

## Moses Leaves Egypt

**Text:** Exodus 2:11-22; Acts 7:20-29; Heb. 11:24-27

### Introduction:

1. Reminder: Moses' life divides into **three 40-year** periods:
  - Moses spent 40 years as a Student (Acts 7:22)
  - Moses spent 40 years as a Shepherd (Ex. 3:1; 7:7). This second 40-year epoch is what opens before us in this section of Exodus.
  - Moses spent 40 years as a Servant
2. In our last message we focused on Moses' decision to turn his back on the fame and fortune of Egypt. Hebrews 11 reveals that faith was behind Moses' godly decision.
3. In this lesson we will briefly review what we covered in our last lesson then continue to look at the faith that led to Moses departure from Egypt.

### I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOSES' FAITH (VS. 10-11)

Moses actions in this passage, though imperfect, reveal a faith that had grown.

**A. The Seed of Moses Faith (Vs. 10; Heb. 11:23)**

**B. The Sprouting of Moses Faith (Vs. 11)**

### II. THE DECISION OF MOSES' FAITH (VS. 11; HEB. 11:24-26)

Hebrews reveals that Moses' actions in visiting his brethren as recorded in Exodus were the product of his faith in God and represented a definite choice. Moses' faith helped him to make the right choice. Observe two aspects to Moses' decision of faith:

#### A. Faith's Refusal (Vs. 24-25)

1. **When He Refused** – "when he was come to years" (Vs. 24a)

2. **What He Refused (Vs. 24b-25)**

Moses refused:

a. The World's Popularity – "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter".

b. The World's Pleasures – "the pleasures of sin" (Vs. 25)

c. The World's Prosperity – "the treasures in Egypt"

d. **Summary:** By faith, Moses was enabled to overcome the lust of the flesh (Egypt's pleasures), the lust of the eyes (Egypt's treasures) and the pride of life (son of Pharaoh's daughter).

Moses rejected three of the world's biggest temptations: narcissism, hedonism, and materialism. God gave him the victory over the three big killers of men of God – fame, fortune and females.

3. **Why He Refused** – "By faith" (Vs. 24a)

#### B. Faith's Reward (Vs. 26)

Faith enabled Moses to sharply discern between what was temporal and what was eternal. His faith gave him focus on what was truly valuable.

### **III. THE DEFICIENCIES IN MOSES' FAITH (VS. 11B-14)**

The Exodus account highlights that Moses' faith had not yet grown to full maturity. At this stage in his life, Moses is both zealous and foolish. There would need to be more refining of Moses before he would be ready for his main life's work. Moses was battling what we all battle with, the assertion of the self-life in his walk of faith. Moses exhibited:

#### **A. Self-will in his Service (Vs. 11b-12)**

1. Moses came out to see his enslaved brethren and saw an Egyptian beating one of his Hebrew brothers. Moses looked this way and that, slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.
2. Moses' motive was right, his method was wrong. A response to the injustice he saw was only appropriate but it needed to be a wise response. The punishment did not fit the crime.
3. As the son of Pharaoh's daughter with the status of prince no doubt a verbal command would have been all that was required to stop the taskmaster beating the Hebrew slave. Instead, it appears Moses lost his temper, got in the flesh and took matters into his own hands.
4. The admonition from James is timely. James 1:19-20 "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, **slow to wrath**: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

#### **B. Self-focus in his Service (Vs. 12)**

1. Moses' furtive glances "this way and that" reveal that at this time he was more focused on how he appeared in the eyes of men than God. Moses' focus at this time was more **horizontal** than it was **vertical**. He was more focused on man's view of his actions than God's.
2. It also revealed the **doubt** in his heart over what he was about to do. The man of faith acting under God's direction has nothing to hide. Genuine service is marked by transparency. If you have something to hide, you can be certain there's something wrong with your service.
3. "Moses "looked this way and that way." There is no need of this when a man is acting with and for God, and in the full intelligence of His mind, as to the details of his work. If God's time had really come, and if Moses was conscious of being divinely commissioned to execute judgment upon the Egyptian, and if he felt assured of the divine presence with him, he would not have "looked this way and that way... **Whenever we look around to shun a mortal's frown or catch his smile, we may rest assured there is something wrong; we are off the proper ground of divine service.**" (C.H. Mackintosh)
4. Note: A convicting exercise is to pause and consider how many of your thoughts are centred on yourself rather than the Lord and others when you are preparing for an act of Christian service rather.

