



The Lord is My Strength

The Misunderstood Leader

Exodus 2

- Our first introduction to this man of faith is a record of what you might call a Failure
- God deliberately includes the details of the failures of many of the great men of old, so that we can be encouraged in our own weaknesses, but also so that we can recognize the ways in which God enables men to overcome failure and the kinds of ways that God can use men even in the light of their failures
- We are looking at the life of Moses from this standpoint
- We are looking at the Moses who says, “The Lord is my strength”
- Exodus 2:11 KJV
 - 11) And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.
- Let’s begin by looking at what Stephen had to say about Moses...
- Stephen fills in some details that don’t appear in the Exodus record
- We left the story with Moses being drawn out of the water by the Pharaoh’s daughter
- Acts 7:22-23 KJV
 - 22) And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.
 - 23) And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.
- So, we see that under the direction of Pharaoh’s daughter, Moses has learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and has grown to be mighty in word and deed
- Mighty in word and deed...
 - Interesting...

- What do you remember about Moses when God came to him in the burning bush?

- Exodus 4:10 KJV

10) And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

- So... Look for a major change about to come in Moses' life!
- We find out that he is now 40 years old, and has spent the past 33-37 years growing up a prince of Egypt and is mighty in word and deed
- In Jewish tradition when is a man counted as a man? 40!
- Moses' faithful parents had taught him when he was very young that God would send a deliverer, and they had gone through great efforts to save him because they thought he was the one that would be used by God to save the people of Israel
- Now, Moses comes of age, and it "came in his heart to visit his brethren"
- I imagine he was beginning to recognize that he was now old enough to begin to do God's work
- So, he begins to look around trying to figure out how he is supposed to go about it

- Acts 7:24-25 KJV

24) And seeing one *of them* suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

25) For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

- Moses, recognizing that God was going to use him as the deliverer, recognizing that the time had come for him to take his place in the adult world, he supposed that his brethren would have understood that also
- As he went out to see his brethren, it was not just curiosity, it was thinking that God would begin to do the work of delivering the people of Israel from their slavery
- This was a very logical conclusion for Moses to come to, as he was now an adult, he was an Israelite, and he was intelligent, strong, well spoken, active, and well-educated in all the wisdom of the world
- I'm not implying that Moses was egotistical, it was just that he had gifts, talents, and opportunities that God had given him, and he was ready to use those for God's service

- Look at what Hebrews tells us...

- Hebrews 11:24-26 KJV

- 24) By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
 - 25) Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
 - 26) Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.
- We know that Moses chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season"
- We understand that to mean that Moses had rejected the throne of Egypt, so we can see that he was evidently very qualified from a human standpoint to be a leader

- Acts 7:25 KJV

- 25) For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.
- In this reasonable assumption that Moses incorrectly made lies the lesson for us
- Moses was moving forward based on Logic, and not based on God's Will
- Moses was moving forward in HIS time, not in God's time
- God wanted Moses to learn the lesson of humility, and to learn to trust in God entirely
- Moses had yet to learn that "the Lord is his strength", and he was prepared to move forward based on his own formidable skills and strengths
- This lesson is important for us to learn also...
- It's not the same for us, as God doesn't directly and openly speak to us and tell us what He wants from us, and when he wants us to do it...
- But, we also need to learn to wait upon the Lord in our lives
- We need to learn to key in to God's direction, and to be patient and wait for His time in the answers to our questions and the resolution of our problems
- We need to learn to trust in His ability, and His DESIRE, to help us through our problems and not to become dependant on our own strengths and skills
- A mistake that Moses made is very much the same mistake that we mistake...

- We often make the mistake of assuming that because something looks like the way that God would do it, that must be what we are supposed to do
- We can clearly see the mistake Moses made in hindsight... He had all the right background, he was in the right circumstances, he saw an opportunity and assumed what he was supposed to do
- As we serve God, we need to be careful that in our own logic and wisdom we do not get ahead of the Lord
- So, we see that Moses went out to see how his brethren fared, and in Verse 12:
- Exodus 2:12 KJV
 - 12) And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was no man*, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.
- We kind of glide over this bit of the story as we focus on the relationship between the Egyptian masters and the Israelite slaves and Moses' interesting connection between the two...
- But, what is it that he did here?
- Murder!
- It's pretty blatant, pretty clear cut, and pretty darn sinful!
- I love how the narrative describes it, "he looked this way and that", and when he saw that no one was looking, he committed a terrible act of manslaughter
- Not only that, but then he goes and hides the body in the sand
- This was not done out of a heart of sincerity and love
- This is not how God would have him do things
- He came to that point thinking that it was God's time for him to deliver Israel, but that doesn't excuse him from committing such a horrible sin
- We see Moses jumping out ahead of the Lord, and trying to accomplish something that God thought wasn't yet ready
- We also see another interesting lesson... Moses using human methods to accomplish something that God would later accomplish miraculously
- The interesting thing is that God later is going to accomplish the very thing that Moses was trying to accomplish, and He is going to do it in a much better way

