

Moses: the Epic Failure

Psalm 90

The Psalms (no. 21 in the series)

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Peter Hiett

Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/moses-the-epic-failure/>

Transcript document prepared by: Heather Eades (eades.heather@gmail.com)

This document was prepared by Heather Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Heather know. Thank you!

Prayer

Lord God, you know that we each come here this morning with fear and shame. You know it makes us insulate our hearts and throw up a blockade to protect us from your Word. So, Lord God, we offer to you now our fears and our shame. (In fact, when I said those words, you probably thought of something. So put it in a jar, hand it to Jesus, and say, "Lord, I'd like to hear your Word." His Word is good.) Father, it's in Jesus name we pray these things. Amen.

Message

"A Prayer of Moses, The Man of God."

That's the title of Psalm 90, and why I wanted to preach on this Psalm.

I wonder what Moses would pray?

What do you think Moses would pray?

For the last fifteen years I've been rather fascinated with Moses—I kind of feel an affinity with Moses.

Video clip: *The Ten Commandments*
Paramount Pictures (1956)

Moses stands before the crowds holding the stone tablet.

Moses (Charlton Heston) "Blasphemers, idolaters—For this you shall drink bitter waters.
God has (set) before you this day his laws of life and good and death and Evil.
Those who will not live by the law, shall die by the law!"

The golden calf is destroyed and scene ends in rubble and destruction.

I feel an affinity with Moses, but not so much that Moses, but this Moses:

Video clip: <i>History of the World: Part 1</i> Twentieth Century Fox (1981)	
Narrator	Moses went to the mountain and God spoke unto him.
God	Moses, this is the Lord thy God, commanding you to obey my law! Do you hear me?
Moses (Mel Brooks)	Yes, I hear you, I hear you! A deaf man could hear you.
God	What?
Moses	Nothing. Forget it. Oh, Lord. Why have you chosen me? What would you have me do for you?
God	I shall give you my laws...and you shall take them unto the people.
Moses	Yes, Lord!
<i>[thunder]</i>	
Moses	Wow!
<i>Moses exits then briefly returns carrying the stone tablets.</i>	
Moses	Lord, I shall give these laws unto thy people.
(to the people)	Hear me! Oh, hear me! All pay heed! The Lord, the Lord Jehovah, has given unto you these 15—
<i>(drops a tablet and it breaks)</i>	
Moses (continuing)	Oy! -10! 10 commandments for all to obey!

I think I feel an affinity with Moses, because Moses was an epic failure. For some reason we seem to forget that, and always rewrite the story so that Moses looks like Charlton Heston with a great tan.

But Scripture says that he was the meekest man that ever lived... [Num. 12:3]
The word is also translated, "humble, needy, and poor." So, if Moses wrote that, I doubt he was bragging, and I bet he wrote it after he was dethroned as a prince of Egypt.

He was meek, and he was an epic failure.
I realize people define failure in different ways, but I mean failure the way most folks mean failure: he didn't do what he set out to do.... a failure-- and not just "failure", but "*epic* failure."

See, I don't think you can be an epic failure unless you've been given the tools to be an epic success, and probably achieved some success, or what appears to be success... and that would be Moses. He was given such powerful gifts, and tools, that if anyone should've succeeded, Moses should've succeeded... and he did not.

He saw the good, and wanted to achieve the good... and failed.
He saw freedom, and wanted to set the people free... and did not.
He did not do what he set out to do.
And if that description seems wrong to you... let me remind you of his story:

Moses was born into a Hebrew family of slaves, in Egypt, where the Israelites had been in exile, and now bondage, for four hundred years. Because the Israelites had grown so numerous, Pharaoh ordered that all their male infants be slaughtered. Moses' mother hid him in a basket in the reeds along the Nile, where he was found by Pharaoh's daughter... who gave him his name. It means "drawn out of water"—kind of like when a person is baptized.

Well, Moses' big sister sees all of this, and suggests to Pharaoh's daughter that one of the Hebrew women might nurse the baby. And so, Moses is raised in Pharaoh's house as a Prince, and yet nursed and raised by a slave—his mother, who must've revealed to him his true identity.

He's an Israelite, raised as an Egyptian prince—that's a miracle. I mean if anyone is destined to set God's people free, it's Moses, right?

