

Exodus – Our Journey (Part One)

Exodus 1:5-2:22

Have you ever gone on a long road trip or an extensive family trip camping? What do you remember most about the trip? I'm willing to bet that you don't recall how big the park was, how big the pool was or how late you stayed up, or even what the scenery looked like. What you do remember is the varied problems, adversities and funny episodes of getting lost, you will remember a car breaking down and enjoying the hospitality of a good Samaritan, or you will recall the sunburns, the tent that leaked, the broken bone, the trip to the emergency room.

What I am getting at is memories are often wrapped up in the context of the adversity we share. The best memories are found in the travel difficulties and the comedic challenges that your family faced while pursuing the ideal vacation.

This morning we are going to launch out on a new sermon series that will take us on a journey through the Sinai desert along with the Hebrews who are on what is often called, "an exodus from slavery."

The book of Exodus is a book of the birthing of a nation through a difficult journey down the birth canal of adversity, hardship and God's guidance. The modern day Jew sees the Exodus as a description of their becoming God's people; of a people who were not God's people becoming His people. The Christian sees it as a parallel of their own new birth in Christ, from being alienated from God and entering into a relationship with Him, of moving from slavery to sin and self to freedom in Christ.

1. Overview

- a. Bible passage: Exodus 1:5-14 *The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt. 6 Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, 7 but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them. 8 Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. 9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. 10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." 11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites 13 and worked them ruthlessly. 14 They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.*
- b. Let me put this in context for you. Jacob and his sons ended up in Egypt during a severe famine that God had providentially provided for through the betrayal and selling of their young brother Joseph. Joseph, if you remember from Genesis, not only survived the trip to Egypt, he kept rising to the top, eventually becoming the #2 man in Egypt, based upon a dream he interpreted for Pharaoh.
 - i. Modern archeologists have often wondered how a person who was not an Egyptian could possibly rise to the pinnacle of power in an Egyptian monarchical system.
 - ii. During approximately 1700 B.C. for about a 110 year period, a group of Semite invaders from the Palestine area conquered the northern half of Egypt. They were called the Hyskos, and ruled over much of Egypt.
 1. By the time of Joseph's climb to power and his family's arrival, it would have been between the 13th and 17th Dynasties.

2. Joseph's family and descendants settled in Goshen, a grazing land to the eastern end of Egypt.
- iii. Eventually, the native Egyptians overthrew the Hyksos and drove them out of their land. But the Hebrews remained, well entrenched in the culture and practices of the Egyptians.
 1. But they were not native Egyptians, and likely were allies to the Hyksos, having benefited from their reign.
 2. It should not surprise us that the conquerors, the native Egyptians, would despise and enslave them.

2. Midwives

- a. Exodus 1:15-22 *The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, 16 "When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." 17 The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. 18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?" 19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive." 20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. 22 Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live." (just like Satan's plan against Jesus!)*
- b. Comments:
 - i. Throw them in the Nile – to honor the water gods. Crocodile food.
 - ii. Genocide – Obedience to God over that of man!
 1. The midwives chose to fear God rather than Pharaoh. They risked their lives. God blessed them and that is memorialized in the passage.
 2. We too have to choose obedience to God over that of man at times.
 - a. Acts ~ 4:18-20 *"Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard"*
 - b. Our nation is still free but many are not. Many can lose everything they have for obeying God, for testifying to what they have seen and heard. And yet they do it, despite the risk.
 - c. And here in America, we sit quietly, comfortably, and we don't tell what we have seen and heard. We don't want to "offend" anyone.
 - d. Offend means to raise indignation on the part of another.
 - e. Being offensive is the hate crime of our generation. If you dare to offend someone you must be a hateful person.
 - f. And so the fear of others, the fear of what others will think controls us.
 - g. We experience Fear of failure. Fear of rejection. Fear of being disliked.
 - h. Oh God, forgive us! We fear man more than we fear You!

