



### ***Ever Landed In What Feels And Looks Like The Penalty Box?***

*"..he [Pharaoh] gave orders to have Moses arrested and killed. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and escaped to the land of Midian. When Moses arrived in Midian, he sat down beside a well. Now it happened that the priest of Midian had seven daughters who came regularly to this well to draw water and fill the water troughs for their father's flocks... 'Go and invite him home for a meal!' Moses was happy to accept the invitation, and he settled down to live with them. In time, Reuel gave Moses one of his daughters, Zipporah, to be his wife." ~Exodus 2:15, 20-21*

**Interesting, the turns life can take huh.**

Do you feel stuck? Have you ever been divorced, or maybe gone AWOL, or been kicked out of school, or been written up and put on probation at work, or worse yet..... fired?

Are you incarcerated behind bars and feel totally forgotten? Please know that you are not.

Do friends talk about you being on the shelf, Christian? Is your existence kinda like a bone-dry desert or more like a gushing oasis satisfying the thirst of others? Do you currently feel locked away in the penalty box of life? How can you know for sure that you really are?

If Moses was here, man, I know He could relate to you! Jesus too. Christ never did any wrong but He too had his periods of waiting in submission to the Father's plan. He's had his own desert experience.

His cous, John the baptizer, even lived in the desert.

Hey there, let's talk about it. So what do you remember of Moses and his special training out there on the backside of the desert? Why was he there?

It was because of manslaughter that Mo found himself in what appeared to be a major penalty box. And it appeared to be no one overnight cushy slumber party out there. God had some things for him to learn.

**But how did the Lord work in that situation?**

For one thing, it sure seemed like God took His sweet time in grooming Moses to become His key man to lead the Hebrew children out of the Land of Egyptian oppression. I could never be anything like Mo.. can you even imagine how that accompanying bondage was? I'm sure it was the kind that makes a person want to earnestly cry out until the Lord would raise up a deliver of some sort ([2:23](#)).

I'm sure you've already heard how Egypt in the Bible is a type of the world? And I'm sure you also know that God wants to use you to help people in the world ..and lead people to faith in His Son and out of the darkness of this world's system? Sure, that's our calling—the duty of every blood bought child of God!

Yup, it didn't take like one whole day, one whole week, one whole month or even one whole year to prep Mo—God did His work in his life over 40 long years.

Was it due to the feelings of shame, condemnation, and reproach? Man, I just wonder if Mo ever felt like a worthless, hopeless wooden-like vessel of dishonor that was placed upon a dusty lonely shelf in a dark corner. Did he feel like an athlete who would never get off the bench to actually go play? Perhaps you have felt like that at times? Do you ever see well-paid secret abusers, hypocrite-leaders or puffed up Christians regularly get sent off on expensive missions trips etc that say their relatives fund and then start to wonder about the inequities of this life? Hey if you can rightly do something to protect others do it, but don't worry about what people like that enjoy now. You keep your eyes on and follow Jesus! Who knows if their works will endure the fires ahead or will turn into wood, hay and stubble ash? Keep showing all people grace wisely.

Do you ever feel too old or un-gifted to serve the Lord? Think about Moses' age. He spent the first 40 years of his life somehow learning that he was somebody, the next 40 years learning that he was nobody, and then the next 40 years learning what the Lord can do with a nobody, who is fully submitted to a God who delights to make a real somebody out of a nobody who is in close relationship with Himself. Moses was like young at 80 (yeah, young in the light of eternity) when he started his POWERFUL supernatural ministry. And what were some of the things that He learned?

**Well, he learned...**

- 1.) **Servanthood** – he drew water for others who were thirsty (2:17), he was regularly tending the flock like a shepherd,
- 2.) Alien and parental existence – Mo learned how to be a stranger in a foreign land and even a father figure after he received a son that he named, Gershom (2:22).
- 3.) **To hear the voice of the Lord** ..which is always very important for any shepherd (3:4). Until you've heard the voice of the Lord (probably non-audible), you really have no ministry at all.
- 4.) **The lesson of obedience.** Take another look at Mo standing there on the holy ground just flappin' his gums and arguing away with God about his inability to communicate (4:10). Actually Mo was using five excuses about why he didn't want to go back there. No, no, he didn't wanna go (4:13)! You'd kinda think that after all that time, he'd be a little bit eager to return and help his kinfolk out by now huh.
- 5.) **Vertical trust** – it had been many days since that Egyptian died—yup, 40 years—but the Lord fed Moses and his family. God met all his needs even when things looked monotonous, unchanging and even hopeless. Moses learned that just a little bit of trust and obedience in faith would bring a whole lot of supernatural blessing (4:7), and that when God blessed him, God also had others in mind (4:29).

What a great movie this would make if they could just get all the special effects right! I just love how God patiently reasoned with Mo saying, **"Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?' So He said, 'I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain"** (Ex. 3:10-12, nkjv).

