**The Stirring of Faith**

**Exodus 2:11-25 (ESV)**

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We’re going to be moving from the story of God’s protection of Moses at his birth, to Moses’ flight; to the awakening of faith, the stirring of faith in Moses’ soul and his flight to Midian.

***11*** *One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.* ***12*** *He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.* ***13*** *When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?”* ***14*** *He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian.” Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.”* ***15*** *When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.*

***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*** *The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock.* ***18*** *When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come home so soon today?”* ***19*** *They said, “An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.”* ***20*** *He said to his daughters, “Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.”* ***21*** *And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah.* ***22*** *She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”*

***23*** *During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.* ***24*** *And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.* ***25*** *God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.*

May God encourage us through His Word!

Usefulness makes life meaningful. One of the worst things that we could possibly say to a person is that he or she is “useless.” Such a judgment declares that the person’s life has no significance, no weight, no glory to it. Every person who is born desires to live a life that matters. Yet in truth, our bondage to sin makes all of us useless. We are useless in reference to knowing the eternal God, useless in reference to gaining His acceptance, useless in reference to being acceptable instruments in His hands.

It is sin that disconnects us from any lasting purpose or meaningful reward. Sin contaminates our work. It renders our labors flawed and fading. Sin consigns us to live lives building massive, ornate sand castles. These sand castles are impressive to beachgoers on the day that we build them. They may attract applause and attention from others, but then evening brings the tide, and the tide washes those sand castles away. The results of all our efforts vanish and we have nothing lasting to show for them.

How can we live a life that is “useful”? I believe our story in Exodus 2 this morning, helps us. Moses lived the first 40 years of his life building sand castles. Up to that point in his life, Moses was living a life of prestige, worldly power, honor, riches, glory. Everyone in Egypt knew of this man, Moses. They respected Moses. They listened to Moses. Stephen, in Acts 7:22 says that Moses was a man “mighty in his words and deeds.”

We’re not sure of all that Moses did during those first 40 years. The Jewish historian Josephus, who lived in the first century AD, records that Moses was being groomed to be the next Pharaoh, as Pharaoh didn’t have a physical heir. Josephus also records that Moses was a valiant military warrior. He led a campaign against Ethiopia. We’re not sure ifJosephus’ history is correct, but we are sure that Luke’s history is. And so we know that Moses, whatever he did, was a man mighty in words and deeds.

We also know that he was educated by the best tutors and scholars in Egypt. He would have been schooled in the arts, in mathematics, in language, in medicine, in music, in literature, in law. If *Time* magazine had been around, Moses would have appeared on the list of the top 100 most influential people through most of his life. Most people in the Egyptian culture would have looked at Moses and said, “That man has it made!” Yet up to this point, Moses’ life had been empty. He was building sand castles on the beach, but that was all about to change.

Imagine you are Moses. Your Egyptian mom has recounted your story behind the name that you bear. She has loved you since she set eyes upon you in that little basket in the Nile River. But you also learn your story from your birth mom, Jochebed, and your sister, Miriam. Pharaoh had ordered that all boys like you be cast into the Nile. But God delivered you and you were drawn out of the water. You have been raised as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, with access to the best of Egypt’s scholars. You have grown to be an impressive man in almost every way. But of late, you have been spending more time thinking about the faith of your birth family. You are drawn to that faith not only because that family has loved you, but also because of this God that they have shared with you, and communicated with you, and that they worship.

You have decided that this God, the God of Abraham, is the one true God. You cannot worship the many gods of Egypt. This creates tension in your soul as you are being drawn by everything around you to worship those gods. And yet, you listen to stories of this one God and you hear of this promised Messiah who would come to deliver God’s people from Satan’s hold. You listen and you think of those promises that God had made, and you begin to believe in them with increasing fervor, with increasing faith. Your heart winds itself around these promises of a future reward, of an eternity with God, and a transformation bursts upon your soul. This invisible God becomes real! All the Egyptian gods have visible statues that worshippers can see and touch. Yet you “see” this God now who is invisible, and you see Him more truly than those who see their idols with physical eyes. You see Him with the eyes of faith. You begin to desire and long for the reward that this God offers.