- We know that eventually God does deliver His people, and in the process thousands of first-borns die all over the nation on the night before the exodus
- God is not averse to using death as an instrument, but God doesn't operate by committing first degree murder and then hiding the body in the sand
- Now, Moses sees the results of his actions...
- Exodus 2:13-14 KJV
 - 13) And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?
 - 14) And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.
- When Moses saves the life of the Hebrew man on the first day, nothing is recorded of the reaction of the man
- We don't have any record of him thanking Moses or of them having any conversation whatsoever
- But, the guy must have told somebody!
- Moses, feeling that Day One of his Deliverance Plan was quite successful, gets up and heads out on Day Two, ready to continue in the process of delivering Israel from the Egyptian oppressors
- He heads out looking for another Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and is surprised to find two Hebrew men going at it instead
- Moses doesn't understand...
- "Don't you have enough problems with the Egyptians always beating up on you, why are you fighting each other?"
- Their response is not only something that Moses didn't expect, but it would have been a very depressing, sad realization for Moses
- Here he is sincerely trying to help these people, and he is totally and fully rejected
- Literally, "Who made you ruler over us?"
- Knowing what we know about Moses so far, what would you have expected his answer to be?
- GOD DID!

- “God called me to deliver you, and I’ll have you know that I have given up an awful lot to serve him in this way! I could be king of this entire country, and here I am out in the desert trying to help out you ungrateful jerks!”
- There is no record of what Moses actually says, but we are told that the whole event shook him up quite a bit
- He realizes that now that the news is out, he will be punished by the Egyptians for the murder he has committed
- He had renounced the throne of Egypt, he thought his people would accept him, but instead they mock him, and mock his purpose and his goal in life
- At this point Moses started to doubt his own calling...
- We know that at this point in his life Moses was working outside of the will of God
- We know that because of two little words in Verse 14. Did you catch them?
- Moses feared...
- When we are walking with God, we can walk without fear
- When we are doing the will of God, doing something that He has clearly lead us to, we can do so without fear
- We can do it boldly and without question
- But, Moses has to fear the response of the Pharaoh
- Exodus 2:15 KJV
 - 15) Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.
- What a strange situation Moses finds himself in...
- Egyptian history says that the man Moses rejected the throne of Pharaoh TWICE
- He has now been rejected by the people whom he thought God had called him to minister to
- He has sacrificed his opportunity to have great power and influence in an attempt to serve God instead, and now the whole thing has come crashing down
- His life is being sought by the man that assumed the throne in his place

- Everything in Moses' life looks so bleak and desolate that he wanders way out into the desert, and just sits down next to a well
- You can just see him sitting there with his head in his hands...
- ...and NOW God is ready to work with him!
- We are going to see that God uses the ensuing 40 years to make a new man out of Moses
- Moses comes out of that same desert 40 years later a different man
- God interrupts this self-confident, self-directed lifestyle that Moses has displayed in the first 40 years to bring about a patient man whose strength is in the Lord, and who waits upon the Lord
- Moses might feel like his life has come off the rails, and everything has fallen apart, but often it is only at times like that that our Heavenly Father can work with us
- God cannot use us until we are ready to be used
- God cannot use you until you come to recognize that the talents and abilities and background and opportunities that you have are not really yours in the first place
- Why do you think that God let you be born where you were?
- Why do you suppose that God let you attain the level of education that you have?
- Why do you think that God allowed you to experience this certain set of life's experiences?
- These things are not coincidence or accident...
- God has carefully guided your life to bring you to this point
- But like Moses, God wants us to learn that our strength is in the Lord
- God wants us to trust in Him, and not in our own abilities, no matter how great they are
- 1st Corinthians 1:26-29 KJV
 - 26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:
 - 27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

- 28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:
- 29) That no flesh should glory in his presence.

- God does that because mighty men are all too often too dependent on their own might
- God chooses people who are aware that they can't succeed without the Lord
- It was all part of God's plan for Moses to "fail" and to come to the place that God was able to use him
- It was all part of God's plan for Moses to be sitting by that well in the land of Midian
- Exodus 2:16-22 KJV

- 16) Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew *water*, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.
- 17) And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.
- 18) And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How *is it that* ye are come so soon to day?
- 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.
- 20) And he said unto his daughters, And where *is* he? why *is it that* ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread.
- 21) And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.
- 22) And she bare *him* a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

- So, Moses "settles down" and probably forgets all about his crazy idea of being the deliverer of Israel
- But meanwhile, back in Egypt...
- Exodus 2:23-25 KJV

- 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.
- 24) And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.
- 25) And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto *them*.