It was so great to see how God addressed all those lame gods that the Egyptains were trusting in too (i.e., frogs, flies etc). Mighty God was no match for all the magicians!

News flash for you: If you've gotten where you are by doing wrong worshipping the wrong things, then simply repent, receive the forgiveness of Jesus, forgive yourself and become the Lord's disciple.

If you haven't gotten where you are by sin, then reject all the false condemnation, accusations and shame that others have tried to heap on top of you and fulfill your calling.. but not in your own strength!

I'm not really sure about your experience, but maybe you've somehow gotten yourself entangled in a politically toxic and volatile situation. Perhaps it came from that small-family-business kind of dynasty, or perhaps from a well coordinated power play in a big corporation.. or from an ugly church fray where somehow you found yourself a target of sorts for some religious leaders. Maybe you did your very best to avoid all fights and maneuvering but you were simply getting paid too much during a new economic downturn.

Did they slander you publicly and paint you as "evil" multiple times before your friends? Did you do well for quite a long while and then suddenly have all you could handle to find yourself reacting in the flesh ...only to find more vicious fingers of accusation pointing in your direction? Do you now "feel like" you've landed in the dreaded "penalty box" ..a place of pure long-term punishment? WHEN WILL THE LORD LET ME OUTTA HERE?

***"I no doubt deserved my enemies, but I don't believe I deserved my friends."***

~Walt Whitman

***In this sin-cursed whacko world of tragedies and pain, this might sound too deprecating, but the weird thing isn't when some cells in your body rebel and the doctor calls it cancer. The odd thing is that all the cells in our bodies don't rebel. I often wonder why this is currently going on in my friend Matt's brain? Why is it not with me Lord when I deserve it more?***

Perhaps you being in the "penalty box" really is due to your own lack of discipline or fleshly blow-ups. There are often consequence for our blunders down here.

You can know if you indeed are experiencing God's firm but loving chastening if you draw near to Him. Ask, "What are you trying to teach me in all this Lord?"

In the Bible, the term "chasten" describes acts of discipline, correction, or even corporeal punishment. Man, who even hears sermons about this kind of stuff anymore, but the Lord's chastening is generally to be considered non-joyful, painful or unpleasant ..when you think about it (See [Heb. 12:11](#)).

It's for the purpose of "rebuke, training or reprimand" to instruct and bring about healthy change in one's behavior, attitude or lame rebellious thinking. God wants to produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness in your life! He is motivated towards this end!

The Children of Israel in the Old Testament were sometimes allowed to be defeat by enemy armies, and this was sometimes referred to as chastisement for sin and rebellion ([Deut. 11:2](#)). Oh yes! But the purpose of chastising was never to destroy lost people or to heartlessly to rub their noses in their wrong-doings to demean them (See [Ps. 118:18](#)), but it was to train righteous people and lead them forwards into repentance (See [Jer. 31:18-19](#)). It was for the purpose of

restoring them spiritually so they could once again enjoy the Father's blessings, closeness and fruitfulness (See Ps. 94:12-15).

I kinda think it's funny in our day how so many church-folk can pray "Our Father.." on Sundays and then wander around worried and floundering like little orphan kids all during the mid-week.

Listen, perhaps you had an uber-harsh-dad, well your loving heavenly Father knows that His wise chastisement is not a bad thing. He is wise, perfect, balanced and longs to help as you go the distance with Him. Although pretty unpleasant, His customized chastisement for you is never to be confused with His wrath or fierce judgment.

Proper judgment will begin in the household of faith, but God doesn't forget that we are in His beloved family. The Bible teaches that we Christians are not appointed unto wrath (See 1 Thess. 5:9) and that's the reason I personally look forward to the Rapture of the Church rather than to seeing the Anti-Christ or days of terrible tribulation as some people will sadly experience. Don't wait another day; get home before dark!

Maybe you feel that you are in the penalty box due to another person's sins and you fight against all that false guilt.. or perhaps you are there because of a mixture of things. God knows and He is still in control! So glad that Romans 8:28-30 is still in the Word.

God fully understands and He still does have a good plan for you, even if it seems like you no longer have a good name or reputation. Hey, we can't be Mo, but we can sure be encouraged by Moses' life in the desert. That's where he really learned patience and God's timing.

Please don't let the enemy of your soul win by making you think that God no longer loves you or thinks about you anymore. If you start listening to the lies of demons, very soon you will be out of the Bible (little bit of reading to no reading), out of fellowship with the Lord and out of fellowship with growing, spiritually minded Christians that God really wants to use to build you up again (take up no offense against or for your brethren that would get in the way of your relationship with Jesus). So many people get sidelined so easy—it's tragic!

Why take up an offense for another without properly dealing with it? Why harbor bitterness and unforgiveness inside until it festers? Why allow some dim, conceited, hard-hearted, blind ..or partially blind Mussolini type of dweeb get in the way of your growth?