You know that Pharaoh’s wrath would strike you down if you openly align yourself with the Hebrews’ God. And yet, you feel more and more that you must. You believe in Him. You know He is real. You know He rewards those who diligently seek Him. You find that the fear of the king’s wrath is fading in your heart and there is a fresh courage that rises in your soul. Your faith is deepening and you decide it would be better to be mistreated with God’s people than to hold on to all those treasures you’ve enjoyed through your life, all those riches and all those pleasures that Egypt offers.

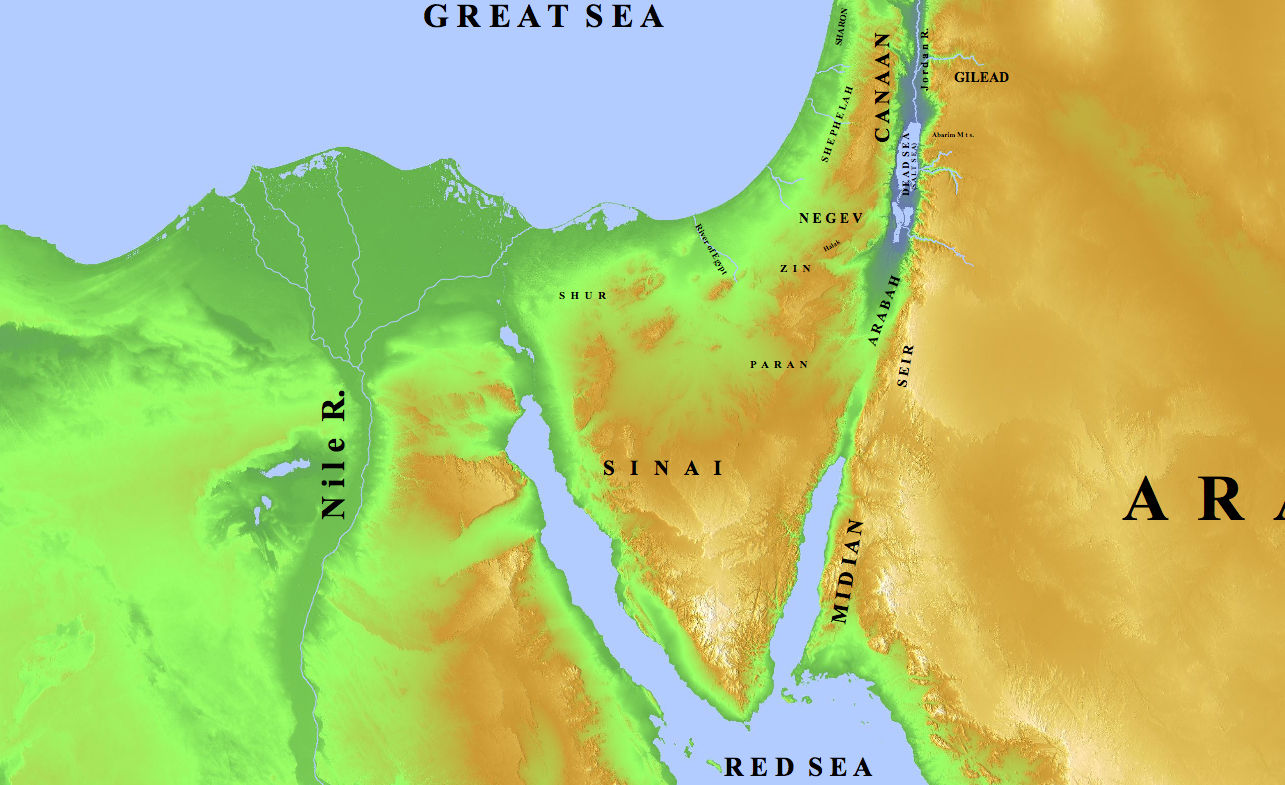
These are your thoughts that are rolling through your soul on that fateful day. The idea comes to you to walk out among your people, the Hebrew slaves, as they toil and work. Your heart breaks as you see them. You observe their plight. You observe their burden, and you want to do something about that burden. Lately, you have had thoughts that God may even use you and your position to deliver them. You do not know how yet, but you think that surely God has placed you where you are to use you to deliver this people from bondage.

Everything you see though, brings anguish to your soul that day. Then you hear a cry of torment. You turn and you see an Egyptian cruelly beating a Hebrew slave; beating him and beating him and beating him nearly to death. Anger and rage rises in your soul. You jump in shouting, “Stop it! Stop it right now!” Instead of obeying, the soldier sneers and continues lashing the fallen slave. Fury mounts inside of you. You want to kill this guy. You look this way and that way. You see that no one is around, and you strike this Egyptian dead.

