

January 15th, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Delivered: The Rescue from Bondage

Sermon #1 Title: *When God Moves*

Sermon #1 Text: (Exodus 3:1-4)

Intro:

Native Americans used to think that if they did the right kind of dance that whatever God there was would make it rain.

- One of the first thing to realize is the fact that God will not move until God is ready to move, but when God is ready to move, there is no stopping Him.

- Now God is ALWAYS at work; but God does not ALWAYS do it in the noon day sun for all to see.

- Nonetheless, there have been times in history when at God's discretion, He stepped out of mystery and right into someone's life in order to do His work.

*Note – Now let me say this – there is absolutely nothing you can do to “Make God intervene.” – But there are conditions in which He is looking for in order to show Himself in someone's life.

We turn our attention today to that time that God rescued the nation of Israel from the oppressions and afflictions resting on them in Egypt.

- But when you come to these moments in history there are some big picture things you need to recognize.

- As God delivers one people He destroys another
- While He is working for the Nation of Israel, He is working in the man Moses.
- While He is blessing Moses; He is blasting Pharaoh
- While He is Plaguing Egypt, He is Preserving Israel
- Multiplied layers of study and spiritual truth in the Epic Work of getting one nation out of bondage, and bringing another to its knees.

While He is working on the national and global scale, He is working on the personal and private one as well.

Israel had a life of crushing problems in Egypt. – But the answer for those problems was being prepared in Midian.

- It is one thing for you to be interested in God's work in our nation; but it doesn't do you any good until you are interested in God's work in you!

I. The Setting When God Moved – vs 1-4

*Note – The first thing that the Lord tells us at the beginning of the chapter is the time and setting in which He moved! He tells us what was happening when He spoke into the life of Moses one day on the western side of a desert in Midian.

A. The Condition Moses was In – vs 1

2 Chronicles 16:9 – *“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him...”*

1.) The Obscurity of his life – “Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian...”

*Note – Moses has been long forgotten in Egypt. – Contrary to popular opinion, Moses never was a “prince” in Egypt by official standards, or had any royal authority by any official standards. – Yes, he lived the life of royalty being raised in Pharaoh’s home, but he never had any Egyptian authority.

a.) 2:14 – The Hebrew slaves testified to that when they said – “*Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?*”

*Note – Now Moses did live the life of Riley in the Egyptian White House, but the Hebrews acted like he had no legal authority over them.

- He has moved from the heights of fame to the desert of the unknown! Over the last forty years Moses has become a forgotten, little-known man working alone in a desert in Midian.

Nonetheless, by the time that we get here, something in Moses comes to the top; which was contentment in the obscurity of life.

2:21 – “And Moses was content to dwell with the man; and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.”

- the idea behind the Hebrew word used for “content” is that he had “yielded himself to” and “consented himself to” live under Jethro’s tent.

*Note – I don’t know why the Lord was working this way, but I know one thing that was accomplished. – Any pride, any self-aggrandizement, any desire to “be a big fish in a big pond” someday was GONE.

One writer pointed out the fact that “if you cannot learn to live peacefully in obscurity, you will never graduate from God’s school of desert theology.”

- As long as you need to be “known” and have your name in lights, rest assured, loneliness in some desert condition of life is one measure God takes to get that out of you!

- The Lord took him from the top to the bottom, and by the time we get to the desert it is apparent, Moses had learned to live peacefully on the bottom!

*Note – Speaking of Moses in the desert, Alexander MacClaren wrote – “*Solitude is 'the mother- country of the strong,' and the wilderness, with its savage crags, its awful silence, and the unbroken round of its blue heaven, was a better place to meet God than in the heavy air of a palace, or the profitless splendours of a court...*”

2.) The Quality of his life. – “he kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian...”

*Note – Here is an 80-year-old man who had known the heights of wealth, and family fortune in his younger days; now tending the flock of his father-in-law.

(Typically reserved for the younger men of the family.)

- the point being that Moses was not a picture of great success or high achievement.

(He had gone from famous royalty to the bluest of obscure blue-collar work.

He had no sheep of his own – he is raising someone else's. – He had not advanced up the ladder of success, or moved up in quality or station of life.