3. Moses Is Born

- a. Exodus 2:1-10 *1 Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, 2 and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. 4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.*

- b. *5 Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. 6 She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. 7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" 8 "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. 10 When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."*
- c. Hebrews 11:23 *By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.*
- d. Comments:
- i. Moses was an extraordinarily beautiful child.
 - ii. The Greek that is used means “lovely in the sight of God” and has to do with ethical beauty. They somehow senses that this child would be special, perhaps even used by God. They tried to protect him by hiding him for 3 months. On the verge of being caught, they do the unthinkable, they put him in a waterproof bassinette and set him afloat among the reeds.
 - iii. Whatever this ethical beauty, this special pre-ordained character produced an outward beauty. This beauty and countenance was a means to his preservation that God has foreordained, making him attractive to the daughter of Pharaoh who took him and later adopted him as her own.
 - iv. We hear a parallel story from the book of Acts 7:20-22 " *20 "At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for in his father's house. 21 When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. 22 Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.*
 - v. The additional details we hear is that he was educated in all of the wisdom of the Egyptians, he was (NOTE THIS FOR LATER) POWERFUL in speech and action.
 1. He learned to read and write. This would be needed for the writing of the first 5 books of the bible.
 2. He was a powerful public speaker and apparently had great physical prowess.

Watch what happens to him:

4. Moses as Savior

- a. Exodus 2:11-15 *One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. 12 Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?" 14 The man said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "What I did must have become known." 15 When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.*
- b. Moses must have stayed in touch with his family (v. 11), perhaps in touch with his sister and later his brother Aaron. He went out and watched his people, the people of his heritage struggling amid slavery. He must have looked at his own position and concluded that God had given him this great position (like Joseph) to benefit his people.
- c. So Moses acts in his own self-energy and understanding.
 - i. He is rash, impetuous, and headstrong, and he does what he believes is right.
 - ii. In the years to come he will become the meekest and most humble of men, conscious to a fault of his own weakness.

- iii. He will in the years to come be at every step looking up for guidance and help from God, **but now he is leaning wholly on his own understanding** and, without guidance of God, he tries to secure the freedom of his people by the assertion of his own will and strength.
- iv. And in the middle of this attempt to “save” these people he is rejected by the very people he felt led to save! He can only run to the desert, away from everyone and everything he knows. What a tough road life must have looked like ahead.
- d. This is the beginning of the making of a saint in him; and it will take many years of waiting and trials before this strong and self-reliant nature would be broken down and shaped into a vessel for God’s use.
 - i. God’s servants must be specially crafted for the purpose of their lives.
 - ii. This special tooling of our lives, the molding of our hearts, the breaking of our spirits does not come naturally to any of us, and often only comes after years of deep and painful discipline.
 - iii. How is God molding you? Have you thought your life was just a series of isolated accidents and you are life’s hapless victim? NO!
 - iv. God has great things planned for you. He has people’s lives for you to touch, and you will be useless until you have been molded and shaped and broken of self-reliance.
 - v. As I talk with some of our seniors and hear the delightful stories of the things God has done in their lives and through them, I am reminded that these great things that God did were not easy and cost-free. These seniors paid a price to become the tools they were in God’s hands.
- e. Do you desire to have God accomplish great things through you? There are several key points about attempting to accomplish great things:
 - i. **Doing God’s Will**
 - 1. Jesus said, “**my food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.**”” (Jn 4:34)
 - a. **The greatest thing to do in life is to do God’s will.**
 - 2. Most people spend their entire lives trying to do their own will. They will even paint it and decorate it so it will look like God’s will. They will become religious and go through lots of church activities just to try to justify the life they lead.
 - a. Yet their life is just the pursuit of their own will.
 - 3. I believe that the ½ of the problem for many of us is discerning the will of God. The other half is actually doing it once it is apparent to us.
 - 4. I have known young men and women who suddenly stood up in a worship service at the invitation and came forward in an emotional moment to say they were called to the ministry or to missions. Yet in a few weeks they are gone from sight because they begin to realize the cost of pursuing a vision is beyond their willingness to pay it. Leaving everything is easy when you talk about it, but when you have to do it, it is much harder.
 - a. **The test of whether you actually have heard God (or just your own heart) will be evident by the passion and endurance with which you pursue it.**
 - b. I rather think that Moses thought he was helping God when he tried to defend the Hebrew from the Egyptian. He very likely believed he was following God’s will!
 - c. But when he was rejected by his fellow Hebrews, he probably had second thoughts. He probably never expected to hear God actually confront him with such a calling.
 - d. This is because while he pursued God’s will, he wasn’t doing it GOD’S WAY!
 - e.