One day, as a young man—or really a middle-aged man—Moses sees an Egyptian beating an Israelite, and in an apparent fit of anger, Moses strikes down the Egyptian. But the Israelites don't trust Moses, and Pharaoh is told what happened. And so, Moses flees to the wilderness, to save his life.

You may remember that Soren Kierkegaard talked about the three spheres, or stages, of existence:

- The first he called the “aesthetic sphere”—that's when a person is ruled by their passions. Moved by his passions, Moses tries to save Israel and failed.
- The second sphere is called the “ethical sphere”—that's when a person is ruled by their conscience, that is their “knowledge of Good and evil,” the Law.

Well for the next 40 years Moses herds sheep in the wilderness for his Bedouin father-in-law, married to his Bedouin bride, whom he met at a well in the desert. He herds sheep—in the middle of nowhere—until he meets a bush....

The Angel of Yahweh, and Word of God, appears to him in a fire, in a bush on a mountain.... And God says “Moses” (God knows his name).

“Moses, I've seen the affliction of my people... and I've come down to save them and bring them into a promised land...

And now I'm sending you to bring them out of bondage and into this land.”ⁱ

If Moses had a prayer, I think it would be “*What the hell?*”

- “*We've been slaves 400 years... and now you show up in a bush in the desert.*”
- “*I was the 40 year-old prince of Egypt, in my prime, and I gave it a shot...*”
- “*I could've used a little help by the way...*”
- “*I was the frickin' Prince of Egypt in my prime, but now I'm an 80-year old fugitive shepherd with a speech impediment resigned to failure... AND NOW you send me to set your people free... What the hell?*”

Now Moses doesn't say that, but he did say something similar.

And God says, “Moses, I'll be with you...”

And, “Moses, check out what I can do with that stick in your hand—that staff.”

And, “Moses, we'll get your brother to help.”

So, Moses heads to Egypt.

(On the way—by the way—God tries to kill him, until Moses' wife circumcises their son...ⁱⁱ

We now know that circumcision is sign of the Covenant of Grace, which contains the covenant of law, but Moses didn't know that at the time. He must've prayed or muttered, “*What the heck? You call me and then try to kill me?*”)

Once in Egypt, Moses threatens Pharaoh with the ten plagues.

The plagues are utterly spectacular and most of them, maybe all of them happen through Moses' staff that he had on the mountain—blood, frogs, gnats, flies, sickness, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness.

Each time Pharaoh doesn't let the people go, for each time God hardens Pharaoh's heart, just as he told Moses that he would.

Moses must've at least thought:

- *"What the Heck?"*
- *"Why'd you send me?"*
- *"Why the hard hearts?"*
- *"Why these freaky plagues... and why this last plague?"*

The last plague is the death of the first born.

Of course, Israel is saved by the blood of the lamb... The Passover lamb....

And so, the Angel of Death passes over the Israelites but visits the Egyptians.

The Israelites escape with the riches of Egypt, led by a pillar of fire and smoke... a pillar that leads them to the edge of the Red Sea, where they're trapped, because Pharaoh had changed his mind...

With that amazing staff, Moses parts the Red Sea.

The Israelites pass through, and are drawn out of the sea, like Moses was drawn out of the river—they're baptized.

Once through, the sea rushes back in on the Egyptians and kills them all.

Some say that Moses' first attempt to free some Israelites failed, because Moses struck down an Egyptian...but God struck down a few Egyptians too, didn't he?

Come to think of it doesn't God kill everyone—or if not technically "kill them," does He not arrange for everyone's death?

People get so stressed that God might smite someone.

It seems to me that God smites everyone... or arranges for all to be smitten by something or someone.

Well, I'm not saying that Moses didn't fail for striking down the Egyptian...I'm just saying that it might not have been for simply striking down the Egyptian that Moses failed.

Well anyway, ten amazing plagues, a pillar of fire and smoke, a sea that splits in two... and surely Moses, must be thinking:

"Wow... but why did God need me? What the Heck?"

"Whatever the case I'm glad it's over."

You see, Moses is now heading back toward Midian, where he had herded sheep, and he must have known that it's no more than a hop, skip, and a jump to Israel—just look at a map... it shouldn't have taken more than a couple weeks.