Everything is in a whirl, now. When you woke up that morning, you did not plan to kill an Egyptian, and yet, here is this soldier, dead at your feet. The Hebrew slave looks at you and slinks away. You come to your senses. You know that if this act is found out, you will be put to death. So you dig a hole in the sand and bury the Egyptian there.

The next day, you rise thinking about the previous day, and also still burdened for your people. You see two Hebrew slaves fighting with each other. This frustrates you. They’re the people of God. They shouldn’t be fighting with each other. They should be in unity and in peace and shalom with one another. You think you can bring shalom. You can bring peace and reconciliation to these two. So you go to the one man especially who is more powerful and is oppressing his brother, and you ask him, “Why do you strike your friend? He is your brother!” The cruel man thrusts his victim aside and snaps in derision, “Who make you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” You feel the gut punch. Fear floods your heart as you realize that this thing that you did, that you thought was secret, did not remain secret, and would now be broadcast. If this Hebrew knows about it, surely everyone will.

Sure enough, Pharaoh hears the story of your killing the Egyptian in favor of the Hebrew, and he puts a bounty on your head. He wants to kill you, so you flee southeast from Egypt for safety. You cross the Sinai Peninsula, that thirsty desert of a land, and you make your way to Midian.



In Midian, you find signs of a nearby well. You follow those signs to that well. You’re so thirsty. You stumble toward it and you find it. You get a drink. You’re exhausted after drinking, and so you finally sit down and rest by that well. And then comes seven sisters. This intrigues you. You don’t speak to them, but they fill their troughs from this well in order to water their father’s flock. But then, some local shepherds come by and they begin to abuse these women. They begin to take the water that the women had labored over to fill in their trough. They are stealing from these women. You are outraged at this and you take on the whole lot of the thieves! You’ve been trained as a warrior and that training now proves to be very, very helpful. Prevailing, you drive this band of shepherds away and you graciously offer to re-water the sisters’ flock. The sisters then invite you to come home and eat and rest at their father’s house. You’re so hungry! You haven’t had a good home cooked meal for so long. You gladly accept.

When you get there, you kind of hang back at a distance, but you’re listening in. You hear their dad, Reuel, ask his daughters, “How is it possible that you are back so soon?” The girls answer, “An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds.” You’re still wearing Egyptian clothes, Egyptian sandals, have an Egyptian bag and an Egyptian hairstyle. So they think you are an Egyptian. They say, “An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.” Reuel, or Jethro, as he is also known, asks, “Then where is he? I want to see him. Have you left the man? Call him. I want us to eat bread together.” As you eat together, you and Jethro hit it off. He presses you to stay one night, and then two. You become really content just staying as long as he is willing. He’s willing for a very long time because he’s very happy with you. Ultimately, he offers to you to marry his daughter, Zipporah.

Early in your marriage, you and Zipporah are blessed with a little baby. You name him “Gershom.” Gershom means “stranger.” That’s what you know you are. You realize that you have been a stranger even when you were in Egypt because you were a Hebrew living among Egyptians. And now you really feel like a stranger, living in Midian. It seems like that’s your lot in life; to just simply be a stranger. You don’t tell much of your life story over the next 40 years living in Midian. Maybe it was just not really exciting. You and Zipporah would have another son.

We have to ask: Did you completely forget your life in Egypt? Was that just something so far distant in the past that you didn’t even think about those people back there, those Hebrews that rejected you as their deliverer? You really don’t tell us. But what we do know is that God did not forget you and God did not forget His people. That brings us to the end of chapter 2, and I want to read verses 23-25.

***23*** *During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.* ***24*** *And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.* ***25*** *God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.*

The central idea we’re going to track this morning is that the happy life is the life that serves God and pursues His delivering purposes. God is a deliverer. Sin is under a curse. It’s under bondage to sin, and God is the great Deliverer. The happy life connects first to God’s deliverance, but then to the work of deliverance. The meaningful life, if we want to live it, always connects itself to God’s eternal work of deliverance. The good news is that God offers every person who is in Christ, to be connected. Now the offer does not mean that we have a meaningful life. It just means that is has potential. We’re invited into that kind of purpose. God is the God who delivers people from bondage to sin, but He loves to use the people whom He delivers to be an instrument in delivering others. Isn’t it marvelous not only to be delivered, but to be delivered into a life, into something that’s meaningful, into something that is useful and lasting?

