

NORTH BALWYN UNITING CHURCH

SUNDAY 23 OCTOBER 2011

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Deuteronomy 34: 1-12; 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-8

“So Good to be Faithful”

First of all, time flies and this is supposed to be my last sermon with you loving people as a candidate. It was a short journey for me but what I learnt and saw here has impacted my life and my ministry so much. I have to thank you all for your support and encouragement that makes me feel at home and loved. I have no money to buy all of you presents, but in return, I want to share this message with you as an encouragement.

This last chapter of Deuteronomy is the best testimonial of Moses after all those years of service. God has made such comment through the scriptures.

These days, people normally have their long service leave after seven to ten years of working for their employer. Many people need a good break after a continuous service, as you know; it is never easy to work for the same boss for ten years. This is what they deserve, but it has taken Moses forty years to have his long service leave. Frankly speaking, it isn't easy.

What has driven Moses in all these years? What keeps him walking even when he was weary? What has he got after all?

If you think about Moses and Apostle Paul, you may find a lot of similarities between them in the scripture. Both Moses and Paul have encountered God in a unique way, the burning bush for Moses and the strong light for Paul. Such encounter has changed their life, for both of them have received a call from God.

What actually is this call?

One may say, the call for Moses is to save the Israelis from the Egyptians, and from the tough life they have in a foreign land.

If we look at the Promised Land from a different perspective, we will notice that, it is actually the Good News from God that Moses is leading people into. Going to the Promised Land, a land of flowing milk and honey is the good news, a land of hope and new life is the salvation. This is the good news that the Israelis needed to live in.

In other words, Moses is an evangelist, like Paul.

As Paul said to the Thessalonians, he was approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel. Both Moses and Paul are the carriers of this good news, and being the ambassador of the good news was their calling.

But even though we may have the good news, we may not want to be the messenger like Moses or Paul. Both of them, like Jesus, didn't even have a proper dwelling place during their ministry.

But why were they chosen by God?

The reason was because they loved their brothers and sisters.

Moses loves his people so much to the point of breaking with Pharaoh.

Paul loves his people so much to the point that he is willing to die for his mission. Paul said to the Thessalonians that they cared for them deeply. They are determined to share not only the gospel of God but also their own selves. God knows their hearts, that's why God has chosen them.

It is such love that has driven them through many hard times. Their journey was hard and tough, Paul was beaten many times, and he was shamefully maltreated at Philippi. Moses was challenged by his own loving people to a point when they nearly abandoned him. But they never changed course, for they knew that where they were heading was the Promised Land, the good news of God.

During the long journey, Moses had a few frustrations and complaints, but he never gave up. He even journeyed with the rebellious people in the desert for a few decades even though he was innocent of the sins they committed. Likewise, Paul said, "We speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts". Both of them understood that God is the witness of Moses and Paul for their labor and love. This was because both of them were faithful servants of God.

When God journeys with us, what should we be afraid of?

Paul and Moses may feel exhausted and weary sometimes, but what empowers them is God's blessing, a shower of blessings.

There is a song called the *Impossible Dream* which I like very much and it has cheered me up on many occasions. It was sung by Andy Williams. The lyric starts...

"To dream the impossible dream

To fight the unbeatable foe..."

The words are from the song "THE QUEST" from the musical 'Man of la Mancha'; words by Dale Wasserman,

lyrics by Joe Darion and music by Mitch Lee (1965).

They are copyright and may be found at [Reelclassics](#)

So, after all these years, what has Moses got?

The scripture said, "Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigour had not abated." And God praised him by calling him, "Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face".

Moses was blessed and had a full life in God, he was not allowed to enter Canaan when he died, but God buried him and let him stand with Elijah and Christ on one of the mountains in the promise land. What a blessing to the faithful servant of God.

If they can receive this shower of blessings, so can you.

Everyone has a calling in different stages of their life. What is your calling now? Do you have that impossible dream?

Every Christian is called by the same God differently.

Being a Christian does not necessarily bring you good wealth or make you famous, but the blessing of God is enormous and full.

Where does it start?

To many Christians, it starts with baptism, which is also called Christian initiation.

To be baptized is to accept this offer from God, to be able to renew one's life in Christ, it is the beginning of a new being. It is the bearing of God's calling. This is a life time calling and commitment without expiry date.

Faith and blessings are not a kind of knowledge, but a reality and a good news for all. The road may not be smooth, but you will receive a shower of blessings unique to each of you. In the end, the almighty God will write your testimony. It is so good to be faithful.

Pray that today's baptism is the beginning of a life time blessing to the baptized, the family and the congregation. Amen.