# Moses Begins To Serve     Exodus 4:18-31

Moses had reached the end of his efforts to defer, deflect, and delay—it was time to respond to the call of God and begin his service. In Exodus 4:18–31, we learn three valuable lessons about how to serve the Lord.

## 1) Make A Start (v18–20)

Our passage begins with a simple statement: *"So Moses went."*

He made a start! Though he had spent a long time deferring and deflecting, Moses finally acted—and he never looked back. So many never take that first step. They claim to follow Christ but continually delay their service—whether because of fear, feelings of inadequacy, time pressure, or concern about others' opinions. But remember: you never reach your destination in 100% of the journeys you never start. The same applies to serving the Lord.

How many opportunities are lost forever because we never begin?

Moses made a start, and so should we. He did so by: respecting others and fulfilling his filial responsibilities (v18); trusting God's care and timing (v19); decisively leaving Midian and heading to Egypt (v20a); clinging to God's promises and trusting in His power (v20b).

Jesus is the perfect example of this kind of decisive start. In his humanity, he rested in the sovereign care of his heavenly Father (Matthew 2:19–21), honoured his family responsibilities (Luke 2:49–52), made decisive steps in service (Luke 4:20-22), and trusted fully in the power of the Spirit to guide him according to Scripture (Luke 4:1-4).

So, follow Moses' example, in the power of the Spirit of Jesus, and make a start in your service of the Lord. Ask yourself: what keeps you from serving? Fear? Doubt? Delay? Don't bury your talent – your opportunity of service – in the ground (which leads to being cast into outer darkness, Matthew 25:30). Just turn up and make a start.

## 2) Remember: It's All About God (v21–23)

The moment we forget that service is all about God is the moment we begin to falter.

Moses is reminded of this clearly: he would do wonders by God's power, not his own (v21a); Pharaoh's heart would be hardened for God's purposes and glory (v21b), remembering that the heart of the king is always in God's hands (Proverbs 21:1); Israel's identity as God's son was by adoption and electing grace, not merit or inherent worth (v22 with Deut. 7:7-8); the Exodus is about God: He is the author, director, and star of the story; the ultimate purpose of deliverance is the worship of God (v23a); final judgment is in God's hands (v23b), not ours. If we forget any of these things, we will soon give up on our service of the Lord.

Jesus, too, served in complete dependence on the Father. He performed miracles by the Spirit's power (Luke 4:18); trusted the Father's sovereign will, even in the betrayal by Judas, knowing that the hearts of men were fickle and God alone was faithful (John 2:24–25); though Son by right (unlike Israel), he served in humility (Philippians 2:5–11); and left all judgment in the hands of the Father, even when he was crucified (1 Peter 2:21–23).

Like Moses, and like Jesus, we must serve with the understanding that it is not about what we can do for God, but what God can do through us—for His glory and our good.

### 3) Commit to Full Obedience (v24–31)

The passage reaches a dramatic turning point in v24–26. While many details remain unclear—what precisely happened in God's confrontation of Moses, what Zipporah's role or attitude was (positive or negative)—the central lesson is this: if we are to serve the Lord effectively, we must commit to full obedience from the start.

Moses had failed to obey God's clear command regarding circumcision (Genesis 17:9–11). How could he speak God's laws if he wasn't obedient to those laws himself? God's intervention may seem harsh, but it was a mercy. He stopped Moses in his tracks to ensure that his service would not be undermined by disobedience.

Zipporah's decisive action allowed Moses to be restored. This episode reminds us: God may discipline and chastise us to protect us from fruitless service (Hebrews 12:5–11); we are often dependent on others (like Zipporah) when we're too weak to act ourselves; God's service requires covenant faithfulness—ultimately fulfilled not by circumcision, but by faith in Christ, who shed his blood for us.

Once through this crisis, Moses moved forward in full obedience, doing all that God had commanded him at the burning bush and seeing God at work through that obedience. God had told him to meet Aaron, and he did (v27). God had told him to speak to Aaron and do the signs, and he did (v28). God had told him to gather the elders of Israel, speak to them and do the signs before them, and he did (v29-30). God had promised that they would believe, and they did (v31). God had assured him that the purpose of everything was the worship and honour of the Lord, and he sees that immediately (v31b).

This is the fruit of obedient service.

In Christ, we see such service rendered most perfectly. He was stopped in his tracks in Luke 4:1-13, not because he had disobeyed, but to test his obedience, and it was perfect from the beginning. Through such obedience, he proved himself to be the only perfect law-keeper in all humanity, the only covenant-keeper amongst all those who are rightly called human. Christ began his service perfectly, keeping covenant, obeying the Father in all things. His obedience enables ours. Through his faithfulness and shed blood, we are brought into covenant and called into service.

### So, what about you?

Have you made a start in your service, or are you still delaying? Have you forgotten that it's all about God and slipped into self-reliance or discouragement? Have you fallen into disobedience, perhaps at the very outset, and now feel stuck?

Come to the perfect servant, Jesus Christ. Be cleansed, be renewed, and be restored. He is greater than Moses. His blood is of far greater value than that shed by Zipporah, and it opens the way for millions to serve faithfully, not just one man. Will *you* come to Christ, be cleansed in that precious blood and begin to serve, either for the first time, or all over again?

Let this be the day you just turn up.