*Note – Now here is the short of it so far:

- He is a forgotten man on the backside of a desert
- He is a mediocre man on the backside of a desert
- and as far as the eye can see, that is all he will ever be!

3.) The Adversity of his life. – Midian

*Note – Midian is a hot, hard, and unwelcoming kind of land.

- Chuck Swindoll points out that as a boy growing up, he lived on the banks of the Nile River –
- he had his food prepared for him by other people who had to worry about growing it
- he had the finest of clothes – the best of universities – the most prestigious connections – all gone....

*Note -Now know this... he knowledgeably and willfully gave all of those things up – and then had to learn the life of a shepherd in a wilderness.

*Note – Know this and we'll move on. Moses learned a lot more than just about sheep while he was in that desert!

B. The Contact the Lord Made – vs 1b-3

1.) The Path Moses was On – *“and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.”*

*Note – Here is where the sovereignty of God meets the seeming randomness of man. Did God lead Moses to him, or did Moses lead his flock to God? – The answer is Yes.

I remind you – Moses is grazing his sheep in a desert. – The western side of the mountain by the way the used directions.

- If those who teach us Bible customs are correct, at that time in that place, there was small ground cover type patches of vegetation scattered around that area. And as Moses led this flock from patch to patch, scarce water hole to scarce water hole, he wound up in a place with useless scrub brushes dotting the hillside.

*Note – Now let me ask you this question – who planted those patches of vegetation? – Who made grasses to grow in certain places in the desert? – Who made small springs of water come from the ground in particular places?

(Here is the point – Sometimes you may feel like you're just wondering from grass patch to grass patch, but it is the Lord God of Heaven that planted them.)

- As far as Moses knew, he was a mediocre man, long forgotten by society, leading someone else's sheep from grass patch to grass patch on the Western side of a Midianite mountain.

2.) The Place that God Spoke – vs 2

a.) Over 300 miles and 40 years away from all things Modern in Egypt.

*Note – *It should be noticed that the Lord could have spoken to Moses anywhere in the world that He wanted.... And God chose His desert over man's world!*

*Note – It should also be noticed that Israel had been in Egypt for 400 years; Moses in Midian 40 of those, and that the Lord could have at any time moved heaven and earth to get Israel out of Egypt – But He chose Now. – Not before now, and not later than now – but now.

b.) This blessed Bush

- a.) ordinary scrub brush
 - the bramble of the earth.

*Note – Now don't over-look the fact that God bypassed the world's royalty – for a scrub brush.

- God did not choose Jethro, a priest of Midian, to light His power on... - He chose a scrub brush

c.) vs 2-3 – Note the things we are told:

- (1.) The angel of the Lord appeared.
- (2.) Fire in the midst of the bush
- (3.) The Bush is not Consumed
- (4.) Moses is amazed that it is not consumed.

*Note – Notice the quote – “this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.”

*Note – Now we look at two particular things about this sight.

#1 – The amazement is not the fact that the bush is burning, but rather that it is not consumed.

- A bush burning in the desert is not necessarily that strange of a sight.

- Some historians and customs teachers tell us common ordinary lightning storms that roll through this region have burned up more than one scrub brush over the years.

- In fact just note what Moses said it was that captured his attention.

- He had seen bushes on fire before – but he had never seen a bush on fire that wasn't consumed or destroyed.

#2- Why didn't the angel of the Lord just appear to Moses? – He did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. – Why didn't He just make His presence known without the fire and the bush? Why did God do it this way?

*Note – Know this. He does not tell us. In the vastness of His Creative Mind, and Wisdom and Heart; having the ability to speak to someone in any way that He chooses – chose this way. – And wants us to see it, and know it – but not have an explained reason for it.

- Now there are some things that God shows us here, that we understand and learn later.

1.) The Fire of God. – Needs no fuel. But fire all throughout scripture has the visible association with Personal Presence of God.

- The Pillar of Fire by Night
- The Fire that consumed the Altar for Elijah
- The Tongues of Fire demonstrated by the Holy Spirit.
- Our God is a Consuming Fire – the Bible will say.
- The Fire that Tries our Works one day to decide if we have produced gold, silver, and precious stones, or just wood hay and stubble.

