



## “Hidden Treasures: Familiar Stories, Sacred Layers”

June 28, 2026: Week 2: “Moses: The Beauty In Slowing Down”

### Denver United Methodist Church

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**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 34:1, 4-7, 10

Online Website: <https://www.denverumc.org/worship/pages/hidden-treasures>

Slide 1: “Moses was Face to Face with God.

**Sermon Outcome:** To compel and inspire the congregation to approach Scripture with curiosity, humility, and wonder, learning that beneath familiar stories are hidden treasures that draw us into deeper intimacy with God.

**Sermon: Opening Question:** "What if we've been reading the Bible correctly, but incompletely?"

- I. Week 1 Review: Perspective Matters: Eastern vs. Western
  - A. It's healthy to look at the Bible through a different lens
    1. The Bible was not written to us, but for us
    2. We are foreigners reading a foreign text
    3. I provided you a resource (can be found on line / QR code)
      - a) Give example of Eastern vs. Western Perspective: Truth
      - b) We miss out on the additional details / the depth
    4. We talked about the Creation Story...
  - B. The goal of the series is to help you fall in love with scripture and hunger to discover the hidden treasures it offers

II. Pray & Read Scripture: Deuteronomy 34:1, 4-7, 10

III. Opening

A. How many of us spend or have spent our lives in the pursuit of chasing the next milestone?

1. Graduate high school, Graduate College
2. Get the first job, then get promoted
3. Get married, buy the house, raise the kids
4. Payoff the mortgage, retire, travel, relax.

B. We have become experts at living for the next thing, the next goal, the next accomplishment, the next destination.

C. We convince ourselves

1. “When I get there...”
2. “When I achieve that...”
3. “When I or we finally arrive...”
  - a) I will be fulfilled
  - b) Satisfied.
  - c) I will be content

D. Honestly, and its this same lens we look through when we look at the life of Moses.

1. Born under a death sentence (Pharoah commanded all males baby’s to be killed).
2. Placed in a basket.
3. Raised in Pharoah’s palace.
4. Fled Egypt
5. Spent forty years in Midian.
6. Encountered God in a burning bush.
7. Returned to Egypt, faced Pharoah through the plagues
8. Led the Exodus. Parted the Red Sea
9. Received the 10 commandments. Led Israel through the wilderness. Interceded for the people.
10. Carried the burden of leadership for forty years.
11. Forty years of sacrifice. Forty years of obedience.
12. Forty years of putting up with people who complained constantly.
13. If anyone deserved a payoff, it was Moses.
14. If anyone deserved to cross the finish line, it was Moses.
15. If anyone deserved to stand in the Promise Land, it was Moses.

16. And then we arrive at today's Scripture.

E. Read Deuteronomy 34:4

1. Moses climbs the mountain.
2. God shows him everything - the panoramic view
3. The land, the promise, the destination, the finish line.
4. Everything he spent his life pursuing. And then God says...
5. "You may see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there."
6. Really? Seriously? After everything? After Egypt? After Pharaoh? After the Red Sea? After Sinai? After 40 years?
7. This is how it ends? Let's be honest, "we don't like this ending!"
8. It feels unfair. It feels incomplete. It feels tragic.
  - a) And that's because we are reading this through our Western lens.
  - b) We are focused on the destination, the accomplishments, the payoff, the reward.

F. Hello God, where's the Gold Watch, the Retirement party?

G. Now those of you might push back a bit and say, but David, Moses disobeyed God and so he wasn't allowed into the promise land...

1. Numbers 20:8-11: God told Moses - "Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and *speak to the rock before their eyes*, that it may yield water. (Moses *struck the rock twice with his rod*; and water came forth abundantly).
2. The way Moses went about it, he took credit instead of honoring God and His glory. "Moses leaned into the staff, instead of leaning into the Word." But that is another sermon.
3. So this one act, appears to strip Moses of the reward of getting into the promise land.
4. Doesn't this seem to be extreme or harsh? Does that sound like the actions of a Loving and Forgiving God?
5. If your struggling with that or wrestling with that - good - we are supposed to be. That means we are trying to understand God's character.

H. So what if we have been reading the story correctly, but incompletely?

1. What if we're so focused on what Moses didn't get, that we've missed what Moses already had?
2. Because the author of Deuteronomy does something fascinating...

- a) The author doesn't list Moses victories. The author doesn't celebrate the success of the plagues. Nor is there mention of the Red Sea. Instead, something remarkable is written: "There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."
- b) Face to Face - Not a destination. Not an accomplishment. Not an achievement. "Intimate RELATIONSHIP"
- c) **What if Moses didn't miss the reward, but "We," misunderstood the reward?**
- d) I will come back to this understanding of Face to Face. Because as we may remember, Scripture tells us no one has seen the face of God. So obviously - we are meant to pause and discover something deeper.

#### IV. What can we learn about Moses' experience with the burning bush?

- A. Moses had to slow down to recognize the bush wasn't being consumed
  - 1. Most of us would have seen a burning bush and kept on going like it was an every day act. (Ellijay, Ga)
  - 2. How did Moses recognize it wasn't being consumed - he slowed down
- B. The importance of Slowing Down & appreciating the ongoing relationship with God is in the now and appreciating the journey, not just the arrival into heaven.
- C. Marriage and Heaven Parallels
  - 1. When 2 people fall in love, it's amazing what they are willing to do.
    - a) They will drive hours just to spend a few minutes together.
    - b) They'll stay up late talking on the phone. They'll write notes. Send texts, buy gifts, plan dates. Rearrange schedules. Why?
    - c) Because they want to be with the person they love.
    - d) Then comes engagement. The ring, the planning, the invitations, the dress, the tux, the rehearsal, the wedding day.
    - e) If we are not careful, we will treat the wedding as the goal. The destination. As the reward for our efforts.

