

#8 - Burning bush - Exodus 3 – Moses (God speaks - Moses responds)

Engage:

- After the creation and the fall we saw how God worked through different people and different situations to bring about “redemption” for people who have His purpose as their own. The hearts of those who experienced “redemption” were similar to God’s (for example, Noah and Joseph). Others were not (for example, the people of Babel, Pharaoh and most of the Egyptians). The bottom line: 1) God’s purpose will always prevail; 2) God is always educating those who will listen and obey as to the responsibilities and joys living holy lives.

- In the last study we saw how God prepared Joseph over a span of almost 20 years for the responsibility that he was called to do. In the story of Moses, God allowed him to be raised in Pharaoh’s house for his first 40 years and then for the next 40 years Moses learned humility and how to shepherd sheep. Point: Moses was 80 years old before he was ready to do his most important work in life as a leader of God’s people.

Thoughts about the story:

- 3: 1-3 – God certainly got Moses’ attention through the talking, burning bush that was not consumed. In what ways have you experienced God speaking to you? Are you as willing to investigate God’s presence in your life as Moses investigated what the talking, burning bush was all about? Did you ever wonder what you could have already missed by not following God’s lead?

- 3:4-10 – God speaks - Moses responds.

#1 - God said: “Moses! Moses!” Moses said: “Here am I” - His response to God’s call is the same as that of Abraham (Gen 22:11) and Jacob (Gen 46:2).

#2 - God said: “Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals,” Moses’ response: We assume he did what God said.

#3 - God said: “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” Moses’s response: He hid his face because “he was afraid to look at God.”

#4 - God said: “I have seen I have heard So I have come down to rescue I have seen the way of the Egyptians are oppressing them. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” No doubt, Moses must have wondered about his people while he was in the land Midian for 40 years. Here he finds that God had been watching, listening and was now planning to intervene on their behalf!

Moses’ response: Excuses! Actually there were four.

3:11 - 1st Excuse: “Who am I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt!” Note Acts 7:22 - “Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.” It has been wisely suggested that 40 years earlier in Moses’ life he would have been more confident, but his experience in Midian as a shepherd had humbled him. How have you been humbled? Note: Read Acts 7:20-44 as a New Testament “commentary” on the life of Moses.

“A person acting in the flesh is impulsive and sees no obstacles, but a person humbly walking in the Spirit knows the battles that lie ahead. . . . Who we are is not important; that God is with us is important, for without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).“ Wiersbe

Just a thought: “There seldom was a man who was both good at making excuses and good at anything else.” *Daily Walk*, 1981.

3:12 - **God’s said**: “I will be with you.” God called these people to worship him. The Hebrew word translated “worship” is also the same word for “to be a slave.” Instead of being forced into slavery because of sin, God calls people to be His willing slaves. Only people who know the Lord understand the joys of being a willing slave of God (See Romans 6:15-23; also Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:1).

3:13 - 2nd Excuse: This excuse was more realistic. The Jewish people in Egypt would want assurance that God was with Moses! (See the other two excuses given by Moses - 4:1; 4:10; followed by **God’s response** - 4:2-3; 4:11.)

3:14 - **God said**. Tell them that “I AM has sent me to you” (meaning I have always been, I will always be, I just am). See how Jesus used the phrase “I AM” to describe Himself: John 6:35; 8:12, 58; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1-5). God’s resounding “I AM” will always drown out the excuse of “I can’t.” No amount of opposition, including that of Pharaoh could stop God from accomplish His purpose. This will always be a true statement.

3:15-22 - **God said**: The rest of the chapter is a continuation of God’s response begun in verse 14. In a nutshell, God told Moses to go to the elders (leader) of Israel and tell them that He was sending Moses to them. Moses was told that they would listen to him (v. 18). But God also told Moses that Pharaoh would not listen until He intervened with what became the 10 plagues (Exodus 7-11). Only then would Pharaoh let the Israelites go (v. 20). Even the Egyptian people will want them to go – so much so that they would give the Israelites “articles of silver and gold and for clothing And so you will plunder the Egyptians” (vv. 21-22). This promise of God would have seemed impossible to Moses – but God proved Himself faithful – and He will always do so!

Summary:

- Neither Moses’ excuses nor Pharaoh’s stubbornness could stand in the way of God accomplishing His will to deliver (redeem) His people from slavery.

- “Probably you’d do exactly what Moses did: feel inadequate! Inadequate to represent God before the mightiest ruler of your day. Inadequate to deliver God’s words through your faltering lips.

And you know, you’d be right! God already knows you’re inadequate. That’s why He selected you. So that His strength might shine through your weakness – and your life might radiate His glory.” *Daily Walk*, 1982.

- See Hebrews 11:23-29 for a further New Testament “commentary” on the life and faith of Moses.

- Make a list of at least 3 excuses that you have (or could have) given to God for not doing something you are called to do. Then ask God in prayer to show His strength through your weakness.