Why let him or her ..who keeps on hurting God's people.. simply derail you spiritually from your calling and best Connection? Why let anyone disconnect you from your purpose? Think about it a moment. If I were to allow anyone to get in the way of me and my Lord, then that person would be in-between us in a way.. and closer to God than I am. My focus needs to be off of people and dead-bolted upwards—firmly fixed on the Lord instead ..with no living or dead impediment.

Again, if it was you who blew it, then simply repent, fully confess and receive your full cleansing from Jesus Christ today! Get up again and walk with Him. Repentance isn't merely feeling sorry for sinning. It has to do with being completely being fed up inside with.. being radically sick and tired of being the boss of your own life. In the Bible "believing" is connected to true repentance. Yes change ..so much so that you turn, that you cease from wrong-doing.. that you quit being Lord of your life and start allowing Christ to be Lord to lead you. You both can be boss!

The statistics show us that the majority of so called Christians in America today have prayed a prayer in a church or somewhere, but there is hardly any real change in their lifestyle. We've seen that there is very little difference in their lives from the lifestyles of those who are lost in the world around them. **Never forget that without true repentance and faith, there is no spiritual salvation at all!**

OK, so can you think of any others in the Bible that God also led through a long ministry training process?

- *Think about Noah who waited 120 years before the predicted rains arrived on the dirt around his feet.*
- *Think about Abraham who waited 25 years for a promised son (and then he gets tested. No room to make even good things idols).*
- *Think about Joseph who waited 14 years in prison, for a crime he didn't commit.*
- *Think about Job who waited perhaps a whole lifetime, 60-70 years, for God's justice to finally kick in.*
- *Think about John the beloved who was banished to the island of Patmos for righteousness sake and how many days there could have been where he really wondered about it (but we love reading what he wrote in solitude huh).*
- *Think about all the New Testament saints landed in prison—some still do today (is that you? You are not alone).*

How wise is our gentle heavenly Father to prepare some of His leaders in a slow-crock-pot type of cooker situation instead of in quick microwave ovens if you will. He knows what we each will need to become the faithful disciples He wants us to be.

But don't you just hate trials at times! I don't hate em ..when I'm not in one, but that's not very long. I often find that if I am departing from one trial, I'm more than likely 'bout to head right into another one. Not many churches even teach what the Bible says about trials, but they teach you to control things by you financial giving and by lining up your confession for your own prosperity huh. "Speak it.. haaaAh!"

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ~James 1:2-3*

*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. ~1 Peter 1:6-8*

Far more valuable than pure gold is all that the Lord works into us while we continue to pray and wait on Him.

Pouring over the Scriptures daily and prayerfully waiting on the Word of God to lead you through ..or to promote you out of the penalty box.. yeah, it can be really good as He puts that Holy Spirit steel into your backbone! You will like how it literally deepens and matures you in Christ! You'll be glad about Him leveling your perspective in all this stuff. It's like His special tool to balance out your walk of victory as it broadens your spiritual understanding of obedience in really tough situations.

Undesired tests of t-i-m-e, unlike some cheap quick-fix preparation jobs.. can literally help you determine in your own mind whether you will believe and go the distance with Jesus Christ! They help us learn whether or not .. or how we will fully trust in the Lord and endure such hard season's of apparent fruitlessness. They indicate whether we can even recognize and prudently seize God's divine soul-winning or saint-edifying opportunities that God brings our way.

*There are no big places and little places. There are only faithful people and unfaithful people. ~Frances Schaefer*

*Jesus said, "Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes" ~Matthew 6:34, mess.*

God says to you and to me, *"Be still and know that I am God"* ~Psalm 46:10

Please don't ever interpret the extended silence of God as the aloof-indifference of Jesus. His delay is not necessarily His denial. Instead allow the Scriptures to comfort you, for He is always on time.. ***"But Now Take courage...Take courage...Take courage, all you people still left in the land, says the Lord. Take courage and work, for I am with you, says the Lord Almighty. My Spirit remains among you, just as I promised when you came out of Egypt. So DO NOT BE AFRAID"*** (Hag. 2:4-5, emphasis mine).

**Take courage, for you will not always be in the "Penalty Box"** ..if you are in one at all! God knows where you are. Take all the things that you do not yet understand and just put them in a "I don't get it Lord" container if you will.. all the tears, frustrations, reversals and inequities. Then give em to Him. Just say **"I trust You Lord and one day face to face You can explain this stuff to me if you even want to by then. I surrender all and that stuff is totally Your deal Jesus."**

Have a prayer request or some questions about knowing God ..and how to properly walk in Jesus Christ? At [fish4souls.org](http://fish4souls.org) click "[Contact](#)" and let us know! Perhaps we can help. Follow.. [Facebook.com/ShareJesus](https://www.facebook.com/ShareJesus) or at [Twitter.com/kurtwvs](https://twitter.com/kurtwvs)

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