

Right Person, Right Place, Wrong Time and Power

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Exodus 2:11–25 (CSB)

MOSES IN MIDIAN

¹¹Years later, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his own people and observed their forced labor. He saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his people. ¹²Looking all around and seeing no one, he struck the Egyptian dead and hid him in the sand. ¹³The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, “Why are you attacking your neighbor?”

¹⁴“Who made you a commander and judge over us?” the man replied. “Are you planning to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?”

Then Moses became afraid and thought, “What I did is certainly known.” ¹⁵When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian, and sat down by a well.

¹⁶Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. ¹⁷Then some shepherds arrived and drove them away, but Moses came to their rescue and watered their flock. ¹⁸When they returned to their father Reuel, he asked, “Why have you come back so quickly today?”

¹⁹They answered, “An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock.”

²⁰“So where is he?” he asked his daughters. “Why then did you leave the man behind? Invite him to eat dinner.”

²¹Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. ²²She gave birth to a son whom he named Gershom, for he said, “I have been a resident alien in a foreign land.”

²³After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor; and they cried out; and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God. ²⁴And God heard their groaning; and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; ²⁵and God saw the Israelites; and God knew.

1. The first 40 years of Moses' life is summed up quickly.

A. About 40 years happens between the first part of Chapter 2 and verse 11.

1. We can assume that Moses grew up as one of the many young men in Pharaoh's court.
2. He would have been educated and prepared to serve a function within the Egyptian empire.
3. His life would have been a far cry different than the lives of his Israelite family.

B. It is really difficult to know exactly what Moses is thinking about being caught in-between His people and Egypt.

1. Does he always know that he is different?
2. Does he recognize that he is not really Egyptian?
3. (circumcision might offer a clue here: I'm assuming he was circumcised).
4. Does Moses feel like an outsider?
 - a. Maybe he loves being one of the grandsons of Pharaoh.
 - b. Maybe he initially loves the privilege, opportunity, and access.
5. At some point, Moses becomes curious.
 - a. He wonders out from the palace area to one of the storage cities.
 - b. We assume that the palace and the worksites were in the same town and vicinity.
 - c. But that isn't necessarily so.
 - d. It's possible that Moses, until he was in his 30s or 40s, had never really seen what Egypt was doing to his people.

C. The, at some point, the narrator of this story says that Moses went out to his own people.

1. Was this the first time he saw Egypt for who she really was?
 - a. She was a powerful, wealthy empire.
 - b. An Empire, much like the later Roman empire, that used brute strength and slavery to build wealth for a select few.
2. Was this fieldtrip the moment that the seeds of deliverance found their solid footing within Moses?
3. About the only clue we have into Moses' thought process were Written several thousand years later, in Hebrews 11:24–25 (CSB)
²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ²⁵and chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin.

2. Upon arriving to the worksite, Moses is upset by the treatment of his people. Vs. 11-12

A. Again, we don't know if this is the first-time he has seen something like this before.

1. Surely, a 40-year old "prince of Egypt" would have known the harsh realities of kingdom building.
2. Maybe this was the first time he had seen it with his own life.
3. Very possibly, what Moses experienced in this moment, was the realization of his life's calling and purpose.
 - a. Moses has no idea what the next 80 years hold for him.
 - b. If he could have seen the plagues, and the wilderness, and the rebellions, Moses would have quit before he ever started.
 - c. Knowing your calling is different than knowing the details.

d. When you know your calling, you find direction not description.

B. Notice all of the possessives in these verses:

1. Moses went out to his own people.
2. He saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his people.
3. **When God gives you a calling, he gives you ownership.**
 - a. A town becomes your town.
 - b. An issue becomes your issue.
 - c. A person becomes your person.
 - d. Callings are intense, they are personal, and require ownership.

C. Moses now realizes that, in some way, he was called to help his people.

1. We know that Moses will be the right person for this task.
2. We know that Moses will be used to deliver the Hebrews from the Egyptians.
3. **What Moses did not yet realize is that our calling, timing, and empowering are often revealed at different times.**
 - a. Moses was the right person and he was in the right place.
 - b. But he was in the wrong time and the wrong power.

3. If you have to look both ways before doing something, you are probably in the wrong time or wrong power.

A. Moses, looks both ways to make sure no one is watching, and then kills the Egyptian taskmaster and buries him in the sand.

1. Moses knew that what he was doing was violating a law or code.

2. Moses knew that, if found out, it would mean his punishment and probable death.
3. Moses did it anyway.
4. Moses was right in know that his calling was as deliverer, but he was wrong in the timing and the power with which God would use him.

