

# Strengthening the Soul Your Faith

Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Exodus 2.16-25

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## I. Introduction to this Study

This week, we continue our summer series, Strengthening the Soul of Your Faith. In it, we are engaging the life of Moses, who learned a great deal *about* God, and accomplished great things *for* God. Many of us are seeking the same kind of life, to be filled with knowledge of God (orthodoxy), and put our faith into action (orthopraxy).

But believing the right things and living the right way requires following Moses' example, who allowed God to meet him at the deepest part of his being, transforming him within his soul.

As we will see below, the times we flee *from* God can be used *by* God to shape us into who God wants us to become.

## II. Study the Text

- a. Let's begin by rereading Exodus 2.1-15. Spend some time thinking through these verses. In our Sunday morning gatherings, we've discussed how God often works behind the scenes. Where do you see God at work in these verses?
- b. Read Exodus 2.16-20. We've all heard the phrase "fight or flight." In the first half of Exodus 2, Moses does both! He fights and flights! (Or, he *flees*, I suppose.) Between verses 15 and 16, it seems that Moses' character mellows somewhat, though he still acts on behalf of the oppressed.

What does this passage and the previous verses of chapter 2 tell us about Moses' character? Why do you think he acts the way he does?

- c. In verse 14 we see fellow Israelites respond to Moses' attempt at justice (though his action was an overreaction, to be sure). In verse 20, we see the Priest of Midian's response. Why do you think the responses are so different?
- d. Brevard Childs writes, "Significant are the contrasts drawn between the two episodes [of chapter 2]. In the first, the Egyptian is the enemy who oppresses; in the second, Moses is called an Egyptian who offers help against the oppressor. In the first, the strife is between an Egyptian and a Hebrew, in the second between two non-Hebrew people. In the first, Moses flees from his home; in the second he finds a home."  
What do you think of these differences? Why do you think the author of Exodus points out these specifics?
- e. Read Exodus 2.21-22. If you have children, what did you name them? Why?  
In ancient cultures, names carried significant meaning. What do you think of Moses' name for his son?

J.A. Motyer writes of the name Gershom, “[Moses] had obviously buried the ambitions that had previously motivated him and seems to have ‘come to the end of himself’ and accepted the nonentity and proper obscurity of the failure.” What do you think? Do you agree?

- f. Moses, an Israelite raised in an Egyptian family who fled to Midian and started a family names his son “Alien There.” In a way, Moses is an alien, a foreigner, twice over. How is *this* Moses different that the Moses we met in verse 11? Do you think his geographical location transformed his spiritual location? How so?
- g. Read Exodus 2.23-25. We read that the Israelites “groaned” and “cried out.” Perhaps it’s unintentional, but the author of Exodus does not state that they prayed directly to God. And yet, “their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God.” What does this tell us about the nature of God when people are oppressed? What if they don’t purposefully pray to God – can God hear their groans and cries? (see also Romans 8.22-27)
- h. Throughout Exodus chapter 1 and the majority of 2, it seems like God is distant, or is at least working behind the scenes. And yet, in verse 24, all that changes: God hears, remembers, looks on, and is concerned. While the author has followed the narrative of Moses out in Midian, we are now reminded of the Israelites enslaved in Egypt, and that God is ready to act!

Pretend you don’t know the rest of the story for a moment: How could God use Moses after all he’s been through? How could God use Moses’ journey to accomplish His will? How could his time in Midian have shaped him? (see also Hebrews 11)

### III. Reflect and Respond

- a. Have you fought or fled in the past? From what – or from whom?  
Are you fighting or fleeing anything now? From what – or from whom?  
Where is God in your fighting and/or fleeing?
- b. Where/when have you felt like you don’t belong? How has God used that or redeemed that in your life?
- c. Ruth Haley Barton writes that in Midian “Moses discovered what we must all discover: solitude is the place of our own conversion. In solitude we stop believing our own press.” Could this be another reason why solitude is so difficult for us!? How have you seen this to be the case in your life?

### IV. Pray

- a. Ask God to help you see clearly the things you’re tempted to fight or flee from, granting you His wisdom to engage these dynamics of life faithfully,
- b. Pray for those in bondage now around the world, that God would hear, remember, look on, and be concerned, raising up modern day Moseses to deliver them by God’s guidance,
- c. Lift up our denominational dismissal process, that the Spirit of God would bring grace and peace to our ongoing discussions with Los Ranchos Presbytery.