I think from the story, one of the things we could learn is the qualities that are necessary to be an instrument of God. We see these already emerging in Moses’ life. If we’re going to be used as God’s instrument to bring spiritual deliverance to others…And again, if you’re in Christ, this is the offer. This is the invitation. It’s the call, in fact, I would call it even the command of God upon your life to be involved in that work, to make that your life’s purpose, your life’s focus. There are a lot of other things that we may have to do that are temporal, but this is where life becomes life. It is being involved in God’s work of deliverance. We’re going to trace six qualities that are essential in order for us to be instruments of God for this miraculous work. The first quality is

**Quality #1: Faith that believes Christ Jesus is better.**

***11*** *One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.*

There’s a big clue about what is happening in Moses’ heart, right here in this verse. Underline the words “his people.” He says it twice. He went out to his people and he saw an Egyptian beating one of his people. Moses has been raised as an Egyptian. Everything about him was Egyptian—his look, his appearance, his training, his education. But now, something is happening around age 40, where he sees these people who are the slaves, as his people. And that means he does not see the other Egyptians as his people. So what is happening that would cause this man to identify with Israel, and not with Egypt?

What’s happening is that he is placing his faith in the God of the covenant; the God of Abraham, the God who promises eternal life, a better city. We ask the question: How clear, how much content does Moses’ faith have? From this story in Exodus, we might be left to wonder, but God removes these questions by some commentaries that God writes in the New Testament about Moses and about this very story. The first commentary is in Acts chapter 7. Stephen is preaching a sermon when he talks about Moses. But the second commentary is in Hebrews 11. Let me read you from Hebrews 11 what God says is happening to Moses at this time in his life.

**Hebrews 11:24-25** By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

So at some point, Moses said, “I am a son of the Hebrew woman, Jochebed. I’m not the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” He said, “I have all the pleasures available to me, but I would rather be connected and even mistreated with the people of God.” All of this happened in his heart, in his soul. By faith, he is making choices. It’s not just that Pharaoh is going to kick him out of Egypt. He’s making conscious choices of faith and decisions that the Messiah is better. And notice this.

**Hebrews 11:26** He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

This is New Testament commentary on what is going on inside the soul of Moses. The word “Christ” simply means “messiah.” And up to this point, there are only little tiny windows that would point to the Messiah. We talked about one last week in Genesis 3. Moses is grabbing on to this idea of messiah. He considered the reproach of the Messiah greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt. Why? He was looking to the reward. What reward? The reward that God promised to Abraham.

**Hebrews 11:27** By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

Again, it wasn’t by force, but by faith, he left Egypt. The point here is that Moses is beginning to possess biblical faith. This is an essential quality if we’re going to be an instrument in the work of God’s deliverance to others. Faith believes that Jesus is better. That’s the first essential to being used of God. Without faith, you can’t please God. It’s impossible!

So what do we have to believe that Jesus is better than? What biblical faith does, is it believes that Jesus is better than everything else. You name a joy, you name a treasure, you name a pleasure, you name a sweet gift. Whatever you would name, Jesus is better than that! The joy of a newborn baby, the love of a spouse, power to make the rules, pleasure of sensual indulgence, the applause of the masses, wealth beyond comparison. Whatever we name, faith says Jesus is better. If I ever come to a crossroads where I have to choose between the two…Often, we will come to those crossroads. God will make us come to those crossroads. You say, “I’m not going to have to make a choice when I come to those crossroads. I already made it. Jesus is better! That’s my choice. That’s my decision. That’s my belief.” If we are going to be used by God, we must believe that, if we’re going to have a life that is meaningful, useful, eternal.

And yet, we have a problem believing that Jesus is better. We keep looking over our shoulder after we grab onto Christ, wondering if the world and its offerings actually might have something that is better. We become distracted. We become busy. And this is the constant temptation of the Israelites, the people of God, after they leave Egypt. They started off saying God is better than Egypt. That’s why they left. They were rejoicing as they left. They celebrated the Passover. God is better than Egypt. That’s how they all started off. But notice how often they wavered. I just want to look at two passages of the many that exist in the account of the wanderings of the Israelites. They said in Exodus 14

**Exodus 14:12** Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: “Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians”? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.