But they're taking a strange route, and soon people start to complain.

God does some cool miracles, including bread that rains down from heaven....

But soon they run out of water, and begin to complain, and so Moses complains to God that they're complaining to him.

So in Exodus 17:6 God says: “Take... the staff, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock...”

In Hebrew, the word translated “strike,” is the same word that’s used to describe what Moses did to the Egyptian. It’s more commonly translated “smite, slay, kill slaughter, or even scourge.” So, God says, “Moses, you shall [smite] the rock, and water shall come out of it and the people will drink.”

Moses slaughters the rock, and everyone drinks. Moses then goes up on the mountain, and God gives Moses the law.ⁱⁱⁱ

Charlton Heston Moses says, “God sets before you, life and good and death and evil.” He’s quoting Deuteronomy 30:15. You see the law is “the knowledge of Good and Evil.”

But then Charlton Heston Moses says something that’s not in the Bible:
“Those who will not live by the law, will die by the law.”

It’s true that we will die by the law....
 (“The day you eat of it you will die,” says God... and we’ve already eaten.)
It’s true that we will die by the law.
But it’s a lie—in fact the very lie of the snake—to suggest that taking the law, the “knowledge of Good and Evil,” will make us live.

Well as you know, (because you saw the movie), Moses gets the law, Israel has already broken the law, and then, Moses breaks the stone law.
Then a bunch of folks get sucked down into Sheol... (also translated “Hell.”)
What the Hell?

Those that survive soon make it right to the edge of the Promised Land... (a place named *Kadesh*, which means “holy.”)
They send 12 spies into the land, but all but two are too terrified to enter. So, God sentences them to wander in the wilderness for forty years, until every adult in that generation is dead, except Joshua and Caleb. --“Joshua and Caleb,” whose names should be translated, “Jesus and dog”. “Joshua” and “Jesus” are the same name, in two different languages, and “Caleb” means “dog”).

Well after forty years of wandering and dying, the next generation comes back to Kadesh, and the new generation starts complaining about water.

In Numbers 20:8, God tells Moses to take the staff and speak to “the Rock.”

Now this is wild, but this rock, appears to be no ordinary rock.
This is the fourth time the term “the rock” appears in the Bible:

- Moses strikes the Rock.
- Moses stands on the Rock.
- Moses hides in the cleft of the Rock from the glory of God.
- And now Moses is told to speak to the Rock.

This seems fanciful to us, but in Jesus’ day, folks believed that this Rock followed the Israelites on their journey throughout the wilderness, like a mobile fountain of fresh water, like a spring of living water... that’s what they believed.

According to 1st Corinthians 10:4, that's what St. Paul believed—he called it “the spiritual rock that followed them.”

Well God says, “Moses, take the staff... and tell the Rock, before their eyes, to yield it's water.”^{iv}

So, Moses gathers everyone and says, “Listen you rebels--”

See: The most humble man on the face of the earth, is losing his cool and blaming his brothers, even though everything is grace. ...Just a little ego, and we resent God and our neighbors...

“Listen you rebels, shall we (Aaron & I) bring water for you out of this rock?”^v

See: God said, “the Rock will give,” and Moses said, “I will take. I will get water from the rock and give it to you sinners.”

And then Moses *struck, smote, slaughtered or scourged* the Rock twice.

He used that staff—the power God had given him—to basically crucify this Rock-- and the water still came out of the Rock... like a river....

And it was then that God said, “Moses... you will not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.”^{vi}

God tells Moses that he will die because he broke faith at the waters of “*Meribah-Kadesh*,” translated “contend and holy”.^{vii} It means something like “the place you contended with God and he showed himself holy.”

It reminds me of Mt. Calvary, where we contended with God, he showed himself holy, and then, bled a river of eternal life—the water of life.

1 Corinthians 10:4 · “...they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.”

Well, the next year, God tells Moses (120 years old) to climb mount Nebo, just east of the Jordan river, so he can look across and see the promised land... and die... and be “gathered to his people” ... in Sheol.

Deut. 34:4 · “and the Lord said to him, ‘this is the land... I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you do not pass over.’ So, Moses, the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab.”^{viii}
On that mountain.

That's got to be one of the saddest verses in all of the Bible.
And that's why I used the term “epic failure.”

