

THE CALL OF MOSES: TAKEN FROM THE WATER AND SET ON FIRE FOR GOD

Text: Exodus 3:1-4; 13,14

Should we attempt to cover Moses' life, we would be required to teach a series. This morning I would like to deal with the aspect of the call of Moses. As we approach this time of the year, high school and college graduates are contemplating a change. This is often the time that families move. Along with the seasonal change of spring comes the change, or at least the contemplation of change, in people's lives.

Moses had some big changes that took place in his life. Consider, he was...

1. BORN WITH A DEATH WARRANT

Exodus 1:8,9, 16. Pharaoh felt threatened by the ever-growing population of Israel. Children are a gift and reward from the Lord. *"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward"* (Psalm 127:3). Pharaoh sees life as expendable and with his wicked attitude and in his depraved mind, if people live or die is contingent upon his wicked estimation of value to himself. If any man, woman or child is not valued or is considered a threat to his domain, remove them. Sadly, we see this same attitude prevailing today as innocent unborns are being snuffed out with the willing consent of parents who have deemed them not worthy of the life God Almighty gave them. Pharaoh commanded all boy babies to die, but in Exodus 1:17-21 we see that Shiphrah and Puah, the Egyptian midwives were applying the principle of Proverbs 24:11,12: *"If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"* We are born in sin, under a death warrant, but like Moses we, too, may be pulled to deliverance by the mighty power of God.

2. BLESSED WITH A GODLY FAMILY

Exodus 2:1-9. Moses was born into a very godly family; Amram was his father, Jochebed was his mother, Mariam was his sister and Aaron was his brother. Jochebed came up with a plan to hide Moses among the reeds in the river Nile River. Mariam then devised an adjoining plan that would make it possible for Jochebed to take care of Moses (at the princess' expense) for the first few years of Moses' life. The Bible is replete with verses confirming God's provision for His people. Job 38:41: *"Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat."* Psalm 34:10: *"The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing."* Psalm 84:11: *"For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."* Psalm 81:10: *"I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."* The Lord expresses some of His most wonderful provision through the family unit: *"God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains..."* (Psalm 68:6).

3. BROKEN THROUGH AMBITIOUS ATTEMPTS TO DO RIGHT

Exodus 2:11-15. Moses wanted to stop the oppression against the Israelites. In his attempt to relieve his fellow Jew, he took the life of an Egyptian taskmaster. Dr. Bob Jones Sr. said, "It's always right to do right. It's always wrong to do wrong and it is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right." A couple of days later when Moses saw two Hebrew men fighting, he tried to break it up and serve as a mediator, but he lost his credibility when the instigator of the altercation asked if he was going to be killed as Moses had previously killed the Egyptian. Then when Pharaoh discovered Moses' crime, he sought to kill him. In Exodus 2:15c we see a broken man, *"But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well."* God meets us at our deepest need. *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"* (Romans 8:31,32).

4. BROUGHT INTO RELATIONSHIPS

Exodus 2:16-25. Moses needed a wife and he needed a friend. We find that Moses found a friend in Jethro. Later in Exodus 18 we see Jethro gives Moses some wise and valuable advice when Moses' burdens were getting too heavy to carry. Jethro said, *"Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone"* (Exodus 18:18). The Bible says, *"Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war"* (Proverbs 20:18). *"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity"* (Proverbs 17:17). Then the Bible says, *"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him"* (Genesis 2:18). *"Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table"* (Psalm 128:3). We observe Moses is recovering from his loneliness as we contemplate Exodus 2:22, *"And she (Zipporah, Moses' wife) bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land."*

As a person who has ministered the Word of God and ministered to people most of my life, I can testify God's greatest life lessons to me have been learned by relationship with my family. I understand God's love for his wife, Israel and Christ's bride, the church through marriage. I understand the heart of God for his children through the relationship with my own children at every phase of their lives.

5. BECKONED FROM THE BACKSIDE

Exodus 3:1. Here is a portion of a poem by an unknown author that expresses what I am trying say at this point: *"When God wants to drill a man and thrill a man and skill a man...when God wants to mold a man to play the noblest part; When He yearns with all His heart to create so great and bold a man that all the world shall praise...watch His methods; watch His ways! How He ruthlessly perfects whom He royally elects...How He hammers him and hurts him, and with mighty blows converts him into frail shapes of clay that only God understands."* When God recommissioned Elijah, he did so in a cave in the wilderness. He raised up John the Baptist in the wilderness. He spoke for three years to Paul, alone in the desolate terrain of Arabia. Our Lord Himself did not begin His ministry until He was forty days in the wilderness. As we find Moses on *"the backside of the desert,"* we see God staying true to His form, i.e. raising up a man to Himself, for Himself, fearing God alone, not man.

6. BURNING WITH A CALL

Exodus 3:2-14. In the Bible, God often witnesses a strong manifestation of His presence through fire. John the Baptist said of Jesus, *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire"* (Matthew 3:11). On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came in power there was the witness of fire in the form of cloven tongues above the heads of the disciples (Acts 2:3). In Exodus 13:21, God guides His children by the pillar of fire. In the Tabernacle and Temple, the priests were commanded to keep the fire that God gave as a symbol of His presence burning, *"The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out"* (Leviticus 6:13).

The burning bush was a great example that God can take something frail and put His fire in it, yet not burn it up. A point should be made that we, like the bush should be ignitable. David Brainerd used to pray, "Lord make me a flame of fire for thee to burn out in one continual flame for thee." In Exodus 3:3, *"...Moses said, I will now turn aside see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."* God uses the man that is willing to go out of the way to find God's will for his life! Once Moses turned aside, God executed His call. Moses' response was correct: *"...Here am I"* (Exodus 3:4c). At this point the Lord gives Moses the specifics of his call in Exodus 3:5-12. Then when Moses asked what name He should give if asked by the children of Israel who sent him, the answer still rings with authority, truth and power: *"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you"* (Exodus 3:14). This is the great covenant name of God that tells us who He is and how much we need Him. Moses literally received a burning call from God. Will you respond in the same way Moses did when God calls you, i.e., "Here am I"?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.