**Numbers 14:3** Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?

So that’s the fight of the faith. It’s to keep in front of us that Jesus is always better, and not to look back. It’s not to put our hand to the plough and then look back. It’s simply saying, “I’ve already made my commitment. I’ve made my decision. I know what is true, and I’m not going to let anything distract me from that.” Here’s how the Psalmist puts it in Psalm 63.

**Psalm 63:3** Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

He says, “Even my physical life,” which if there’s no physical life, there’s nothing else in this temporal world to enjoy. He says, “I’ve come to know that you’re a God whose steadfast love is better than life.”

**Psalm 84:10** For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

In other words, if I had a choice between living one day in the presence of God and a thousand anywhere else on the earth, the best place on earth, I’m going to choose one day in the house of God because it’s better. It’s not because I should. It’s not because I must. It’s not because I’ve been commanded to. It’s because it’s better. I believe that! This is a much, much better choice.

Well then, we jump to Hebrews. The whole argument of that letter is that Jesus is better. Just a couple passages to highlight.

**Hebrews 8:6** But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

It’s a better covenant. It’s an everlasting covenant. Jesus has better promises.

**Hebrews 11:16** But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

He’s talking about the people of faith. They desire a better country; better than the one we’re living in now. And that’s the heart of the Christian. It’s the heart of faith. “I believe that Jesus is better and I desire that better country where my fellowship with God and with Christ is unimpeded.”

So the first quality if we’re going to be God’s instruments, is faith that simply says Jesus is better than everything else.

**Quality #2: Compassion to see the need for deliverance.**

If we don’t see people the way God sees them, we won’t be instruments of God’s deliverance for them. It’s natural for us to remain blind to the needs of others; especially their eternal needs. And even physical needs or emotional needs are easy to walk right past. And what God does with His instruments early on, before using us as instruments, is He opens our eyes to see people as He sees them. To see them with eternal needs and to have our hearts break over them. Look at verse 11.

***11*** *One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.*

He’s lived in this place for a long time. Had he ever seen that before? He’d seen it, but he hadn’t looked upon it. There’s a difference between seeing and looking. Seeing just says, “I see a car accident over there. Oh boy! That’s a really bad accident.” Looking causes us to enter in. It causes us to begin to feel and to wonder about needs and to want to take action.

We look at people sitting by themselves perhaps in church almost every Sunday. But do we see them? Looking is a moment. Seeing, having sight, requires us to have a heart that God opens up to enter in; to see this person as God sees them. Seeing is entering in with understanding, with insight, with a readiness to take action and to be used.

In our busy, suffering world, we have become accustomed to looking without seeing. So I want to urge us to ask God to give us eyes to see. Let’s ask Him for a heart of compassion to see emotional, physical, and most important of all, spiritual needs of people around us. To see them as people who are walking into a Christless eternity with no hope, only despair, only misery, without God.

Now, we have to know that seeing is going to be inconvenient, and it’s going to take a lot of time. It’s going to be a bit of a hassle. But it’s the pathway to a meaningful life. It’s the pathway to usefulness. So when you look at people, ask yourself, “What do I see?” Are you seeing what is real around you?

**Matthew 9:35-36** And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus didn’t just look upon the crowds. He saw them. Did they look more harassed and helpless than any other crowd that we might be in front of? I don’t think so. I don’t think there was anything on the outside that caused them to look more harassed and helpless than any crowd we’re ever in front of. But when Jesus looked, he saw them helpless spiritually. He saw them harassed by bondage to sin, and He had compassion. He was moved and He acted. That’s what faith does. It takes action.

We need to have faith that believes God and His promises are better. We need to have compassion to see, not just to look at events and people, but to see the need for deliverance. And thirdly, we need

**Quality #3: Courage to act for the cause of deliverance.**

Moses showed courage all through the story. He showed courage first in deciding to align himself with God and the Israelites and to suffer with them rather than to align himself and be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He showed courage in confronting this brutal Egyptian. And finally, Moses held on to courage in confronting the local shepherds who were harassing Reuel’s daughters. He could have lost his life in those latter two circumstances, but he didn’t let fear stand in the way. He said, “God has called me to do something, to act.” Moses believes that God is sovereign and that Pharaoh is not. His faith drives him forward to push through those fears and to courageously act.

