

God's will or my way ?

Acts 7:21-29 Exodus 2:10-15

Introduction

Let's be really clever today – and learn from someone else's mistake(s).

Moses Childhood

Moses was raised a child of Pharaoh's daughter, given a new Egyptian name, Moses, to help him conform to his new adoptive identity. Educated in the very best schools - the scholarship of the day.

History suggests Moses went on to lead the Egyptian army in a great victory over Ethiopia.

A prince in Egypt - perhaps destined to become a Pharaoh! Well known and respected in Egypt. "a man of power in words and deeds" Acts 7:22b

All this he rejected "By faith Moses, when he had grown up refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Josephus tells us that Pharaoh had no other children, and that his daughter, Thermutis, had no children of her own. So, most probably Moses would have succeeded to the throne. That some offer was made to Moses, after he had reached manhood, is clearly implied by the words "he refused." What he refused then was wealth, honours, power, and, most likely, a throne. Had he accepted, he could readily have mitigated the sufferings of His own people, and lightened their heavy burdens. But he refused. "He chose to be ill-treated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time." Heb.11:24-25

He knew his own people and identified with them.

Crunch time

He wanted God's will - but he wanted to do it his way - God was too slow. He was already 40 years old. He probably knew that he was God's choice for leading the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt – fed up of waiting, he'd get the ball rolling. "he decided" v 23

When he saw an Egyptian beating one of his brethren HE looked left, HE looked right, HE killed, HE hid - trying to hide the evidence.

All of self. Even a prince of Egypt or the man of God, he had no right to kill him. He was long to repent this one hasty, undisciplined act. He looked every way - but up. No consultation with God. "It seemed right to him" - How wrong he was. He did not use the power and wisdom available to him; he acted in the flesh.

So often when we live by and in the flesh and not the spirit, we try some shameful cover up. Hiding sin does not erase it.

It is the problem of thinking that end justifies the means. This is not Biblical. Live by the flesh and you will end in the desert of spiritual dryness and be useless to self and God. Spiritual ends are not achieved by carnal or worldly means.

Gal 5:17

His brethren did not support his action so events led to his speedy departure from Egypt. Acts 7:25 "he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand." His hope that the hour of deliverance had come; turned to fear.

By one wrong hasty act, Moses put it out of his power to do anything towards alleviating the sufferings of his brethren for a further 40 years.

Moses was unwanted and misunderstood by his own people. Moses was wanted by Egypt to be punished for murder. The Egyptians did not understand his motives.

Think for a moment about the time-scale. Who told on Moses. Pharaoh hears about it the next day yet. He went out the next day and already word had got around. His own people had given him away.

Pharaoh undoubtedly had spies, so naturally he heard about it in a hurry. Any kind of threat to Pharaoh is going to be eliminated. So he is out to kill Moses. Moses is scared, of course, and flees.

Moses is forty years old at this time. What happens to men who are totally rejected at forty? Moses is not some figure in ancient legend out there, some special person. He is a normal human male that happened to wind up a prince of Egypt, but he is a man, and he is forty years old, and he is rejected by both the Egyptians and his own people the Jews. He is totally rejected. What happens to the male ego at forty. What happens to the male ego and self-worth? In the business world, if you don't make it by forty, you are over the hill. One might as well forget about a career.

What happens to a man when he is rejected at 40, or thinks he is. He begins to question himself. At forty everything starts coming apart. The hairline starts to recede. Its feeling over the hill time. A time to begin to question the future.

Rather than rally round Moses the Israelites isolated and rejected him.

“Moses thought that his own people would realise God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.” Acts 7:25

Intellect, education and the ability to lead men even into battle was not enough for God. He had all the skill and knowledge, but not the sensitivity to Gods will and timing. At the age of 40 this somebody suddenly learnt that he was a nobody. A nobody with a price on his

head rejected by his own people whom he was chosen to deliver, and rejected by his adoptive nation and family.

Moses was afraid - reasonably so – he had to flee Egypt. Because he had acted apart from God's, will in method and timing. - He exchanged his surroundings of luxury in Pharaoh's household - for the poverty of living in the desert of Midian. He had to run for his life.

Moses was confused, frustrated, tired - probably feeling a failure that God could never again use in any significant way - certainly not to rescue his brethren from slavery.

The need for a right perspective

Moses had to be delivered from himself before he could reach out and deliver anyone else.

If I am hung up on my self-worth and am judging myself by my worldly performance, by how men judge me or how men respond to me, anyone can shatter me by just rejecting me.

However, if I really believe that my acceptance, my self-worth, is based upon my position in Christ, the fact that I am accepted as a son of the living God, I am impregnable even though I may have to go against the crowd. I do not need approval – but it is nice to have.