Well if Moses, the Man of God, humblest man on the face of the earth, still had a little pride, such that he lost his temper, struck a rock, and still turns out to be an epic failure... maybe I'm an epic failure too.

If Moses, the Servant of God, with the most awesome super-powers in just his shepherd's stick, couldn't set the people free... maybe I can't set me free.

Prophetically I've been called to free people on at least two occasions.

I've had my ducks in order, seen miracles, and felt sure that this was the moment when the gospel would break through...

And yet at that very moment, I've seen everything miraculously fall apart.

And then found myself leading a group of people through the wilderness, who would like to know where we're going and what's the plan, and I don't know.

Maybe I'm an epic failure... maybe we're all epic failures.

I mean we find ourselves imprisoned in this world with so much hope for freedom—freedom to love and be loved.

So, we go to school to gain knowledge so we can be free to do the good and build a life... and then we watch *everything* slowly die.

We make covenants and even get married to ensure love and produce life... and then we watch *everyone* die.

It's the same story for all the children of Adam:

You may have only one bad friend *or* you may have a long happy marriage, but you will taste the Good, and then it will all die. You may do a little good, like feed your cat *or* you may do what some think is a much greater good, like build a city... but you will still taste the good and watch it die—the work of your hands, will turn to dust.

You know it wasn't just Moses that didn't enter; it was also all those Israelites.

And even the children of the Israelites that did enter, didn't occupy, and were exiled at least twice, and were never actually at home.

So anyway, If Moses said a prayer, what would it be?

Psalm 90

A Prayer of Moses, The Man of God.

- 1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place—our home—
in all generations.**

Now that's a rather surprising statement from someone who spent his entire life trying to get himself, and his people, to a dwelling place. If the Lord is his dwelling place... that means the dwelling place was travelling with him; the Promised Land was with him....

- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**
- 3 You return man to dust
and say, "Return, O children of man [Adam]!"**
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight
are but as yesterday when it is past,
or as a watch in the night.**

That means your entire life is just a day... I think this entire eon is just a day, the sixth day on the edge of an eternal 7th.

- 5 You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream...**

When we preached through the Revelation, we noticed that our life in this world is often referred to as a dream, from which we are to wake up.

It's a bad dream induced by a snake in a garden, who has convinced us that we must create, save, and redeem ourselves...

We all assume that we create ourselves, but we can only create false selves, like a bad dream.

- 5 **You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream,
 like grass that is renewed in the morning:**
6 **in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
 in the evening it fades and withers.**
7 **For we are brought to an end by your anger;**

In Scripture it becomes abundantly clear that God predestines his anger.

In other words, his anger is not a *reaction* to our decisions.

His anger is a means used to create our decisions.

His anger is a function of his love, for He is Love.

We are brought to an end—Jesus is the end—by your anger.

We are brought to an end—brought to Jesus—by your anger.

By your wrath we are dismayed.

- 8 **You have set our iniquities before you,
 our secret sins in the light of your presence** [literally: your face].
9 **For all our days pass away under your wrath;** (which must also be “his face”);
 we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

What is a sigh?

To “sigh” is to literally, surrender your spirit, your breath, your *neshawmah*.

Jesus was the first man to willingly surrender his breath, his Spirit, the Life, to God... He did it on a tree in the garden on Mt. Calvary.

And why is God mad at the children of Adam?

Well, we all take Life and think we make life... we take Good and think we make good—that was the sin in the garden.

We breathe in, and hold the breath, as if it were our own—so, even as we live, we’ve already died... to live, you must constantly lose your breath and find it.

- 10 **The years of our life are seventy,
 or even by reason of strength eighty;
 yet their span is but toil and trouble;
 they are soon gone, and we fly away, *fly away***
11 **Who considers the power of your anger,
 and your wrath according to the fear of you?**
12 **So teach us to number our days
 that we may get a heart of wisdom.**

When we preached through Ecclesiastes, we discovered that Jesus is Wisdom.

Paul tells us “*He is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*”^{ix}

- 12 **So teach us to number our days
 that we may get a heart of wisdom.**
13 **Return, O Lord! How long?
 Have pity on your servants!**

- 14 Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.**

What morning is Moses talking about? ... Maybe the morning of the endless 7th day, that is God's presence and our dwelling place.^x

And by "all our days," Moses must mean all these days that pass under his wrath

...as if he thought it was possible to dwell in the promised land, even as we still journey to the promised land.

