

14. The Man Who Stumbled into Egypt

And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the Lord met (Moses) and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah (Moses' wife) took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of **her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" So (God) let (Moses) go. Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!"**—because of the circumcision (Exodus 4:24-26).

I had you read "Moses and Paul" from *The Feast of Tabernacles*. That article gives an understanding of what is really happening in these very strange verses.

What kind of a man is caught in such a humiliating vise?

Moses' Many Failures. How do we know that this man stumbled into Egypt with his heart ripped apart by humiliation?

Consider that this is the man who gave the law and often enforced it, directing that a man who violated the Sabbath be stoned to death. But for forty years, he never required circumcision of the people, even though he knew God had given it to Abraham as a seal to show that these men belonged to Him.

This failure on Moses' part comes out from a complete inability inside the design of his person, one of many. As James said, Moses, like Elijah, was a man just like us.

A Man Just Like Us. Let's trace out, then, the heart of this man who failed so many times. James's words, "a man just like us," allow us to place our own knowing of ourselves into Moses' soul.

Now, just like with Abraham, the testimony of Paul and the writer of Hebrews is "great faith" – BUT the reality of their lives did not look like faith at all. Just like Abraham, Moses did not know himself in that way.

And so we understand that the testimony of faith in Hebrews 11 is not how Moses saw himself, but Jesus proving Himself through Moses' weakness.

Made Perfect in Weakness. My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is brought to full perfection and completion inside of your weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Through faith Moses, having become great, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; preferring, rather, to endure adversity together with the people of God, than to possess the temporary enjoyment of sin. Having esteemed the wrongful condemnation of Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, indeed he was looking away into the reward. Through faith he left Egypt, not fearing the anger of the king; indeed, he endured steadfastly as seeing and experiencing the One who is invisible (Hebrews 11).

A Friend of God. Here's the thing. The account in Exodus 2 is clear; Moses believed that he left Egypt BECAUSE he "feared the king." In the same way I believed that I left Blair Valley because I did not have enough faith to stay.

In the same way that Moses would have been astonished when God told him otherwise, so I was astonished when God told me otherwise.

Consider this line – the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend (Exodus 33:11). HOW did Moses become the man who befriended God? This is our critical question; this is what we want to be.

From Twenties to Eighties. Consider Moses in his twenties – Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds (Acts 7:22). Then consider Moses in his eighties – Now Moses was the meekest man in all the earth. – The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

How does an arrogant and intelligent youth become a man who knows and is friends with a God who is meek and lowly of heart?

It is easy for me to point out in the text the clear proofs of the answer because my life story has been the same.

Seeing and Experiencing. And you as well, for this is clearly God's intention, that we identify ourselves with these men and women of the Bible as being just like them and they just like us.

We cannot, of course, know for certain that Moses was Asperger's; nonetheless, the entire argument against God at the burning bush comes out from the agony of Asperger's thinking.

This brings us to the next line that we want to know – seeing and experiencing the One who is invisible. I can promise you this, this quality was going on inside of Moses even when he was a brash and foolish young man.

Never Fitting In. It takes a learned mind to think clearly and to set forth an orderly way of thinking, AND it takes humiliation to bring such a mind into being friends with God. It is a long process to become friends with God.

Moses probably always knew that the Israelites were his people, and, despite his success in school, he probably knew that he never fit into the Egyptian world. Then, when he tried to “be the leader,” he did it all wrong. He ran because he “feared the king,” yes, but even more so because of his excruciating social inability.

Moses' social inability did not begin at age 40; it was always the story of his life. At 40, it had become too much to bear.

The Cry of the Calling. And so we have a boy who, from the start, is thoughtful and contemplative – on the inside. Always there is this whisper inside, this calling, this voice of an invisible Being towards whom his heart turns regularly.

Outwardly, however, Moses is intellectually and organizationally capable. People are often astounded at his abilities. BUT – they are just as astounded at his inability in social relationships.

Moses is often proud of his abilities and often deeply distressed by regular and deep humiliation while interacting with others. Yet these humiliating moments always increase the cry of the calling of the Invisible One.

A Wonderful Community. Then, at age 40, when the conflict between ability and humiliation has become too great, Moses heads out into the desert and becomes a part of a wonderful community of people, the family and household of Jethro. **We don't know fully who** this man Jethro is, but Scripture seems to indicate that he knew of Abraham and that he knew the God of Abraham.

And so, besides joining the community and marrying Jethro's daughter, Moses spends the next four decades wandering around the desert with them taking care of sheep.

We also know that through those years, Moses sings in his heart to God, as David did.

The Singing of Moses. Here is one of the songs that Moses sang. – He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the **Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust”** (Psalm 91:1-2). [Read all of Psalm 90 & 91 and think of Moses wandering in the desert with his sheep.]

This singing comes out of the depths of a man's soul, out of deep calling to deep inside a man who sees and experiences the Invisible One, personally, inside his own heart.

Yet Moses was ashamed of himself through all those years.

Being Ashamed. I don't doubt that Moses loved Zipporah with all his heart, but two things made for a difficult marriage, Moses' social inadequacy and with it, his deep shame towards

himself. It takes a special kind of woman to love an Asperger's man, and God has not made very many of them.

