



Sermon Series: Mentoring: Investing in Others

To be used with Session 2: Moses and Joshua

Sermon Title Possibilities: From Leader to Successor

Scripture: Numbers 27:12-23

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Mentoring: Investing in Others” this sermon teaches us how to gracefully transition from being in the lead to empowering others to lead. By examining the life of Moses, we experience the true heart of a mentor and the unselfish posture needed to seek God, surrender self, and support a successor. With the Word of God as a roadmap, transitioning from leadership can become a blessing to all.

Introduction: The game of football is a violent contact sport. Football players, considered modern-day gladiators, risk life and limb to play a sport that guarantees a 100% injury rate. Injuries are players' worst nightmare because it removes them from the field to the sideline, where another person fills their role left vacant. However, injuries are not the only reason for being sidelined. Ineffective players will find themselves on the sideline due to constant mistakes, turnovers, or failure to listen to the coach. Players, removed from the field due to ineffectiveness, can support or sabotage their successor.

In our text, Moses is sidelined because of his ineffectiveness in the field of life. God informed Moses of the reason for his removal but permitted him to play a significant role in preparing his successor. Moses, demonstrating a repentant heart, received God's judgment and began the process of supporting his successor, Joshua, a process we must consider when it is our turn to present our successor.

1. Process #1 Accept the Reality (Numbers 27:12-14)

There is no other way to explain it, Moses made a mistake. God told Moses in Numbers 20:8 to speak to the rock and fulfill the thirst of the children of Israel, but Moses struck the rock, and his disobedient obedience prevented him from entering the promised land. God reminded Moses of this failure in Numbers 23:14. However, grace is extended to Moses, and despite being unable to go into the promised land, God granted him an opportunity to see the

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promised land. Moses' reality reminds us of the seriousness associated with following God. However, at a closer glance, we see God extending unmerited grace to Moses despite the seemingly unfair judgment. Having the opportunity to see the promised land, Moses can visualize it as a testament to God's faithfulness to His people. May we embrace the reality that despite our disobedience, God is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations (Psalm 100:5).

2. Process #2 Engage the Reality (Numbers 27:15-18)

Despite the devastating news delivered to Moses, he never wavered in his commitment to his role as a leader. Remaining unselfish, he thought more about others than he did himself when he could have exited to the sideline and pouted. In verse 15, Moses appealed to the Lord out of love for the community he served. He understood that entering the promised land was not his reality, but he continued to serve on behalf of the people in his care. Despite his mistake, God used a willing Moses to engage in the succession plan. In the text, Moses has the responsibility of laying his hands on Joshua (v.18), standing him before the priest and the whole community (v.19), and confirming his authority on him so that the entire community will obey him (v.20). Joshua received the greatest gift from his successor, his support. May that be so with us. When it is time for our transition, we would be willing participants in the successful transfer from one pastor to the next pastor, from one ministry leader to the next ministry leader. May we be honorable in our succession plan.

3. Process #3 Embrace the Reality (Numbers 27:19-23)

Moses received the succession plan from the Lord. Joshua, slated to take his position as leader of the children of Israel and will escort them into the promised land, is in place. Will Moses obey God or disobey? Pharaoh's heart was hardened, Samson disobeyed, Judas betrayed, and Thomas doubted. All these individuals represent the actions of those surrounded by God's divine presence but decided to go their own way. Despite Moses having the succession plan, the decision to obey the voice of the Lord is still in his hands. In verse 22, Moses followed precisely the Lord's request and established Joshua before the priest Eleazar. In verse 23, Moses submitted to the will of God by establishing Joshua in front of the people. Of all the things Moses accomplished, obeying the Lord's voice is paramount to his ministry. May that be said of our ministries as well.

Conclusion: Accepting, engaging, and embracing a succession plan is paramount for smooth transitions. Moses' handling of this leadership shift reminds us that succession plans should be handled in a way that brings glory to God, honors the current leader, and prepares the new leader for a successful tenure. If it is true that we all serve the Lord according to His plan, Moses' tenure is a reminder that leaders may change, but that does not mean the job is complete. May we all be reminded that the completion of God's work may begin with us but may not always end

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with us. Everyone is responsible for playing their role in the plan ordained by God. As a reminder, let us walk with Him and see each other as companions, not competitors.

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