

Lesson 3 – 13 February 2011

Moses' Call to Deliver Israel

Lesson Scope: [Exodus 3:1-4:28](#)

Lesson Focus

Moses spent forty years in Egypt. He spent another forty years as a stranger in Midian. Meanwhile, his brethren, the children of Israel, continued to labor under their cruel Egyptian taskmasters. But God had not forgotten them. He knew it would take some time for the people to become willing to leave Egypt, the only home they had known.

God was not only preparing the people to leave Egypt; He was also preparing their leader. After forty years in Midian, Moses was less confident in himself and more ready to depend upon God and seek His guidance before moving ahead.

God's call to Moses at this time shows us that God knew that the time was right for Israel's departure from Egypt. Moses was prepared to lead them, and the people were prepared to follow.

As we study this lesson and apply it to ourselves remember that God is looking, not for a display of talent, but for faithfulness. Simply accept the truths found in His Word to the best of your ability.

We are reminded that not all are called to a great work such as Moses was, but we are all called to one sphere of service or another. Every day, opportunities arise to which we should willingly respond. We are workers together with God, carrying on the work He wants us to do.

We can identify with Moses in his feelings of inadequacy, because we too are human. But we serve the same God Moses served. His enabling grace has not diminished.

God calls men to the work for which He has prepared them. As they respond favourably to the call He can use them in His service.

Lesson Aim: To identify noble responses to God's call for service.

Theme Verse: [Isaiah 6:8](#).

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.”

Lesson Text.

"Here Am I"

Exodus 3:1-7

“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb. ²And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed. ³And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. ⁴And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I. ⁵And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. ⁶Moreover he said, I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. ⁷And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;”

Exodus 3:10

“Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

"What Shall I Say?"

Exodus 3:11-14

“And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? ¹²And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. ¹³And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? ¹⁴And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

Exodus 4:1-3

“And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. ²And the LORD said unto him, What *is* that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. ³And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.”

Exodus 4:10-14

“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. ¹¹And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? ¹²Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. ¹³And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand *of him whom* thou wilt send. ¹⁴And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, *Is* not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.”

"Let Me Go, I Pray Thee"

Exodus 4:18

“And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which *are* in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.”

Questions for Study

"Here Am I"

1. How had Moses been faithful prior to God's call at the burning bush?
2. What qualities does God look for in those He calls to service?
3. How does God call people to service in the church today?

"What Shall I Say?"

4. What past experiences of Moses shaped his humble view of himself?
5. How does our view of God affect the way we enter the service to which He calls?
6. In what ways does God provide for those who labor in His service today?

"Let Me Go, I Pray Thee"

7. What evidence do we see that Moses was surrendered to God's will?
8. What may be some evidences that one is prepared for greater service?

Analyzing the Passage

This passage describes a sacred scene. In the backside of the desert, Moses was far from other people and very near to God. He stood on holy ground as God spoke to him. Here at Horeb, the mountain of God (Exodus 3: 1), Moses stood at the place to which he would later lead the children of Israel. The bush that burned but was not consumed typified Israel in Egypt. "I

have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isaiah 48:10). Though they were in affliction, God kept them from being consumed.

By taking off his shoes (Exodus 3:5), Moses expressed reverence and obedience. He acknowledged who God is and what He has done.

God's Name "I AM" (Exodus 3:14) denotes His self-existence. He is eternally present with no time limitations.

Principles and Applications

"Here Am I"

1. Man needs to be open to receive God's message at any time (Exodus 3:3). One never knows when the call to service will come. Therefore we must be ready to hear God at any time. This is not limited to calls to service such as leadership in the church or a call to the mission field. God's message may come to us to carry out some small service in our daily walk.

2. God can speak to people when He has their attention (Exodus 3:4). How often God wants to speak, but men's attention is on other things! How many times God's voice is drowned in the din of other voices bidding for our attention! Let us be attentive to God's still, small voice and treasure each word.

3. When God speaks, man needs to respond in reverence and humility. (Exodus 3:5-6) Moses felt unworthy of God's interest in him. When man meets God, he understands that God is so much greater and so far above man. Taking off one's shoes was a symbolic gesture of reverence. Wherever God makes His presence known is holy ground, and we should be in a spirit of reverence.

"What Shall I Say?"

4. God provides assurance when we might fear to obey (Exodus 3:12; 4: 1-3). Perhaps people fear to listen to God speak because they realize that it will require something of them. They may feel incapable of successfully carrying out the work to which God calls them. The promise of God's presence provides assurance that calms those fears.