From the time I stumbled away from Blueberry, having failed completely at being a leader of God's people, until I KNEW my precious union with Christ, the bottom line of my self story, my constant refrain was, "I am so ashamed of myself."

I consider John Eldredge and Joel Osteen two of my best friends in life because they taught me to stop imagining such an awful and untrue thing.

God in the Fire. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the **midst of a bush. ...the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."**

God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. ...I am the God of your 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 (Exodus 3:2-6).

The Invisible One. My argument is that this experience did not happen in a vacuum. The man who turned aside to see a God who speaks from inside the fire is a man who has wrestled with this very God inside his own heart all his life.

It is not Moses who catches our heart throb, however, but this Invisible One who is speaking to him, this One who is very concerned that no one should imagine any form, just fire, and a voice out from the fire. [Read Deuteronomy 4.]

And **the Lord said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I KNOW their sorrows** (verse 7).

I KNOW Their Sorrows. How do we know this Invisible One? We know Him by one means only – He that has seen Me has seen the Father. We know God by knowing a Man.

A Man who – has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows (Isaiah 53:2-4).

When God said to Moses, “I know their sorrows,” He did not mean that He “knew about” their sorrows.

The Father’s Pain. I am adding two chapters to *A Highway for God*. They might be called “God’s Shattered Heart,” and “Healing God’s Heart.”

One of the most ridiculous things I have ever heard inside “Christian theology” is the doctrine of the “impassivity of God,” that God does not know sorrow or grief. I will refrain from waxing eloquent against the sheer stupidity of such an un-Biblical rationalization.

Every single hurt against those who belong to Jesus is a far greater hurt against our Father’s heart. I am beginning to sense just how much pain we humans have inflicted on God and on His heart.

The Seed of Christ. You see, just because God could not speak Paul’s gospel to Moses does not mean that God did not relate with Moses by symmorph. Moses knew God inside his own heart far beyond any knowledge in his mind.

The evidence of the next forty years, then, shows us that one line in this entire conversation penetrated deep into Moses' heart to become the Seed of Christ inside of him. That one line is – "I know their sorrow."

What kind of a man goes eighty days without food or water contending with God for the sake of His people? – A man who shares Hheart with God.

Arguing with God. Then look at this! – Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. That doesn't last very long. In just a few minutes Moses is arguing with God against himself. "Me? No way!

"They won't listen to me. I always get it wrong. I'm no good at things. You've got the wrong guy. I don't know how to speak in public. They're not going to believe me. O my Lord, please **send by the hand of whomever else You may send.**"

Finally, God gets angry with Moses. "Okay, all right, I'll get Aaron to talk for you. Just go, Okay?"

The Fear of the Almighty. Then, as they are camped the night before they meet Aaron on the borders of Egypt, the worst experience of Moses' life happens to him. Let me paraphrase it.

Moses wakes up in fear, scared out of his wits. The finger of the Almighty is pointing right in his face. He hears "Will you surrender all that you are to Me right now?" Except those words come in the form of "Why have you not circumcised your son?"

In that moment, Moses knows the Fear of God, that God will take his life right now if he does not surrender. But he can't. He just can't. Cutting off his 25-year-old son's foreskin is outside of his ability.

An Angry Wife. Moses is desperate. He wakes up Zipporah. "You've got to do it for me, dear. I can't do it myself; I just can't."

Zipporah sees her husband's face. She has been his companion for over thirty years. She knows him. She knows his strength and his relationship with God. And she also knows his waffling inadequacy and his always caving in when it counts. Zipporah is almost as angry with Moses as God is. "I'm going to die, Zipporah. You have to save my life."

Zipporah wakes Gershon up in her anger. Gershon takes one look at his mother's face and submits.

A Bloody Husband. Zipporah doesn't even have a knife, so she finds a sharp stone and saws her son's foreskin off. Both of them are in pain, humiliated, and angry with Moses.

When Zipporah finally carves the foreskin off, she turns and throws it at Moses' feet. "You bloody man. You bloody, bloody man."

I have never known a moment of shame, inadequacy, and humiliation that comes near this moment in Moses' life. The thought that the very next day he would have to stand before two million people and try to convince them to make him their leader was like a taser in his forehead.

Sharing Hheart with God. Why did God make sure that Moses stumbled into Egypt in wrenching shame and humiliation? God was about to confront the powers of this world through this timid man. And God was about to do some of the mightiest things in the Bible every time Moses waved his little stick.

Yes, God NEEDED a man who knew NO SUFFICIENCY in himself. But that was just the outer reality.

When a God who is meek and lowly of Heart shows up inside His creation, what does He always do first? He humbles Himself – Moses sharing Hheart with God.

Reading for Next Time. The next lesson is “The Man Who Confronted the World.” There is a fair bit of reading for this lesson, but all of it interesting. Read Exodus Chapters 5, 6:1-13, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12:29-32. Then add Romans 9:14-24 and Revelation 11 & 12:13-17.

In your reading of Exodus, pay careful attention to the conversation between Moses and Pharaoh. As you do, think of all the governments across the world, all the politicians and judges, who ordered churches closed.

Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.