B. Just because God places a call in our life today, it doesn't mean the timing is now.

1. Often, we get an idea or a hint of our calling and start making plans to bring that to fruition right now.
2. What happens is we get out in front of God's will.
 - a. Joseph, the original deliverer, was guilty of this.
 - b. Remember, he had a dream of his brothers bowing down before him.
 - c. Joseph's calling and dream was real, but he made a mistake by trying to implement and share that calling before the time was right.
3. Moses was right in wanting to deliver his brethren.
 - a. He was wrong to in his time and his means.
 - b. God would set His people free.
 - c. But it would be in ways that the Moses of Chapter 2 couldn't imagine.
4. Now, Moses flees to a place called Midian for 40 years.
 - a. Moses didn't plan on living in Midian, but God used the land of Midian to do prepare Moses for his calling.
 - b. What's so significant about Midian?

4. The Significance of Midian. (See Map)

- A. **First, Midian is the place where Moses finds new family.**

1. As Moses comes into this land, he comes upon a well.
2. At the well, there are several women who were trying to water their father's sheep.
 - a. But several local shepherds oppressed the women, driving them away from their task and their lively hood.
 - b. It is then that Moses intervenes, asks as deliverer, and rescues these women.
3. The father of these women was so happy and thankful; he gives his daughter Zipporah to Moses as his wife.
 - a. With Zipporah, Gershom is born.
 - b. Zipporah and Gershom becomes the family that Moses was robbed of.
4. Isn't it incredible what God can do with our unplanned detours?
 - a. When we thing that we have messed up the calling and plan of God, God does something spectacular.
 - b. God redeems, restores, and he reconciles our past with our present.
 - c. Moses hadn't planned on being in Midian, but it was in Midian that Moses received a family.

B. Second, It was in Midian that Moses is connected to the history of his birth family.

1. Moses was adopted.
 - a. So often in adoption, there is a complete severance to the previous family and history.
 - b. Usually this is for the best.
 - c. But for Moses, he needed to discover his Hebrew roots before he could become the deliverer of the Hebrews.
 - d. Midian was the perfect place for that discovery.

2. Midian was one of Abraham's sons by Keturah (Gen. 25:1-6).
3. It were Midianite traders that brought Joseph down into Egypt to be sold as a slave hundreds of years before.

C. Third, It was in Midian that Moses encountered God.

1. The next couple of weeks, we are going to look at this more in-depth.
2. But let me ask you this:
 - a. Is there any evidence that through the first 2 chapters of Exodus that Moses knows anything about God?
 - b. Moses was raised by Egyptians and their Pantheon of gods.
 - c. There is no evidence that Moses has ever had an encounter with God yet.
3. In the early life of Moses we see that **it is possible to have a calling from God without yet having a relationship with God.**
 - a. God uses people all the time, and not all of them are Christians.
 - b. Later on, God uses Cyrus the Great to set Israel free from their Babylonian captivity, but he wasn't a godly man.
 - c. Pontius Pilate had no clue God was using him as a pawn in the plan of redemption when he assigned Jesus to be crucified.
 - d. Jesus said that people will perform miracles in His name and yet they don't have a relationship with God.
4. I dare to say that **there are people here today who are trying to fulfill God given callings without God.**
 - a. You are doing the right thing and you are in the right place but you are doing it with the wrong power.

b. For some of us today, the most important thing we can do is not to find our purpose but to find our relationship with Jesus.

5. Maybe you find yourself in your own version of Midian.

A. You've tried and failed once already.

1. You stepped out and stepped wrong.
2. You are now questioning so much about your past, present, and future.
 - a. The enemy is sowing all sorts of doubts into your heart and mind.
 - b. You wonder if God can ever trust you or use you again.
3. Let the example of Moses encourage you:
 - a. Just because you outstepped God in the past, that doesn't mean you have to be out of step with God now.
 - b. God has a beautiful way of using out of the way places like Midian to help us to discover our callings and purposes.

B. It is possible to leave Midian better than you left it.

1. Most of us have been or are in tough situations.
2. That is what led Moses to Midian to begin with:
 - a. It was there he received a wife and children.
 - b. It was there he got to know his new father-in-law, who was a priest and a wise man.
 - c. It was in Midian that Moses had an encounter with God.
3. Don't despise what God is trying to teach you where you are.
 - a. It could be in this difficult season of life that you receive your greatest blessings.

b. Your greatest encounter with Jesus maybe in your near future.

c. It doesn't have to be in the palace, or in the church, or in a special service.

d. It can happen on an ordinary day when God shows up!

C. For those of you thinking about giving up, don't.

1. Don't quit, don't give up, don't surrender.

2. Be on the look-out for God to do the impossible.

3. Midian may not have been in your plans, but God knows.