...as if, even now, we could hide in the cleft of the Rock.

- 15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,**

Moses talks as if God foresaw and even planned his epic failure!

And, you know, it seems that Moses didn't even complain the day he died.

Read the account—it's almost as if he thinks everything is going according to plan.

He didn't pray "*What the hell?*" He just surrendered to the King of Heaven.

- 15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
and for as many years as we have seen evil.**

- 16 Let your work be shown to your servants,
and your glorious power to their children.**

- 17 Let the favor [*no'am*: "grace, beauty"^{xi}] of the Lord our God be upon us,
and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!^{xii}**

Moses prays, "Establish the work of our hands."

The work of Moses' hands, was the salvation of Israel, and Moses.

Moses or, at least, the false Moses is the work of Moses' hands.

Are you the work of your own hands?

Moses: the epic failure prays, "Establish the work of our hands."

So, does God answer Moses' prayer?

Fast forward about 1500 years, which in God's reality is less than a day.

And this happens, (We read about it in three of the Gospels and 2nd Peter):

Now about eight days after these sayings...

[Jesus told them that they were going on a journey to Jerusalem and that they must lose their life to find it... "about 8 days after that," says Luke. Mark and Matthew say, "after 6," which would be 7.

See? I think they're all referring to the endless 7th day, that the Jews referred to as the 8th day, Easter Sunday, God's promised rest.]

Now about eight days after these sayings, [Jesus] took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered.... He was transfigured (*metamorphoo* – It's where we get the word "metamorphosis".) He metamorphosed and his face shone like the sun... and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory [they were glorious too] and spoke of his departure [*exodos*: exodus], which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem... And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents [tabernacles], one for you and one

for Moses and one for Elijah.” For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified... He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”^{xiii}

Understand what’s happening?

Moses is standing on a mountain speaking to the Rock;
He’s speaking to Joshua, *yeshua*, that is, Jesus;
He’s speaking to the Angel of Yahweh, who appears in the flame;
He’s speaking to the Burning Bush on the Mountain of God;
He’s speaking to the Glory of God and He shares the Glory of God.

He is appearing in Glory—so much Glory, that Peter, terrified and unable to stand, offers to build him a tabernacle, that is a temple. Moses *not only reflects* the Glory, as he did in the Old Testament after he’d met with God in the Tabernacle...Moses *now radiates* the Glory, for he is the Tabernacle, the Eternal Dwelling Place of the Living God.

Moses has been *metamorphosed* and become “like Christ.”^{xiv}

He now stands in the 8th day, chatting with *Yeshua* about his journey—

His journey through time, and his exodus from time into eternity, at the end of the 6th day of creation, 6th day of the week and 6th hour of the day.

And now if you didn’t quite get all of that, just get this:

Moses, the epic failure, is standing on the Mountain with God in the Promised Land.

So, did God establish the work of Moses’ hands?

You know most American Christians have been taught that Moses, and all Israel, who failed to enter God’s Rest 3500 years ago, are now suffering endless conscious torment in Hell. But Scripture is clear that Moses was seen with Jesus, in the Promised Land, no longer empty of substance, but full of the Glory of God.

And Scripture is clear, that God will raise the “dry bones” of “the whole house of Israel” and bring them all into the Land.^{xv}

Matthew even states that when Jesus died, the tombs were opened, and saints entered the city.^{xvi}

Paul makes it abundantly clear in Romans “In this way all Israel will be saved...”

But not only all Israel, but all humanity that is grafted into Israel, fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham that through his seed all the peoples of the earth would be blessed.^{xvii}

So, did God establish the work of Moses’ hands? Yes, Yes, Yes!!! *HELL*, YES.

He established the work of Moses’ hands, and he established Moses; for Moses is not merely the work of his own hands. He is God’s handiwork.^{xviii}

Moses: The Epic Failure, is God’s Unmitigated Success.

And You: The Epic Failure are also God’s Unmitigated and Eternal Success.

And once you begin to see that, it will entirely change the way you travel.