#### **C. Self-importance in his Service (Vs. 13-14; Acts 7:25)**

1. Moses comes back the next day and sees two Hebrews fighting. He rebukes them but they have a typical response to rebuke and lash out at Moses. "A man needs no great authority for the giving of a

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friendly reproof, it is an act of kindness; yet this man needs will interpret it an act of dominion, and represents his reprover as imperious and assuming.” (Henry)

2. Acts 7:25 “For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.” It was true that God was going to use Moses but **he was too big in the picture**. The word ‘supposed’ comes from the Greek word meaning “to think”. Moses’ mindset was that his brethren would recognize him as God’s appointed man for the hour.
3. Moses ran into several timeless principles that each of God’s servants must come to terms with – God’s work must be done in **God’s way**, in **God’s timing** and with **God’s enabling**.
4. We need to come to terms with the fact that often there is **too much of self** in our service for God to be of much spiritual use. This is often true in our early acts of service when we are still young in the faith. That does not mean we should not attempt to serve God as young Christians. We just need to remain humble and teachable as God works in our lives to refine our motives in order that our usefulness for His glory might be increased.
5. C.H. Mackintosh wisely notes, “The servant of Christ has to learn many a lesson, to undergo many an exercise, to pass through many a conflict, in secret, ere he is really qualified to act in public. Nature does not like this. It would rather figure in public than to learn in private. It would rather be gazed upon and admired by the eye of man than be disciplined by the hand of God. But it will not do. We must take God’s way. Nature may rush into the scene of operation; but God does not want it there. It must be withered, crushed, set aside. The place of death is the place for nature.”
6. J. Grant writes, “If the early attempts by Moses to deliver the people had gone ahead and even if they had been able to affect some kind of partial deliverance, it would have been recorded in history as **the work of Moses**. He might have been remembered as a powerful leader such as Alexander the Great, or Napoleon, but that would have brought no glory to God. In time Moses would see God’s work, done God’s way with God’s power.”

### IV. THE DEPARTURE OF MOSES’ FAITH (VS. 15-22; Heb. 11:27)

When Pharaoh heard that Moses had slain the Egyptian to protect a Hebrew slave, he sought to kill him. The primary issue was not that Moses had killed an Egyptian. The issue was that Moses had sided with a slave over a citizen of Egypt. This was an affront to the established order of Egyptian society and given Pharaoh’s policy of suppression towards the Israelites, it was seen as an act of treason. “Moses went against the education he would have received as a prince. One of the primary goals of Pharaoh’s educational system was to reinforce the pride of those in power. Some ancient Egyptian texts describe slaves as the “living dead” or donkeys. All of their hard labour is contrasted with the pleasures of the ruling elite, who enjoy a life of ease.” (Ryken)

#### A. The Principles in Moses’ Departure – “By faith he forsook Egypt”

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1. The principle of faith – “by faith”. It took faith for Moses to step out and leave where he was. He could have made the excuse “well God put me here”. That would be a true statement on the one hand. God had providentially placed Moses in the Egyptian palace. But faith also recognizes that God can also move us on from where we are. We note that faith enabled Moses to overcome his fear of Pharaoh – “not fearing the wrath of the king”.
2. The principle of separation – “he forsook Egypt”.
  - a. We see the wisdom of God in removing him from Egypt. Victory would not come from the man of God working from within the system but from the place of separation outside the system. God separated Moses from Egypt, matured him, then brought him back to impact Egypt. **Separation from sin and the world is necessary if we are going to have a true impact upon the world.**
  - b. “We have here the great cause of the weakness of faith in our days. There is no separation from the world. So many Christians seek to have as much of its pleasure and honour and riches as they possibly can, consistently with their profession of religion. In such an atmosphere faith is stifled. Many hardly believe, or never remember, that the world, with its arts and culture and prosperity, amid all its religious professions, is still the same world that rejected Christ.” (Andrew Murray)

### **B. The Perspective of Moses’ Departure – “he endured as seeing him who is invisible”**

1. Moses eyes of faith gave him a vision of the invisible God and gave him the strength to patiently endure.
2. “Faith looks at everything in the light of eternity, judging of it as one will do when the judgment day is past, and the glory begun; everything is seen in its true value, and sacrifice and suffering and loss and trial are welcomed as the training in which the glad decision, and the firm will, and the strong character, and the victory of faith are attained.” (Andrew Murray)

### **C. The Profit of Moses’ Departure (Vs. 15b-22)**

God blessed Moses separation from Egypt, giving him a spouse, son and a place of service where he could be prepared for what God had in store in the future.