*Note – The fire of God, needs no earthly fuel. It cannot be created, controlled, or captured.

- It purifies what He wants to purify – He destroys and consumes what He wants to destroy and consume, and He can turn off the heat of it, without dimming the light of it.

*Note – Furthermore – in this passage it is associated with the Pure Holiness of God.

2.) – The Scrub Brush

*Note – But note what God does. He puts His presence on a desert scrub brush. – The most useless thing to man.

- Scrub brushes burn fast – they are not really even good for heat.

*Note – Within this picture, You see God choosing to show Himself through the bramble of His desert, rather than the finest of man's comforts.

*Note – I do not know why God chose this method. But one thing that I cannot help but see is the fact that God showed us, that there are times He would rather Show You Himself in the most Useless thing to man; than He would the Plushest of palaces.

- God is never impressed with man's ingenuity – He has no use for it nor regard for it.

*Note – I don't know what message Moses got from this sight, but he could at least see that God needed nothing special to make His presence known!

*Note – Here's the point. There is a reason God uses ordinary things to show His extraordinary presence; that will not

merely be added to the catalogue of man-made sights. – **Never Look for the Lord in the Man-Made!**

*Note – God did not meet Moses where he was.... Moses met God where HE was.

C. *The Call that God Gave* – vs 3-4

1.) Came from the angel of the Lord – the messenger of the Lord.

*Note – In case you have missed it, at this point in Moses' life, God has moved in His time and in His manner, and through His messenger.

(*Note – While you can never make God move, you can be available when He does.)

2.) It did not come until Moses gave His attention to this sight.

a.) "When the Lord saw that Moses turned aside to see, God called unto Him out of the midst of the bush..."

*Note – Rarely will God ever shout over the noise of your busy-ness.

*Note – Notice carefully that when Moses gave His attention to see what was going on, then and only then did God speak to Him.

- James 4:4 – "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you."

*Note – We cannot say it enough, you have as much of God as you are willing to pay attention to. – He is not a fast-food God!

*Note – Know this. – Many people want to see God's call in their lives in some mystical, magical and monumental way, filled with skyrocket and background music. Do you know

where you will God's extraordinary presence is in this ordinary world? It is no longer in a Bush to Burn, but a Book to Read! – His Word to us is not found in a Bush, but in His Book! – And there is no substitute.

(You will never have a busy, chaotic, consuming schedule – and His Word at the same time.)

- If you have time to watch a ball game - you have time to miss one – and study His Word.
- If you have time to watch a movie – you have time to miss a movie – and hear from God.
- If you have time to go play – you have time not to – and go hear from God.

*Note – Now listen to me. None of those things are wrong – they are just to be LAST. If anything is going to get missed, it is those things, not the Word of the Lord.

*Note – The call that God gave came “From the messenger of the Lord – when He got the attention of Moses – and

3.) Was Personal to him.

a.) “And God called him out of the midst of the bush, and said Moses, Moses...”

*Note – Let me ask you a question. – What was Moses birth name? – You don't know, and I don't either.

*Note – All that we know him by is his pagan name. Pharaoh's daughter named him, and for the rest of eternity that is what He is known by.

- God called him that.
- The Lord Jesus called him that.
- All of the Bible calls him that.

*Note – What's the big deal about that?

1.) Her role in his life is validated by the Divine
a.) God recognizing his name forever, is Him validating Pharaoh's daughters role in His eternal plan for ever.

2.) You can change your name but the Lord still knows who you are! – The Lord God knows YOU.

*Note – It is really irrelevant because the Bible tells that there is a day when He will give those He has redeemed a “new name.”

Conclusion:

- God is overseeing the nations of the earth. And as we speak He is also overseeing things for every individual that makes up those nations.

- He is available to all – yet forces none.
- He will speak to all – on His terms.
- He will rescue all – on in His way.
- He is all loving – He is all right – and He will never sacrifice his “rightness” under the guise of being all loving. – To hear from Him, you must Listen to Him, His Way; not yours.