *Our Gang* shorts in two years...After leaving *Our Gang*, Beckett emerged as one of the top child stars of his era, appearing in many films with the top stars of the late 30s and early 40s.

At around the same time, Scotty began to gain notoriety not only for his acting, but also for his nocturnal activities. Part of the young Hollywood jet set, Beckett was a fixture at parties and would frequently be seen with young stars like Roddy McDowall, Jane Powell, Elizabeth Taylor, and Edith Fellows. His nightlife seemed to become more of a priority than his burgeoning acting career, and it started a trend of reckless, irresponsible behavior which plagued Beckett the rest of his life

This behavior included drunk driving, abusing his wives (he was married twice), cashing bogus checks, addiction to pain pills, crashing two cars while intoxicated, serving time in a Mexican prison, smuggling dangerous drugs across the border, assault with a deadly weapon, and finally suicide at the age of 38.

Leonard Maltin summed it up best when he wrote, "It was a particularly sad end for someone who, as a child, had shown so much easy charm and talent." Scotty Beckett was not the first child-star casualty and he would not be the last. But his story was certainly one of the saddest.

([Internet Movie Database, Inc.](#) 1990-2007. Amazon.com. September 3, 2007.)

Before Scotty Beckett ended his life he attempted to work as both a used car salesman and an ambulance driver. He went from being one of the top box office stars to a

criminal and an occupational drifter. Mr. Beckett could not adjust to change in life. When he was too old to be a child star, he simply drifted into confusion, pain, and despair.

Moses experienced a drastic change in his charmed life as well. He went from a relative of the Pharaoh to a fugitive. Like Scotty, Moses was guilty of his crimes. But unlike Scotty, Moses made necessary changes for his new life.

Exodus 2:14-15

Verse 14-15: Moses had to run away. He was one of the people from the household of Pharaoh, an impressive kingdom at the time; now he is sitting alone by a well. He knew no one. He was not trained for life outside the royal court. Moses was not prepared to survive in Midian. But the Lord knew all of that. He turned the rejected “prince” into a local hero.

Exodus 2:16-16-17

Verse 16-17: That feisty nature of Moses appears again. The first time, he unleashed his sense of justice in an unjust way, killing an Egyptian. This time he is just in defending the shepherdesses and he is rewarded for his efforts.

Exodus 2:18-20

Verse 18-20: God takes care of our emotional needs. Moses was all alone and the Lord provides him with a new family. I am amazed by the mercy of God. Even when we find ourselves in a terrible place due to our sin; the Lord meets us exactly where we are. He did not say, “Moses, too bad for you. I had a plan for your life but you ruined it all. Good luck.” Instead, God opens a door for Moses so that he could begin a new life in a new place. Although the Lord showcases His mercy, Moses still remembers his past; the consequences did not just disappear.

Exodus 2:21

Verse 21: The royal one is now married into a shepherd’s family. The one who was served now works at a lowly profession. The life of Moses had radically changed. He remembered his past and his dreams; but he accepts his new life. He commits to being a shepherd in the land of Midian. He probably thought it was the end of the story. He had no idea that one day his life would make another radical change.

Up Close and Personal

Thank God that He shows us mercy.

How do you respond to change in your life?

When have you experienced God's mercy in the midst of your consequences from poor choices?

DAY
4

Today's Scripture:
Exodus 2:23-4:17

The Word

It was my birthday. I had to run into the grocery store so my friend dropped me off. He said that he would come back around and pick me up. I bought the snacks I wanted and came back outside. I waited. And I waited. And I waited some more. Then, I began to cry. Here it was, my birthday, and I was stuck outside of a grocery store. It was already one of those difficult year birthdays (I will not tell you which one) so this was enough to push me over the edge. I was standing in front of the store crying when he finally came around to pick me up. He apologized. He finally shared that he had run over to Target to buy me a card because he had forgotten to get one to go with his gift. I told him next time forget the card just don't forget me outside the store!

Have you ever felt forgotten? There was a nation of people who felt like God had abandoned them. In their misery, they cried out for help

Exodus 2:23-25

Verse 23: The Israelites were the people of God yet they were forced into slavery by the Egyptians. They had been slaves for four hundred years. I think it is understandable why they felt as if the Lord was ignoring them. All they could see was their misery. The Israelites had no idea of the Lord's plan for salvation. The plan included Moses, a man who also felt forgotten in the desert land of Midian.

Exodus 3:1-10

Verse 1-10: Moses the murderer, Moses the fugitive, Moses the shepherd, was called to go to Pharaoh, only the most powerful man on earth at that time, and say "Let the Israelites go." Usually, when people go through resumes, ex-murderers are not hired for public relation positions. Yet the Lord, knowing the past of Moses, said "you are the guy for the job." Our past does not limit our future with the Lord.