You will know that you are created, saved and redeemed by Grace through faith... and find that the Promised Land is travelling with you.

Indeed, the Sanctuary of the Living God is in the temple of your heart.

You will enter God’s rest, for you will discover that God’s Rest has entered you.

Soren Kierkegaard called this “the third sphere,” or stage, of existence:

In the first you try to save yourself with your passions... that is, you see that the fruit is “good to eat and a delight to the eyes,” so you take it, eat it, and everything dies.

In the second stage you try to save yourself with good works... that is, you see that the fruit is good “to make one wise,” so you take it and apply it like fig leaves; you live by the law... and everything dies.^{xix}

In the third sphere you know that you are saved by grace through faith... that is, you know that the fruit on the tree is Jesus, and he is your bridegroom, and he gives himself to you, for you are his dwelling place, his bride, pregnant with his life—the fruit of his Spirit, His Life in you.

You enter God’s rest, because God’s rest has entered you. We’ll talk about that more next week when we read Psalm 95.

But for now, just take a shot at believing the Gospel:

Our epic failure has become, and is now revealed to be, God’s Eternal Success.

“Where sin increased, Grace abounded all the more.”^{xx}

So, if you feel like a failure, perhaps everything is going according to plan.

For our epic failure is the revelation of God’s unmitigated and eternal success.

You are God’s unmitigated and eternal success.

So, why the journey? Why the failure? Why even try not to fail?

Well, you can’t fail unless you try... to not fail.

You won’t know God’s unmitigated and eternal success, if you don’t know your own failure.

If you fail to fail, you’re just stuck here, alone in your empty illusions.

So, perhaps, God has arranged things so that you will see the good, try to consume the good, and try to make yourself good... and fail.

So, that you will know, you can’t make yourself good, for the Good has made you yourself... your true self.

So, that you will know, you can’t justify yourself, for you have always been justified.

So, that you will know, you can’t save yourself, for God is the savior of all.

So, that you will know, you cannot create yourself, you have been created, by God with the Word of God and so radiate the Glory of God.

To say it another way:

You cannot bear the weight of your own glory, which is God’s Glory in you, unless you know that the Glory is an absolute gift.

Moses cannot stand with Jesus on the mountain in the Promised Land, if Moses is not entirely humble and utterly lacking in human ego.

In other words, you cannot love, until you see that you’ve been loved, and you did not make that love; Love made you. God is Love.

In 2nd Corinthians 3 through 4, Paul talks about Moses, us, and glory, then writes, “these slight momentary afflictions—humiliations—prepare us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all compare.”

We cannot bear the weight of our own glory, if we think that glory is in anyway dependent on us.
And to think that it is, is evil.

The journey is designed that we would come to know the evil and forever choose the Good, for the Good has chosen you for no merit of your own.
You are entirely God's success.

You are not your failure.
You are God's unmitigated and eternal success... in whom he is well pleased.

When we know that, because we've been known by that, we are transformed—*metamorpoo*—metamorphosed.

Every little child falls, the day that they become aware of their own beauty and so try to bear the weight of that beauty; they try to justify their own existence, and stop dancing, because they know their Father is watching.

We're saved, when we see that we are not the source of our own glory; we cannot bear the weight of that Glory, we can only be that Glory.

It's then that we dance with freedom and joy before the face of our Father—*metamorphosed*.



The last time I spoke with my Mom was a Wednesday about 8 weeks ago...
We spoke on the phone, and she kept saying, "Peter I don't know what to do, I don't know what to do, I don't know what to do."

Over and over, Scripture tells us that God does everything that's anything...
Isaiah 26:12 *O Lord... you have indeed done for us all our works.*
Even if our works are "nothing," perhaps God makes them something.
He fill them with meaning—His Word is the meaning.
He establishes the work of our hands... "Good works which God prepared beforehand that we would walk in them."^{xxi}

"I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do..."
Finally, I said—fully knowing what I was saying—I said, "Mom, you don't have to do anything." And then we prayed.

Two days later, after she spent the afternoon with my sister...the nurses came into turn her around at 10:30 in the evening. As they did, she looked up, and said, "I'm a butterfly, and I'm going to fly away." And then she sighed... and flew away....

