

“Training at Midian”  
Exodus 2:15-25  
(Preached at Trinity, July 23, 2006)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we came to **Verse 11** Moses had passed from childhood to manhood. Forty years have passed. He has been raised up in the customs of Egypt. He has received an Egyptian secular education with all of the learning of the ancient world. He has enjoyed the vast wealth of Pharaoh’s house.  
But he has not forgotten his heritage. He has not forgotten his people.
2. One day he went to see the condition of his Hebrew brethren and witnessed an Egyptian taskmaster beating one of them. Becoming infuriated over what he saw he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand.
3. As we saw what Moses did was wrong because it was against the law of God. Moses knew it was wrong as evidenced by his own actions
  - A. He did it in secret  
**Exodus 2:12** – “And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was no man*”
  - B. He tried to cover his actions  
**Exodus 2:12** – “hid him in the sand”
4. In killing the Egyptian Moses permanently severed himself from his Egyptian roots.  
**Hebrews 11:24-26** – “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; <sup>25</sup> Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; <sup>26</sup> Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”
5. Moses genuinely believed he could stir the nation of Israel to action. He sincerely believed by God’s help he could be their deliverer.  
**Acts 7:25** – “For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.”
  - A. God had not yet called Moses to lead his people out of Egypt
    1. God did not call Moses to take up arms against this oppressor.
    3. God would later smite the Egyptians, but that would be His work.
  - B. The ultimate proof that it was not God’s plan is in Moses fleeing before Pharaoh.  
**Exodus 2:15** – “But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian”
  - C. No matter how noble his intentions, it was still sin.
6. Now confused and dejected Moses sits down by a well.
7. God was about to begin a time of preparation that would last 40 years. By the time God had completed this training time Moses would be 80 years old.
8. Tonight I want to share with you some of the important lessons God would teach Moses during his time of training.

- I. Moses was learning the importance of controlling his temper
- A. Soon after Moses sits down he again becomes a witness of injustice – **V. 15-16**
1. There was a man named Reuel, a priest of Midian, who had 7 daughters
    - a. **Chapter 3:1** tells us his name was also Jethro
    - b. There is a debate whether or not he is a priest of God  
Some claim he was polytheistic quoting Exodus 18  
**Exodus 18:11** – “Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all gods”
    - c. But he seems to have godly wisdom  
The name Reuel means “Friend of God”  
The name Jethro means “His abundance”
  2. Moses sees Reuel’s daughters being abused by some shepherd men – they would drive the women away making them wait until the male shepherds had watered their flocks. Apparently, this was a regular occurrence. Moses courageously came to their defense.
  3. Being raised as an Egyptian Moses would have been taught to despise shepherds.  
**Genesis 46:34** – “for every shepherd *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.”  
These young ladies were shepherdesses, yet Moses had compassion upon them
- B. Seeking justice is a good thing
1. When Moses came to the aid of the Hebrew slave he acted nobly.  
God loves justice and mercy  
**Psalms 89:14** – “Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.”  
**Proverbs 21:3** – “To do justice and judgment *is* more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”
  2. It was his uncontrolled anger that was his downfall
  3. Now that Moses is in Midian he again demonstrates his high love for justice and mercy  
Moses was bold while also learning to control the passion of his anger.
  4. Anger would be Moses’ lifelong besetting sin
    - a. He broke the first tablets of the Ten Commandments in anger  
**Exodus 32:19** – “And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.”
    - b. He smote the rock instead of speaking to it as God commanded  
**Numbers 20:10-12** – “And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? <sup>11</sup> And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”

