

### ***Lessons from Exodus pt3 10-17-00***

Last week we ended in the middle of God's call to Moses, when God spoke to him through the burning bush. We saw how God calls us all uniquely – his presence with us is the qualifying factor. Interviewing with a search committee once, I was asked what qualified me to be a Pastor. I had really been in prayer and the hand of the Lord was on me at that moment – almost without my mental involvement I answered immediately, "I'm not qualified but Jesus in me is more than capable of shepherding His flock." And that is what qualifies each of us for the thing He calls us to do.

When God calls us to be of service to His Kingdom it is often after we have found we can only mess things up when we try our very best to meet a need. The broken humble man or woman of God that knows they must look to Him is the individual God can use. Instead of self-reliant they are God-reliant. This is Moses' condition when God called him.

Let's pick it up again in 3:13 <sup>13</sup> Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"<sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. (NIV)

The Hebrews placed great importance in a name. It suggested your character and your reputation. Moses had a legitimate question. The understanding of God was limited to the revelation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to some extent Joseph. Through the names of God in the Old Testament we can learn a lot about God. Here God revealed himself to Moses as the One who always is. I think the NLT translation best fits our English equivalent of God's answer: "I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS." If you were reading this in Hebrew in verse 15 when you got to 'the LORD' it would sound very much like "I AM" and is probably derived from it.

God lives in the Eternal Now. Anytime is present with God. He is not bound by time. Before a revolution of the earth made the first day, as we know it – God is. If there was such a thing as a million years before that we would point to that far off time and say God is then too. And the Day of Judgement sometime in the future, at the end of his 1000 year reign on the earth, He is. And that eternal God that sent Moses is the mighty God that sends you and me into this world. In 14:10 Just as the Father was in and worked through Jesus – Jesus desires to be in and work through you! See John 14:20. "I AM has sent me to you." When you are walking in the call of God, with the life of Jesus working in you, then you can say with Moses, "The I AM has sent me," to do whatever it is He has called you to do.

<sup>16</sup> "Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-- appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt.

<sup>17</sup> And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites--a land flowing with milk and honey.' (NIV)

He promised Abraham 500 years earlier because He is now and then – present tense. Here again we see God is concerned about human suffering, about your trials. Notice that He is watching over us in the midst of the trial. That is when we are most likely to feel forsaken, but He is there! Notice to that God calls Himself the God of the patriarchs. He had covenanted with Abraham to send them into that land, and confirmed that covenant with his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. God is saying now is the time for that promise to be fulfilled. Sometimes we wonder what God is doing – if his promises will ever come to pass. God is not a man that He should lie – even if 500 years pass his word will come to pass. If you are waiting for a promise of God – believe. If you have truly heard from God it will happen in his time. It may not come about as you imagine, but it will happen His way and time. And His way and time are always best.

<sup>18</sup> "The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.'<sup>19</sup> But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him.<sup>20</sup> So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go. (NIV)

Was God asking Moses to lie? God already knew Pharaoh wouldn't even give them even one three-day weekend to worship Him. He was letting Pharaoh top off the reasons for the wrath of God to fall on Him. God knows exactly what it will take to break Pharaoh but He has other reasons for displaying his mighty hand that we will get to later. When you have a calling from God his mighty hand assists you. It is God's mighty hand that prevails when you walk in your calling.

<sup>21</sup> "And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed.<sup>22</sup> Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians." (NIV)

God is laying out for Moses what is about to happen in detail. When God does lead them out, they will take the wealth of Egypt with them, fair wages for the work their nation had done in captivity. "the wealth of the sinner *is* laid up for the just." Prov 13:22b God balances the books. One thing we can be sure of, God is just. Have you suffered injustice at the hands of man? God will balance the books in his time. I was selling a camcorder back when they first came out for a charitable cause. A man and woman pulled up in a corvette and wrote a check on a Saturday. That check bounced. When I went to the address the guy was smoking a big bong and gave me some story how it was stolen and he was out of money etc. Finally we got an old truck out of it and just figured it was a lesson learned. About two months later on a Saturday I was in a supermarket. His girlfriend was buying two heaping carts of groceries. I saw her pull out her check book and decided I better warn the manager. Before I left the grocery store the police were there talking with her. You don't get to see justice that fast – but whether you see it or not there is a Just God watching over our lives.

