

Moses – Part 2

Last week, we learned that the book of Exodus proves three things to us: (1) that God never forgets or breaks a promise, (2) that His timing and methods are seldom according to our preferences, and (3) that He uses imperfect people to accomplish His perfect will.

Moses lived to be 120, and his life can be divided into three parts: (1) he spent his first 40 years being raised in the palace of Egypt, (2) he fled the country and spent his next 40 years tending sheep in the desert of Midian, and (3) he was called to be Israel's deliverer at the age of 80 and spent his last 40 years leading them from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Someone quipped that Moses spent 40 years thinking he was a somebody, 40 years finding out he was a nobody, and 40 years discovering what God can do with a nobody. They were basically right!

Moses had perhaps the best chance of anyone to be a success, but we found out last week that he messed things up by taking matters into his own hands. The consequences of his failure chased him into the wilderness for forty years ... but God wasn't finished with him yet!

VIDEO CLIP: PRINCE OF EGYPT (Exodus 3:1-10)

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

You may not have noticed it, but this was the day in Moses' life that God chose to break a forty year silence! It dawned like any other ordinary day without warning, but that's the way our God works – **He speaks to ordinary people on ordinary days.**

God loves to use broken vessels to accomplish His purpose! It doesn't matter how scarred the vessel is, as long as the treasure is inside.

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We sometimes look at our lives like one long string of random coincidences, but that's not what the Bible teaches:

Psalms 139:16 (KJV) Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Psalms 139:16 (LB) You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book!

God is speaking in your life TODAY – He'll use His Word, He'll use His people, and He'll use your circumstances. He WILL be speaking – that's not the question. The question is, will YOU be listening? You see, nothing happened to Moses until he took time to TURN ASIDE and hear God.

Notice Moses' answer when God called him: "HERE AM I." That was Abraham's answer in Genesis 22, Jacob's answer in Genesis 31, Samuel's answer in 1 Samuel 3, and Isaiah's answer in Isaiah 6 – "HERE AM I; SEND ME!" It's the answer of everyone who has ever been used by God. It's the answer God is looking for. HERE AM I.

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

The Hebrew word is HINAYNEE, which we would render simply "It's me." God is not looking for our ABILITY, just our AVAILABILITY. "It's me." Remember that Moses has not heard God's voice for at least forty years, but look at what God says: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people," "I have heard their cry," "their cry has come unto me," "I have seen their oppression," and now ... "I am come down to deliver them!"

The devil would like us to think exactly the opposite – God doesn't see, God doesn't hear, God isn't aware, God doesn't care. But he's lying!

Jeremiah 29:11 (KJV) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

2 Peter 3:8-9 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Moses was thrilled by the fact that God was going to deliver His people from Egypt but the next part of God's plan left him shaking in his sandals! "Come now therefore, and I will send THEE unto Pharaoh, that THOU mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt."

Moses first reaction was, "I tried that before – that's why I'm in this mess!" But that's what God was trying to teach Moses, that his life had been one long effort of the flesh to accomplish something good. Like a knot in a shoelace, the harder Moses pulled, the tighter the tangled mess became.

*With thoughtlessness and impatient hands,
We tangle up the plans the Lord hath wrought.
And when we cry in pain, He says,
"Be quiet, My child, while I untie the knot."*

Moses' excuses as to why he couldn't be used by God are pretty typical!

1. **Who am I?** God says, "It doesn't matter who you are, it just matters that I am with you."
2. **What shall I say?** God says, "Just talk about Me (I AM THAT I AM)."
3. **What if they don't believe me?** ("What if?" is always the question of doubters) God says, "Use what is in your hand (ROD)."
4. **I am not eloquent.** God says, "I'll give you the words AS YOU SPEAK THEM (not before!) ... and I'll give you people to work with you (Aaron), so it doesn't just depend on you anyway!"

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

On the surface, Moses appears to leave this supernatural encounter with God the same as he was. He is still carrying the same shepherd's staff. And yet, something is undeniably different ...

Exodus 4:2 And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, **A rod.**

Exodus 4:20 And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took **the rod of God** in his hand.

The staff of Moses became the staff of God between verses 2 and 20. Whatever we are willing to give to God, He is willing to use. In fact, that's the principle of Scripture – God blesses whatever we put Him first in!

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Before it is over, Moses' rod will be used miraculously to ...

- confront the magicians of Pharaoh's court
- turn the waters of the Nile River into Blood
- bring plagues of frogs, lice, hail, and locusts upon the land
- cause the waters of the Red Sea to stand up like a wall, then collapse on the Egyptians after Israel passed through
- bring forth water from the rock at Horeb
- bring victory to Israel in battle as Moses held it high in prayer

WHAT IS THAT IN YOUR HAND TODAY?

- God isn't asking for something in someone else's hand
- God isn't asking for something you don't already have
- God isn't asking for something impressive
- God is just asking for what you have right now!

What would have happened if Moses had refused to give God his staff?

- A nation would have stayed in slavery
- Thousands of Israelites would have been killed
- Moses would have never become a great man of God

WHAT DID GOD ASK MOSES TO DO?

- Throw it down
- Pick it up after God has changed it (that's the scary part!)