1. The blessing of a Spouse (Vs. 15b-21) – behind every great man there is a great woman. A man of God is incomplete without a help meet.
  - a. The **Location** of their Meeting (Vs. 15a)
    - i. Midian - Midian in Moses’ time “was located generally to the south of Moab and down the eastern side of the eastern gulf of the Red Sea.” “The Midianites were descendants of Abraham through Keturah (Gen. 25:2, 4). Some appear to have dwelt in cities; other lead a more nomadic existence. The paths of the Midianites and the sons of Joseph had

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- crossed previously when Joseph’s brothers sold him into the hands of Midianitish merchantmen (Gen. 37:28).” (J. Grant)
- ii. Most of the Bible’s references to the Midianites are negative but in Moses’ case, God used them to provide a place of refuge. It is a reminder that God can use **unlikely places** and **unlikely people** to help his children in times of crisis and need.
  - iii. The well – there are a few famous Bible romances that started at wells. Isaac’s servant found Rebekah at a well. Jacob first met Rachel at a well. And here Moses meets Zipporah.
- b. The **Occasion** of their Meeting (Vs. 16-20)
- i. The mistreatment from the shepherds (Vs. 16-17a) It appears the shepherds who were bullying Jethro’s daughters allowed them to fill the troughs, then drove them away and let their own flocks drink up the water in the troughs.
  - ii. The manliness of Moses – he was caring and courageous!
    - Moses “stood up and helped them”. We need masculine men like this who will use their God given attributes in the right way to protect women and the vulnerable from unjust treatment. Rawlinson says that the word “stood” means he “sprang to his feet.” Moses was prompt to help. He had an inner compulsion that would not let him sit by and watch injustice take place. You get a sense from this chapter that Moses was a strong man. The Egyptian taskmaster was no match for him and neither were these rough band of shepherds.
    - This took courage on the part of Moses. He was outnumbered but this did not stop him standing up to the bullies. We need more soldiers, not sooks and sissies!
    - Note: Chivalry used to be promoted as a desirable trait in a man. The word origin goes back to the days of the Knights. The word described the qualities of the ideal knight. To be chivalrous therefore means to be valiant. In relation to the treatment of women, it speaks of a man “marked by gracious courtesy and high-minded consideration especially to women.” (Merriam Webster)
    - Moses gentlemanly conduct paid off. He made a good impression on Zipporah<sup>1</sup> and she became his wife!
  - iii. The mistake of the ladies (Vs. 18-20) They left their hero behind at the well! Their father was clearly alarmed they hadn’t repaid his kindness with an invitation to come for dinner. Sometimes we can forget to show appreciation for someone who has helped us greatly in a time of need.

### 2. The blessing of a Son (Vs. 22)

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<sup>1</sup> Zipporah means “bird”.

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- a. He names his first son Gershom meaning “stranger” or “foreigner” as he was a stranger in a strange land.
  - b. Moses had a second son, Eliezer, by Zipporah, but he is not mentioned by name until Exodus 18:4. Eliezer was so named “for the God of my father, said he, was mine **help**, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh” (Ex. 18:4).
3. The blessing of Service (Vs. 21a; 3:1)
- a. Moses becomes a shepherd in the employ of his father-in-law. Shepherding was an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen. 46:34). No doubt Moses was very aware of this. And yet he humbly accepts this occupation. Do you see what has happened? Moses has gone from the top rung of Egyptian society to the bottom rung of Egyptian society but it was the best thing that ever happened to him. It made him useable. God cannot use a proud person!
  - b. Numbers 12:3 informs us that Moses went on to become the meekest man on the earth. No wonder he became such a giant for God! Meekness is the path to true greatness; humility the pathway to usability.
  - c. Moses would learn valuable lessons as a shepherd that would help him to be the leader of God’s people in the future. He was also gaining valuable knowledge and experience of the wilderness. J. Grant notes, “Preparation for the service of God is often carried out without an awareness that God is working in the life. It is often with hindsight we can see with sharper clarity how and why God prepared us the way He did. As David was tending his sheep, he little knew that he was being fitted to sit on the throne of Israel as the shepherd/king. The young Samuel at Shiloh probably didn’t realize he was being prepared to impact his nation. As Daniel and his friends left Jerusalem as captives to the Babylonians, they probably had no idea that their lives would be propelled into service for God at the highest levels of the Babylonian Kingdom.”

### Conclusion:

1. Do your choices reflect the perspective of faith? Are you making your decisions in the light of eternity? Do you need to refuse some things by faith?
2. Are you cooperating with God as he works to remove self from your service? Are you too big in the picture for God to use in any significant way?
3. Are you pursuing the separated, pilgrim walk?