That means so much to me, because I know that my mom so often wanted to be, what she couldn't seem to make herself be....

In the words of Paul, she couldn't seem "to do, what she wanted to do..."^{xxii}

But now she is what she always wanted to be...

And she does exactly what she wants to do... she's free.

And yet, even in this caterpillar of a world, when my Mom believed that she was loved—she would just radiate love.

When she believed that there was nothing for her to do, she would do, what was absolutely glorious... and free.

Even in this caterpillar of a world, when we believe the Gospel, our epic failure is already revealed to be God's unmitigated and eternal success.

So, Children of Israel, are you thirsty... for freedom?

There's the Rock.

I think we already smote it... Let's speak to it.

Do you feel like a failure? Well, tell him...

This is how you would say it in theological language:

Say, "Lord, I can't justify me... Please be my justification... Establish the work of our hands."

Communion

And so, he broke the bread saying,

Take and eat this in my body broken for you.

And he took the cup saying,

This is the covenant in my blood. Drink of it, all of you.

Benediction

Do you love your Mom, your Dad?

Or, if you were orphaned or abused, the person that took care of you when you were two?

Even if it's complicated and mixed, do you love them?

Do you know why you love them?

Because they loved you when you were an epic failure.

Every two-year old is an epic failure...

And yet, they are worth your entire world and you would gladly die for them.

Do you know the most dangerous thing for them?

It's thinking that they're grown up.

For then they stop to learn.

And so, you may get angry at them—even if, you go in the next room and laugh.

You get angry cause you don't want them to be stuck.

I think maybe our biggest problem is that we think we're already grown up.
Paul writes, "Be transformed (*metamorphoo*) by the renewing of your mind.

1 John 3:1 · Behold what manner of Love the Father has given unto us, that we should be called the little children of God... and that's not just what we're called, that's who we really are... what we shall be has not yet appeared, but we know that we will be like him.^{xxiii}

1 John 3:2 "We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared....

See, what ability do you have to judge yourself a failure or a success? You don't even know who you are....

"We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears we will be like him, for we will see him as he is."

You see? You will stand on the Mountain with Moses, Elijah, and Jesus.

So Believe the Gospel and it will entirely change the way you travel.

Endnotes

ⁱ Exodus 3, my paraphrase.

ⁱⁱ Exodus 4:24-26 (The Bible is AWESOME!)

ⁱⁱⁱ It only makes sense that Moses slaughters the Rock that bleeds living water, the Rock that we now know is Christ, and then God gives him the law written on stone.
He slaughters the living Good, and gets the dead description of Good, written on a stone... much like the human heart.

^{iv} Numbers 20:8

^v Numbers 20:10

^{vi} Numbers 20:12

^{vii} Numbers 27:14, Deut. 32:15

^{viii} My translation, based on the Hebrew and YLT

^{ix} 1 Corinthians 1:30 RSV

^x Remember that the inner Sanctuary of the tabernacle and temple was the presence of the coming age, the eternal 7th day (that comes at the end of the 6th Day, a good Friday), and is pictured by an 8th Day (that in Hebrew thought was an eternal 7th Day and in Christian thought is Easter Sunday, the 8th and 1st, the beginning and the end, the presence of the Eternal)

^{xi} This is such a fascinating word. The definition from Strong's Concordance is as follows. Pay attention to the last entry and remember that the Lord is our husband.

"*no'am*... Seven occurrences; [Authorized Version (KJV)] translates as "beauty" four times, "pleasant" twice, and "pleasantness" once. 1 kindness, pleasantness, delightfulness, beauty, favour. 1a delightfulness. 1b symbolic name of one of two staves. 1c pleasantness (of genitals)."

Perhaps, God establishes the work of our hands as the husband establishes the labor of his Bride's womb. In other words every good deed is the fruit of the Spirit.

xii Isaiah 26:12 *O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works.*

xiii This is a combination of Luke 9:28-35, Mark 9:2-7, and Matthew 17:1-5 (all ESV)

xiv 1 John 3:2 *"Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."*

xv Ezekiel 37:11

xvi Matthew 27:52

xvii Romans 11, Genesis 12:3

xviii Ephesians 2:10

xix Genesis 3:6

xx Romans 5:20

xxi Ephesians 2:10

xxii Romans 7:15