5. Man must recognize that God is able to supply all he needs to fulfill his call to service (Exodus 3:14). When God calls one to a place of service, He, of course, knows that person's weaknesses. He promises to supply those things that are needed in the course of performing that service. Moses could go in the strength of the Lord and serve in the confidence that the "I AM" had called him.

It is good to be modest and reserved about our gifts or calling. However, to claim inability or unduly call attention to one's weaknesses may be a subtle

form of pride.

6. God gave us our abilities to be used in service for Him (Exodus 4:10-12). God made us with our particular abilities. He never asks more of us than we are capable of performing, and His resources are abundant. Are we using them for His glory or to serve self?

“Let Me Go, I Pray Thee”

7. Even though we have personal responsibilities in God's service, we are involved in a corporate effort (Exodus 4:14). None of us are alone in the work of the Lord. We involve ourselves with others who are likewise called to serve. As each one contributes his part personally, it becomes a corporate effort. As each does his part, a greater work is accomplished. One plants; another waters: but God gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).

8. Man needs to evaluate God's call in light of the written Word and test it with other faithful men (Exodus 4:18). Moses understood that his response to God's call would affect his father-in-law. Therefore, he went and spoke to him respectfully and presented the facts of the matter. Though Moses faithfully served Jethro many years, he was ready to serve in another place at the call of God.

Important Teachings

1. Man needs to be open to receive God's message at any time (Exodus 3:3).

2. God can speak to people when He has their attention (Exodus 3:4).

3. When God speaks, man needs to respond in reverence and humility (Exodus 3:5-6).

4. God provides assurance when we might fear to obey (Exodus 3:12; 4:1-3).

5. Man must recognize that God is able to supply all he needs to fulfill his call to service (Exodus 3:14).

6. God gave us our abilities to be used in service for Him (Exodus 4:10-12).

7. Even though we have personal responsibilities in God's service, we are involved in a corporate effort (Exodus 4:14).

8. Man needs to evaluate God's call in light of the written Word and test it with other faithful men (Exodus 4:18).

Answers to Questions

1. How had Moses been faithful prior to God's call at the burning bush?

Moses chose to identify with God's people in their affliction rather than to

be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He had tried to help his suffering brethren but needed to flee for his life. He helped Jethro's daughters in their time of need and watered their flocks. He faithfully kept Jethro's flocks.

2. What qualities does God look for in those He calls to service? God calls those who are attentive to His voice. He calls those who love and reverence Him and are of a humble spirit. He calls to service those who have been obedient to His Word in the past.

3. How does God call people to service in the church today?

God calls Spirit-filled people to serve in specific offices through the church. Church members should consider this the call of God and respond accordingly. Some kinds of service do not involve the direct call of the church. Such service includes things like visiting the sick, helping a neighbor in need, or writing a letter of encouragement to someone in distress.

4. What past experiences of Moses shaped his humble view of himself?

His impulsive attempt to defend his Israelite brother by killing his Egyptian oppressor helped him to see that he could not deliver his people in his own strength. His forty years in the wilderness enabled him to gain a practical wisdom he never learned in the schools of Egypt. Experiencing life as an exile in a strange land shaped his view that Egypt was not the home of the children of Israel.

5. How does our view of God affect the way we enter the service to which He calls?

When God calls us to a specific field of service, we understand that His choice is made on the basis of His infinite wisdom. He places each of the members in the body as it pleases Him. We should regard our service as to the Lord and as an opportunity to be involved in His work. When God calls, He also enables. We must rely on His strength and wisdom, not on our own.

6. In what ways does God provide for those who labor in His service today?

God had given us His Word as a guidebook for our service. His Holy Spirit indwells us to direct us. He has instituted the church for our support and encouragement. God is always ready to aid us at any moment as we call upon Him in prayer.

7. What evidence do we see that Moses was surrendered to God's will?

He acted promptly by going to speak to his father-in-law to request his consent to leave at the call of God. He was willing to leave his present duties to enter into the work God had called him to do.

8. What may be some evidences that one is prepared for greater service? If one is carrying out his present duties responsibly, he may be ready for new spheres of service. If he willingly serves without complaining, no matter how menial the task, he may be a suitable candidate to place in a more responsible position.

Summarizing the Lesson

Moses was faithful during the forty years he cared for Jethro's sheep. Because of his faithful service, he had become a man God could use to lead Israel as a faithful shepherd of God's flock.

Faithful service depends not so much on one's ability, but on his availability. God strengthens and enables those He calls. With Paul we can say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Research Guide

1. Read Luke 16:10-12, which emphasizes faithfulness in service.
2. For an example of service that may seem of little worth but is acceptable to God, read Mark 14:1-9.
3. Acts 13:1-5 shows how God calls persons to service through the church.