I do not know your past, as you do not know mine. But I want to speak encouragement to all of our hearts; we are not beyond the calling of the Lord. We have days of service in front of us if we would choose to follow Him now. Those who feel unqualified, unworthy, unwanted, and unimportant: you are just like Moses. He had reservations about God's calling on his life as well.

Exodus 3:11-4:17

Verse 11-31: I have to let you know: these are two of my favorite chapters in the Word. I love them because God used these Scriptures to radically change my life. I was working as a counselor with runaway and homeless youth but I was feeling more and more restless in my job. One Sunday I was at church when the music minister began singing a song about Moses. The song highlighted all of the reasons Moses told God "no" and all the reasons God said "yes". Moses knew that he could not do the job. The Lord was saying "I'm with you and I will perform these miracles through you." As I listened to the words I realized I was just like Moses. I kept telling the Lord why He could never use my life in a significant way. He reminded me that it had nothing to do with me but it had everything to do with Him.

Moses knew his past, his inadequacies, his station in life. But none of these were hidden from the Lord. He did not choose Moses because he had made a mark on the world. Instead, God was going to make a mark on the world and He chose to do so with Moses. The Lord knows your past, your inadequacies, your station in life. But He will determine your future. When he informs you of His plan, join His work and experience Him doing something amazing through your life as well.

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord that He does not discard us because of our pasts. Thank you for the future that you have because of Him.

What excuses keep you from fully following the Lord?

How will you choose to obey God instead of focusing on your excuses?

Has the Lord called you to something new? What is it? How will you obey?

DAY 5

The Word

Today's Scripture:

Exodus 11:1-9; 14:13-31

Moses heard God speak through a burning bush. After much protest, he finally submitted to God's will to return to Egypt. This was not a heroic start for what would end up being a heroic career.

Moses witnessed the Lord breaking the strength of Egypt through the ten plagues. You can read in detail about the first nine plagues in Exodus 7-10: water filled with blood, frogs covered the land, gnats came upon people and animals, flies swarmed around the Egyptians, livestock died from a plague, painful boils festered on people and animals, hail fell that was large enough to kill people and livestock, locusts devoured all plant life, and three days of thick darkness took place. However, through it all, the Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go. But there was still one more plague to come.

Exodus 11:1-9

Verse 1-9: The last plague would be a tremendous blow on an already wounded Egypt. The former plagues had damaged not only their population but their economy as well. But this plague, as the others, did not come without warning. Moses told the Pharaoh about the impending doom but the ruler refused to listen. His hard heart cost him the life of his firstborn son.

While Pharaoh displayed his arrogance, the anger of Moses was shown. In verse 8 it states that Moses left Pharaoh, "hot with anger". I love that. Moses' personality had not changed from who he was forty years ago. Remember, he killed an Egyptian; his anger at the abuse of the Israelites resulted in Moses taking another's life. That was Moses acting out of his own ways. Now, in obedience to God, he still had anger. He was mad at the refusal of Pharaoh to do what was right, causing so much pain for the people of Egypt. But now that anger was channeled through the Lord. He was allowing God to take vengeance, not himself. He went from independent (I'll take care of this unjust situation myself) to dependent on the Lord (I'll let God take care of this unjust situation in His own way and time). His dependence on the Lord saved the nation, for he followed the words of the Lord time and time again.

One of the most famous examples of Moses' dependence on God was in the incident of crossing the Red Sea. The Israelites had left Egypt. After they left, Pharaoh decided that he wanted to bring them back. He and his army went after them. The Israelites were penned against the sea. The former slaves would have been no match for the trained Egyptian military. Moses prayed and followed the guidance of the Lord.

Exodus 14:13-31

Verse 13-31: Moses, the murderer, became one of the greatest leaders Israel has ever known. He is still greatly revered for his contributions to religion, law, historical documentation, and so much more. He was a poet and a prophet and taught the people songs that he wrote. Moses was an amazing man, not because of who he was, but because Who he depended upon.

Our future and our present can be radically different from our past. This is only possible by our dependence upon the Lord, allowing Him to guide us through life's ups and downs. His journey is more amazing than anything we could imagine. Moses thought he would live the lonely life of a fugitive shepherd. The Lord made him the leader of over a million people. Moses thought his people were destined to remain slaves. The Lord allowed him to not only witness their release but be an instrumental part of it. Moses felt washed up. The Lord knew he had better years ahead.

Take your cue from Moses. Depend on the Lord. Let Him lead you into the future He has planned for you. It will far outshine your past mistakes.

Up Close and Personal

Confess your independent ways. Ask the Lord to help you depend upon Him.

How does the story of Moses encourage you?

In what ways do you need to depend upon the Lord?

How have you allowed your past to keep you from living fully for God now?

What changes will you make today?