- f) But every happily married person knows something important. The wedding is NOT the reward.
  - (1) The reward is waking up next to the person you love.
  - (2) Growing together, laughing together, crying together, serving together, walking through life together.
  - (3) The wedding was never the destination. The relationship is.
- 2. “*Experiencing God*” Workbook - Amy/”Presence”
  - a) Yet many couples spend years pursuing the wedding and then stop pursuing one another.
  - b) They stop, dating, listening, investing, growing. Because they achieved a milestone.
  - c) And sometimes I wonder if Christians do the same thing.
- 3. Many people spend enormous amounts of energy trying to understand how to get into heaven.
  - a) How to be saved. How to secure eternity. How to make sure they get in. And those questions matter.
  - b) But once they answer them, they often settle into spiritual maintenance mode.
  - c) As though heaven is the reward. As though salvation is the finish line. As though the goal is simply crossing through the Heavenly gates. (Promise Land).
  - d) What if we have been reading the story correctly, but incompletely?

V. Return: “Moses was Face to Face with God.”

A. This is the Hidden Treasure

- 1. The author wants us to see something deeper.
- 2. **SLIDE 1**: The focus for Moses was not where he went, It was **who** he knew.
- 3. Rethink about Moses’ life: He had direct communication with God over his lifetime
  - a) He spoke with God from a burning bush.
  - b) He spoke with God on Sinai.
  - c) He spoke with God in the Tent of Meeting.
  - d) Again, and again. Conversation after conversation.

- e) Encounter after encounter. Moment after moment.
- f) What if the Promise Land was never the ultimate reward?
- g) What if intimacy with God was?
- h) Isn't that worth more than a destination of a Promise Land?
- i) Let's be real, how did it work out for those who crossed into the promise land? NOT TOO GOOD.

4. Imagine asking Moses

- a) Moses, would you rather have the land... or the relationship?
- b) Would you rather have the destination... or the conversation?
- c) Would you rather have the inheritance... or the Presence?

VI. If it hasn't become personal for you yet, it probably will now.

A. Because we do exactly what Moses' story warns us against.

1. We spend our lives chasing destinations.

- a) Career, Financial, Relationship, Retirement, Spiritual
- b) We have all heard the quotes

(1) "It's not about the destination, it's about the journey."

(2) "It's good to have an end to journey towards, but it's the journey that matters, in the end."

2. And God continually invites us back into Presence.

- a) The world says, "arrive," God says, "abide"
- b) The world says, "achieve", God says "Know Me"
- c) The world says, "accomplish," God says, "Walk with me."

B. Maybe that's why slowing down matters.

1. Because intimacy cannot be rushed. Relationships cannot be microwaved. Love requires Presence. Time. Conversation. Attention.

2. Perhaps that's one of the reasons why Scripture is layered. Not because God is hiding from us between the lines. But because He wants us to linger. To wrestle. To reflect. To spend time with Him.

3. Because the greatest rewards has never been about a destination. The greatest reward has always been the relationship.

C. The Goal of Christianity is not getting into heaven. The goal of Christianity is walking with God. Heaven is simply where that relationship continues forever.

VII. The Hidden Treasure of this Story

A. Let's not focus on what Moses didn't receive. Focus on what Moses already had: God's Presence.

B. It's not about the "there." It's not about the land. It never was. It's about the God who is here wherever we are.

C. And today's believer, has God's presence too. The Holy Spirit is talking to you. Are you willing to slow down to notice, all the burning bushes in your life, not being consumed?

VIII. Close

A. So you made the effort to come today. So what will be the evidence that you came?

1. My Ask

a) If you don't own a study Bible...

b) Approach the Bible intentionally looking for what is odd

c) Be willing to wrestle with the Scripture... that is wanting to wrestle with you.

B. Marty Solomon "The Gospel of Being Human"

1. "God's love is more real than our rebellion. Forgiveness is more real than our failure. God is wooing us on a journey, seeing us as much more than pawns or disappointments or damaged goods, inviting us into something far more freeing and expansive and extraordinary than just a solution to sin.

2. The Cross was not a transaction for our sin, it is an invitation into a relationship. An invitation from God to us. And for us to extend the invite to others.

C. Amen / Lord's prayer

Newsletter:

## **Week 2: Moses – The Beauty in Slowing Down**

What if one of the most misunderstood stories in the Bible isn't about failure at all?

Most people know how Moses' story ends. After leading Israel out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and all the way to the edge of the Promised Land, Moses is told he will not enter. For many readers, it feels disappointing, unfair, and even tragic.

But what if we've been reading the story correctly... but incompletely?

What if our Western tendency to focus on achievement, accomplishment, and destination has caused us to miss the real treasure hidden within the story?

This week, we'll slow down and revisit one of the most familiar figures in all of Scripture. Together, we'll explore a surprising question:

### **What if the Promised Land was never Moses' greatest reward?**

As we continue our series, *Hidden Treasure: Familiar Stories, Sacred Layers*, we'll uncover a beautiful truth that many readers overlook—a truth about intimacy, presence, and what it means to truly know God.

If Week 1 taught us that there is more beneath the surface of Scripture than we often realize, Week 2 invites us to discover that sometimes the greatest treasures are found when we stop rushing to the ending and learn to linger in the relationship.

Bring your Bible. Bring your curiosity. And come ready to discover a hidden treasure that may change the way you read Moses' story forever.