Now some might ask the question, and we would be right to ask it: Did Moses do right by killing the Egyptian? There are some Bible commentators who believe that Moses was completely in the right. John Calvin is one of them. So there are some really impressive commentators who have good arguments and believe Moses was just defending the life of this Hebrew slave and that there wasn’t much alternative but to kill the Egyptian. However, I think verse 12 indicates Moses’ guilt.

***12*** *He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.*

This is not the forthrightness of righteousness. It’s the desire to be in the darkness that sin often brings. “Let me hide!” That’s where Moses was. But at the same time, the Bible does commend Moses for his heart and his courage.

**Acts 7:24** And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian.

That’s how God described this. He defended and he avenged the man by striking down the Egyptian. So again, I think Moses did reveal that he acted in anger and rage, and there were some sinful aspects to that action. Yet, his heart really was desiring to courageously confront oppression.

Remember that Moses had just left Egypt when he came upon this well and came upon the oppression of these women. It would have been easy for him to say, “Not again! I got kicked out of Egypt. I have Pharaoh chasing after me. I don’t need one more problem in my life, and this is a big problem. There are a number of men here, and there are just women here that would be on my side. I really don’t need that problem.” He could have backed away and said, “I’ve learned my lesson, and it doesn’t pay to get involved.” And we would have understood, at least emotionally, where he was coming from. But thankfully, Moses kept his faith and his faith allowed him to press into courage. When we walk by faith, God looks upon us with approval, not condemnation. And Moses didn’t allow his past failure to keep him from continuing to press forward. By faith, he received what God was offering him and he acted in courage to be the cause or to be an instrument of deliverance.

Now, we have to ask the question: What act of courage would God have us take in order to be part of His work of deliverance? I know it’s going to be scary. I know that there are many times when that fear drives us away from that act; at least we’re tempted. The fear may be too much time. It’s just going to take too much time, too many of my resources. I don’t have it in me.” There is the fear perhaps sometimes, of rejection. “If I share with them the Gospel of God, I see their spiritual need and I share, they might be mad at me forever. If I try to reach out to this brother or sister who is wandering away from the faith, they might resent me and they might say all kinds of things about me.” But courage presses in to say, “This person needs deliverance. I see that. I see them as God sees them. And God, I want to be used as an instrument.” Faith then looks to God and says, “God, would you give me courage to act?” I don’t know what actions, but I think at almost any point in everyone’s life, there is some action that day that God would call us to take that requires courage.

**Quality #4: Wisdom to use God’s means to bring deliverance.**

When Moses killed the Egyptian, I think he used the wisdom of Egypt to set the situation straight. The wisdom of Egypt says, “You fight force with force. If this guy is being forceful, you go after them. He hits you once, you hit him back twice.” And by Egyptian wisdom, I think Moses would have been right in line with what he’d been taught as a boy growing up in these situations. But please know that we never advance God’s deliverance by killing Egyptians. That’s really important! God’s work must be done in God’s ways.

What are God’s ways? It’s the Gospel of Jesus. It’s first, active repentance against sin in our lives. It’s brokenness and humility before the Lord. It’s prayer. It’s the Word, which has power. It’s the cross of Jesus. It’s a devotion to simple obedience to God. It’s a passion for God’s glory. God’s wisdom is higher than man’s wisdom. God’s ways are higher than man’s ways. It’s impossible to do God’s work in man’s ways. It will never ever, ever work. So we have to seek God’s wisdom and pursue the work in God’s ways and God’s means, and be more devoted to the God of the work than the work of God. Do you catch that? That’s a big difference. If we’re devoted more to the work of God, we’re going to justify all kinds of means in order to get that done. But if we’re saying, “No, I am first and foremost devoted to the God of the work, I want Him to be honored in everything.” That makes the means absolute. They’re not sort of secondary. They’re absolute. And if those means don’t honor God, don’t exalt Jesus Christ, then regardless of the outcome that appears to happen, they are means that are unworthy of God. So it’s vital that we use the wisdom that God provides us to bring deliverance.

Beloved, I would ask you to pray for your own church. If this is your church, pray for this church. If you have another church, pray for that church. Because this is a strong temptation, perhaps more so than any other time throughout Christian history. There’s a temptation to use human means in order to accomplish God’s ends or God’s work of deliverance. And oftentimes, when those means are questioned, the answer is, “Well it worked! Look at the number of people that are being baptized!” But those are not the means.