- II. Moses learned that obedience to the law is essential
- A. Even good things must be done the right way
1. God loves justice and mercy
  2. Never are we allowed to forsake God's law even for apparent good reasons  
We must never embrace the principle of the end justifies the means
- B. Moses had learned this principle
1. In Egypt he came to the relief of the Hebrew slave, yet he killed the Egyptian in clear violation of God's law
  2. In Midian he came to the relief of the shepherd girls while controlling the extent of his wrath. He used only enough force to drive the oppressors away.
  3. Moses was not acting like God's deliverer. He was doing right things the right way.
  4. God demands absolute obedience from us at all times
- III. Moses learned the value of service
- A. After Moses drove away the shepherds he watered the flocks of Reuel's daughters  
**Exodus 2:19** – "And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew *water* enough for us, and watered the flock."
1. It was unthinkable for a man to do such a menial task as draw water
  2. Moses was not too proud to serve
  3. This would characterize the remainder of Moses' life, especially as Israel's deliverer and leader
  4. By learning to serve he was learning to lead. Leadership and service are inseparable. The leaders in our church are all servants. This is Christ-like behavior.  
**Matthew 20:28** – "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."  
<sup>NAS</sup> **Luke 22:26** "But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant."
- B. Service is a high virtue for God's people
1. As a pastor I have been continually grateful for those in my care who have servant hearts
  2. There are those who labor tirelessly – you know who you are.  
You help teach our children, you labor in VBS, you visit the sick, you labor in the upkeep of the buildings, you labor in our outreach ministry  
And I hear of how you serve others apart from the church

- IV. Moses learned the importance of patiently trusting God
- A. Moses went to Midian where he was cut off from civilization
1. Moses went from a life of riches in which his ever desire was met to a life in which he would trust God for his daily bread
  2. God's training often takes time – There are 40 difficult years between **Verses 22-23**
  3. God was teaching him to depend upon Him
  4. From the practical side God was teaching Moses the way of the wilderness. How to travel
- B. Moses was being taught patience
1. He became a shepherd – the very occupation despised by the Egyptians
  2. Sheep are not very bright and need food and water provided for them. They are prone to wander off. They are defenseless and subject to attack by wild animals and need constant protection. The life of a shepherd is a life of constant vigilance.
  3. This constant feeding, protecting, leading, watching was providing Moses to be the shepherd of God's people  
**Psalms 77:20** – “Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”
- C. Spiritually Moses was growing in his knowledge of God
1. Moses was taught of God from his early years with his mother. He had not forgotten his heritage
  2. But he likely also received spiritual training from his father-in-law who seems to be a man of wisdom and one who worshipped God  
**Exodus 18:9-10** – “And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.”
- V. There was one more point of preparation here
- A. The children of Israel were also being prepared
1. When Moses was in Egypt they were not yet ready for deliverance
  2. Now they are crying out to God  
**Exodus 2:23** – “And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.”
  3. They cried out to God, and God heard
- B. Sometimes we don't completely trust God until He humbles us
1. Sometimes He calls upon us to suffer
  2. Sometimes we are brought to the lowest point – This is where God's people are brought to cry out to Him. This is where we most understand our weakness. This is where we see our absolute dependence upon Him.

3. Sometimes all we can do is groan in faith before God, and He hears  
**Romans 8:26** – “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

#### Conclusion:

1. Like Moses, God is teaching, preparing, training, and nurturing us. Like Moses, it is a slow process for us.  
 God is at work in us.  
**Ephesians 2:10** – “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”
  - A. He uses life’s experiences to train us. People we have relationships with. Those who are more spiritual than us can be used greatly of God.
  - B. God can use our marital situation
    1. Singleness can create a special intimacy with God where we learn to lean entirely upon Him.
    2. Marriage can be used of God was the husband and wife aid in the sanctification of one another.
  - C. God can use our work situation as He surely did with Moses. Perhaps you work in a difficult situation – God is teaching you to trust Him. Perhaps God is teaching you the nature of leadership in your work setting. Perhaps your work seems mundane in which God is teaching you patience.
  - D. Sometimes He uses failures and mistakes. Moses sinned against God, yet God did not set him aside. God can work in spite of our failures. Sometimes it is after we have failed that we can see God’s hand at work in us.
2. We must understand the God is at work in us and learn from what He has to teach. John Wesley prayed, “I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.”
3. And we must be patient. Moses waited 40 years for God to use him. And the children of Israel waited decades if not centuries for God to deliver them. We must be patient and wait upon God. God never forgets His elect people.