ii. **Doing God's will, God's Way**

1. Moses tried to accomplish the deliverance of the Hebrews in his own way, with his own power and might.
2. **But God's ways are not our ways.**
 - a. Proverbs 14:12 *"There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death."*
 - b. Isaiah 55:8-9 *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts."*
 - c. Wide and narrow roads?
 - d. God's ways seem backward to this world, but it is the world that has the methodology backwards. Consider
 - i. Jesus told us that to be great you had to be a servant of all.
 - ii. Jesus told us that to find our life we would have to lose it.
 - iii. Jesus told a Jewish Rabbi named Nicodemus, *"You are Israel's teacher and you do not understand these things?"*
3. **God's ways will often be counterintuitive.**
 - a. That means they will seem almost foolish.
 - b. When we moved to Ft. Worth to go to Seminary, we tried to be prudent, tried to find a job, tried to find an apt. before we went, but when we got there, we had neither. That really sounds dumb. But in God's economy it was perfect. He placed us in an apartment that provided us a base for Jennifer to type tempapers and supplement our income.
 - c. God's ways don't always make sense until later. And then we see His hand and stand in awe!
 - d. {If Moses had really been doing God's will, God's way, he would not have been concerned who was looking. (Notice the passage says, "glancing this way and that and seeing no one"). }

iii. **Doing God's will, God's way, In God's Timing**

1. Moses wasn't in God's timing yet. He had 40 years of further preparation to go.
2. I remember 2 accountability partners who had washed out of ministry by the time they were 40; I was 40 and just getting started. I complained to God about the fact that I was starting ministry so late in life. He replied, "would you rather be starting or finishing at 40?"
3. So often we expect God to be on our timetable, and when He doesn't act when we want Him to, we take matters into our own hands – and we end up settling for far less than God's best. What is that called? SIN.
4. Jesus knew the value of perfect timing in waiting upon God when He said. *"My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready."* (John 7:6)
 - a. Waiting upon God is never easy. It requires trusting Him to know what He is doing.
 - b. Billy Graham's wife has been quoted as saying, *"we have learned that God is always on time, never late, and unfortunately, rarely early."*
5. Some of you have just recently become Christians. Some of you have been following God for years and years, and you are still wondering what your purpose will be. How will God use you?
6. You may have been going through all that you have in your life for the moments ahead, in the next months or years. God desires to use you. His timing is perfect.
7. Are you willing to wait upon God?

iv. **Doing God's Will, God's way, in God's time, Using God's Resources**

1. We all too often try to do things in our own strength. Moses certainly did. Peter did as well. Whenever we try to do God's will in our own strength, we can count on poor results.
2. Like Gideon, Moses was at first too strong for God.
3. But God will not give His glory to another.
4. God will not entrust His power to men until they are humbled and emptied and conscious of their helplessness.
 - a. We spoke of this last week when we spoke about the promise of the Holy Spirit's power.
 - b. God will not give the fullness of the power of His Spirit to anyone who refuses the Spirit's direction and control.
5. The most godly saints must suffer from a thorn in the flesh to remind them of their weakness.
6. A man who depended upon God's resources

5. Concluding observations:

- a. Acts 7:23-*"When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. 24 He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. 25 Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. 26 The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?' 27 'But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' 29 When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.*
 - b. Moses left everything he knew. He abandoned all of the comforts, all of the ways he had known and moved to a desert village where he would raise a family and work the hardest he had ever done by learning to be a shepherd. He would spend 40 long years getting to know a harsh wilderness. 40 long years thinking about all that he left behind. 40 long years about his family, his brother and sister. 40 years is a long time. Especially when you are 40 years old when that forty years begins.
 - c. Maybe you are in that "re-tooling" time in your life. You wonder where God can use you. Your life seems to be in neutral or reverse. Nothing makes sense anymore. You used to have a good life, and now it is hard. Occasionally you look up to heaven and ask "why God?" And you get no answer. Just silence and more of the same.
 - d. You are in your desert, your humbling time. God is molding you. Are you fighting Him or are you surrendering?
6. Today, you have heard about God's chosen servant, Moses, of his stellar beginnings and his humble mid-life. God wasn't done with Moses and He isn't done with you. Won't you look to Him and let him have His way in your life today? Let's pray.