<sup>4:1</sup> Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?'"<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied. (NIV)

I get frustrated with Moses questioning God when God already told him they will listen. But then I realize that my frustration is because it mirrors my own "what ifs" that I bring to God. But thank God, He is patient. "What is that in your hand?" God will often use the common

things He has placed in your life in extraordinary ways. If what you have is yielded to His use, you will find it becomes a tool for the Master. It may be a talent, an ability, a position, a business, just ordinary things. But in the hands of God the ordinary becomes extraordinary. "What is that in your hand?" Is it yielded to the Master? The time will come when He will use it to build up His Kingdom if you have surrendered it to Him. Then the Lord gives Moses the signs. Signs encourage the doubters. Signs are a confirmation of God's hand on the messenger. Skip down to verse 10.

<sup>10</sup> Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."<sup>11</sup> The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

<sup>12</sup> Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say." (NIV)

This is a powerfully encouraging truth if you will take hold of it. What God asks you to do, He will enable you to do. (repeat) Do you think He will ask you to witness to someone and not give you the words? Or to help someone and not empower you to help? If He asks, He equips. Don't doubt Almighty God's ability to equip you for what He calls you to do. NOW GO! Sometimes we need to act just because God said so. That He is with us should be enough. But He promises that He will help and teach Moses what to say.

<sup>13</sup> But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."<sup>14</sup> Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you."<sup>15</sup> You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do.

<sup>16</sup> He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. (NIV)

Even God gets frustrated with Moses. God wanted the entire role to be Moses' but sometimes when we insist, God gives us our way, and we end up counting the cost later. Aaron turns out to be a blessing but he does cause some major problems along the way – we'll come across them later. This situation of God represented in man is a type and shadow of Jesus. Many today want to elevate the pastor to the Old Testament prophet position. The author of Hebrews tells us clearly in the beginning of his letter that God use to have an intermediary like the prophets to speak through, but in these last days He has spoken to us in his son. There is still a prophetic gift but it does not take the place of you hearing from God personally. Go to verse

<sup>24</sup> At a lodging place on the way, the LORD met [Moses] and was about to kill him.<sup>25</sup> But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched [Moses'] feet with it. "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said.

<sup>26</sup> So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said "bridegroom of blood," referring to circumcision.) (NIV)

I think we may have a marital dispute here about circumcision. Moses had not circumcised his son and the Lord is dealing with him about it. Abraham's male descendants were all to be circumcised. I wonder if Zipporah was refusing to do so because she did not want the child to suffer and had been unwilling to let Moses do it. Finally when she sees Moses could die from disobedience she does it herself. And so she throws the foreskin at his feet calling him a husband of blood. What a warning if that is the case. When God calls us He is not messing around. We need to walk in obedience, fear of disobedience is a healthy thing.

In the NT elders are required to have their house in order. They need to be the spiritual head of the home and seeing the home is obedient to the Lord. Moses could not be the leader of a nation if he could not lead in his home in what God commanded him to do.

<sup>29</sup> Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites,<sup>30</sup> and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people,<sup>31</sup> and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped. (NIV)

This is the result of the calling of God. It turns people's eyes to the loving concern of God for their lives. When they understand God sees their situation and is concerned about them, the appropriate response is worship.

Do you know God sees your situation? Do you know how concerned He is? This is the fourth time we have read that He is concerned. What a comfort that should be to our hearts. What hope that should instill in us.

Let me summarize the lessons I see here for us today. When God calls us he equips us. He brings about his promises in His time. He will use the ordinary things (staff) in an extraordinary way. When He calls we must walk in obedience. We must be an example in all areas of our lives. Whatever our situation, God sees, and He is concerned – and that should evoke a response of worship! Recognize his call. Don't ask for someone else to do it for you. Yield to His direction and watch Him produce the results. True for us individually as well as for us as a fellowship.