What are the means, again? It’s the Gospel of Jesus. It is the bare teaching of the Word of God. It is the call to repentance. It is the call to genuine biblical faith. It is obedience to God. All of these things. There’s a passion for God’s glory. And oftentimes, we have adopted other means to accomplish God’s work of deliverance. And it might appear as though God is using it, but Beloved, it is vital to know that God uses His means and His means only to accomplish His purposes.

**Quality #5: Willingness to be rejected by those you seek to help.**

So we find that after he kills the Egyptian, then he’s going out to help and be a deliverer. He sees himself as a deliverer already. Acts 7 tells us that.

**Acts 7:25-28** He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, “Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?” But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, “Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?”

He’s going, I think, with a kind heart. And that rejection of Moses, I don’t believe, was just from this one Hebrew slave. I believe it was the rejection of all the people. They didn’t want Moses to be their deliverer. Moses wanted to be a deliverer. He was willing to be used of God. God is teaching Moses that His servants, His instruments must be willing to be rejected even by the people who they care about. God says, “Moses, I’ll be faithful to you in the end, but don’t expect that others will.” The Apostle Paul knows this perhaps more than any other Christian laborer. I want to just read one part from 2 Timothy.

**2 Timothy 4:16-18** At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul is at the end of his life. It should be a time when everybody is lifting him on their shoulders and saying, “This is the greatest apostle of all. This is the missionary to the Gentiles. This is the guy who planted the churches, who gave his life.” He is in prison and he thinks he’s going to die, and it’s likely that he does. He even lists a few specific people who rejected him. And it had to have hurt Paul to be rejected, like it would hurt any of us. But Paul says, “I’m trusting myself to God.” And that’s what God’s instruments do.

There are untold pastors who are no longer pastors. It’s not because they’re not qualified in their life before the Lord. It’s not because they’re not gifted. But it’s because they said, “I can’t be hurt anymore. I can’t be rejected anymore. I can’t take that again.” There are a lot of laypeople who are hurt when they get involved in ministry and then they are…and I don’t want to point to the back because it’s great to be in the back. But they sit down at some point in the Sanctuary and they’re just quiet and they’re not connected to the work of God anymore. When you say, “Why aren’t you…?” They say, “Well, I was hurt so bad. I can’t afford to be hurt again.” But one of the aspects that we have to grab onto is God’s faithfulness in the midst of our hurt. We can’t avoid the hurt. Satan is going to whisper, “You expected this from the world, but you didn’t expect it from God’s people. So let’s back away.” And God says, “No. Know that my son was a suffering servant. He came unto his own, and his own did not receive him. You’re to follow Him. If you’re my instrument, you must follow Him. But know that I will be with you and I will reward you.”

**Quality #6: Humility to depend solely upon God for deliverance.**

We need God in order to accomplish anything of eternal value. Jesus would say

**John 15:5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

I think this is where the story is leading us into the wilderness. He’s bringing Moses to nothing. He’s bringing him to smallness. He had greatness, but I believe part of his big problem in killing the Egyptian is that he was resting in his own strength. He was resting in his own wisdom. He was resting in his own abilities to be a deliverer. He thought, “I can do this, and I can do it now.” And God put him in a desert for 40 years to say, “Moses, you need to become small so that you realize I’m big, and so that you’ll never ever again depend upon your smallness, but you’ll always depend upon My bigness. I’m God. I will do it and I will use you.”

So as we think about what it means to have a meaningful life, let’s know that God says have faith to believe that Jesus Christ is better. Ask Him for compassion to see the need; to see. Not just to look, but to see. Courage to act for the cause of deliverance. Wisdom to use God’s means. Willingness to be rejected by those you seek to help, knowing that God is faithful. And the humility to depend solely upon God for deliverance; not on your own talents and not on our own resources, not on our own giftings.

And who is the ultimate deliverer? Jesus. Thank God He looks at us and He has compassion as He sees our need. He had courage to act for the cause of deliverance. Being rejected by all. Suffering death on the cross. He had wisdom to use God’s means, the means that He had planned with the Father from time and eternity. He had a willingness to be rejected, a willingness to be despised, and yet stay in there all the way to the end. Drink that cup; every drop. And He had humility to depend solely on His Father for deliverance. And He is our deliverer. How good it is to be delivered!