Another chapter in the life of Moses

This highly qualified, self-motivated, handsome “young” man, this refugee, sits down by a well humiliated, ashamed of himself, embarrassed - worthless. He probably did not leave Egypt as a slave clinging to a staff. He probably left Egypt in a hurry and probably as a prince in the finery that he had. He was also probably heavily armed and on horseback.

He felt and WAS a failure. Nevertheless, he was to learn from his experience.

While Moses is sitting by the well, here come Reuel's seven daughters to water their flocks. Under the Semitic system, the men did not water their flocks. That was woman's work. Children lead the flocks around and the women did the watering. Men did not water flocks.

It was - and still is the custom that who comes first to the well may use it. One can assume these rude shepherds made a habit of "pushing in" for Reuel (also called Jethro) later asks his daughters, "Why have you returned so early?" Ex.2:18

Now Moses is a man. He is a Semite, and he is an Egyptian to whom shepherds are "loathsome" is the word in the Hebrew. How badly does he want acceptance? When shepherds come out and chase away Reuel's daughters, out steps this heavily armed, well trained Egyptian warrior who has proven himself in battle, and he chases those shepherds up one side of the Sinai and down the other. Moses - the champion of the oppressed intervenes. He stands up for what is right - but this time no unnecessary violence. Probably dressed as a well travelled prince, on a tired horse, he lets his kalashnikov do most of the talking.

Then what does the great prince of Egypt do?

Woman's work. He wants to be accepted so badly that he not only does the work of a loathsome shepherd but also "woman's work." He pours out the water. All his life he has had this prejudice built into him, and now here he is doing shepherd's work, woman's work. At this point he will do anything to be accepted. He is pretty low. That is where God wants him, and that is where God can use him. Moses the leader learns to begin as a servant. So when Reuel invites him to come and eat, he does.

That Moses could "stand up" against those shepherds, single-handed, shows plainly that the Lord was on his side; and in befriending the daughters of Reuel, Moses was enabled to win the esteem of their father.

Reuel [means "friend of God." He obviously is a Semite. He worships God. Midian, by the way, was a son of Abraham through Keturah his other wife so he is directly related to Abraham]

Events show how the Providence of God opened to Moses a home during his long exile from Egypt. God made all things work together for his good.

Therefore he is welcomed; works for Reuel and in time becomes one of the family.

His new home - the land of Midian, an area south of Canaan, a flat barren area covered by sand, rocks and a few shrubs. Not a desirable "Thompson holiday area."

This man of power and influence used to luxury now lives in a wasteland, meeting his own family needs by manual labour as a shepherd. Willing now to live a life of obscurity.

Riches to rags. Luxury to poverty. A prince to obscurity.

Moses had acted impatiently - now God was to teach him patience - painfully for 40 years! A long wait before God was ready to use him again.

40 years of quiet and solitude - Time to develop his relationship with God.

He learnt to change - otherwise his feelings of despair, loneliness and uselessness would only have increased.

He learnt that God cares for failures - to bring them to repentance and change.

Conclusion

Like Moses, we continue to make mistakes - if we do not learn from them. God may have to bring us down and down until we will listen and heed his word. God can use desert experiences for our benefit.

Moses found himself in a barren, lonely and uncomfortable place. Of his desert experience Moses could have said

1. I don't want it - Afraid of what God might do to and with me. FEAR
2. I don't need it - I have a good education, I'm strong, handsome and intelligent. PRIDE
3. I'm tired of it - a few months to learn my lesson OK but not 40 years! Has God given up on me? FATIGUE and ANXIETY
4. I accept it "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" Rom.8:28 Moses accepted painfully that God knew what he was doing - and all was for his and his peoples benefit somehow!
Prepared to have his setbacks turned by God into a springboard.

The situation you are in may be the result of your own rebellion or disobedience.

The situation you are in may be the result of another's making
The situation you are in may be specifically God given

Whatever - turn that situation over to God - Be determined to let God teach you in and through it. Turn setbacks into springboards (but beware of woodworm while waiting.) Mistakes and failure can become building blocks for the future. Don't let pride, miserable feelings, or feeling sorry for ourselves, humiliation, ashamed, bruised, broken, embarrassed and feeling worthless get us down. Be sure he can use ALL things for your benefit - in time, even 40 years.

Psalm 119:67-71
Sow cress seed

Shortest route from A to B may not be the best - walk over chairs,
people, etc
Fastest way to get a new bike is steal it.
Fastest way to deal with the problem of your neighbours tree
Fastest way is not always the best way.

Many aim for the right goal - but try to go about it the wrong way.
May be well intentioned, but weak, ignorant or misguided.
Too easy to think we know better than God

Cress seeds not grown - be patient for them to grow.
Not everything has to wait for. Instant coffee - 2.Cor 6:2b
Jelly babies

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