

16. The Man Who Raised His Stick

Bringing judgment to Egypt was not Moses' purpose, neither did he gain any delight from it. Egypt was as the womb as it tells the child, "You don't belong here anymore. Get out!"

Being birthed is an overwhelming experience for the child, yet the birthing is what all the travail is about. The birthing of God's Church into the fullness of Christ, into the fulfillment of Tabernacles, into the revelation of all Salvation NOW through her, is what everything is about.

And these things are foreshadowed in wondrous detail in the Exodus.

God-With-Me. I must confess that we went through a *Veggie Tales* phase when our children were young, and it was the *Veggie Tales* "Moses" that showed me what Moses actually did.

All Moses ever did was wave his stick. There was nothing magical or "holy" about the stick, it was just a stick he had found lying on the desert ground. And it did not become "holy" just because Moses waved it. What was holy was Moses' heart towards God. Moses believed with all confidence "God-with-me."

This lesson, then, is about those moments when we see Moses' quiet and profound certainty that he walked in God.

More than Enough. There is a word that means "walking in quiet and utter certainty of God-with-me," and that is – favor.

The more prominent word is "grace," of course, and grace means "God-with-me," but grace is sort of like "love," it's too large and mushy to be as useful as the more specific word, "favor." Yet this favor was not "upon" Moses, per se, but through Moses towards God's people.

God's abundance, whether it be protection or provision, is abundance through. As Paul said, "Sufficient for every good work." But Jesus said, "More than enough."

Living in Favor. Living in favor is living in the intimate awareness that God is utterly part of our lives, that God surrounds us thickly, that God directs our every step, and that God is GOOD.

And inside this favor is the intimate awareness that everything we might need to accomplish God/our purposes through us is at hand, whether we see it or not. Because we walk in symmorphy, we do not say “God’s purposes, not mine.” We know that God energizes as desire inside of us.

Nonetheless walking in favor is also walking in supreme patience, for God/our true purposes take time.

Right on Time. But the story of Moses shows us that everything needed to accomplish those purposes is right on time; everyone is in the exact place they need to be when they need to be there. Then, when God/our purposes are accomplished, it looks miraculous to everyone, including us. – Which it is.

Consider the fact that every single one of the children of Israel danced on the other side of the Red Sea, with all their animals and all the wealth of Egypt in their hands.

And so we must understand that the confrontation with the world accomplished the favor of God. Yet at no point did Israel put their hand against the Egyptians.

Abundance. When God fulfills Covenant inside of us, He brings us into no sufficiency in ourselves, but all sufficiency in Him. Then, when God fulfills Kingdom through us, He moves out from us in all abundance.

At the end of this session, we want to pray together to call God out from our hearts into our world. Calling God into our world is another way to say the Kingdom of God. God is known as His kingdom by abundance.

And this is the great issue between God and the children of Israel in the wilderness, prompting Moses to use his stick.

Does God Provide? Does God protect? Does God deliver? Does God provide? Does God give victory? Does God bring order? Does God take us into life and joy? Does God do what He says?

Here's the deal. This is what the entirety of the Exodus and the entrance into the Promised Land is all about. God wanted a people who walked inside of His favor with all confidence. Even though they did not do that, they still became the wealthiest little country in the world within 500 years.

What would Israel have become if those people had walked in the same confidence in God shown them by Moses?

The Wrong Image. And that was the purpose of Moses' little stick. What God wanted was that all those two million people should walk in the same confidence of "God-with-me" that Moses walked in.

Moses did not place himself above, nor present himself as a superior agent. Moses would have been as thrilled as God if the people had followed his example of friendship with God.

But that is also the problem of Moses' little stick. Even though God used it to show that it was always He, the people got their eyes on the stick. But when the stick left, they turned to something else.

A Great Conflict. We want to look, now, at several instances in Moses' interaction with the people in which Moses stood between them and God to show them God-with-them.

And we want to look at these instances in the light of this great conflict God sets between ABUNDANCE through FAVOR – versus – SCARCITY through HARDNESS.

We also see that God sets up the Exodus to look just like the birthing of a baby from the womb. As Isaiah said of us – **Before she was in labor, she gave birth... Who has heard such a thing? ...Shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children (66).**

Our Only Source. Yet this birthing of a nation in a day happens three times, the Exodus as the foreshadowing, the birthing of the Church out from death and resurrection as the source, and the birthing of the Kingdom through us as the fulfillment.

That is the context, but the issue always remains the heart, a heart that walks in confidence of God-with-me. And thus we see that the prayer of Jesus in John 17, the prayer that birthed the Kingdom, includes this same issue of abundance versus scarcity and the protest and pain coming from the womb, saying, “Get out of here.”

God is our SOURCE, not our conniving nor this world.

Confidence, Not Conniving. I want to look briefly at five instances where Moses in some way stood between, not always with his stick, of course. Those five will be the moment of Passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, manna & water from the rock, the fight against the Amalekites, and Moses’ face on the ground.

Yet it is the issue that concerns me still, not the context.

When God is SOURCE, He often provides through the world. But He never provides through conniving. Conniving – versus – Confidence. To connive means “to wink together,” that is, “secret complicity,” whereas to confide means “to share faith together,” God and you.

Passover. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:13).

This is the first mighty connection of God with each individual person among the children of Israel.

We are looking at the littleness of Moses, a man just like us, and the simplicity of his actions. In this case, instead of a stick, it was a “bunch of hyssop.” Can you do that? Can you place Blood upon your entrance into God? Can you place yourself inside of Christ? Can you walk through the Blood into Jesus?

Protection. Favor is walking in the seeing and the experience of an invisible God utterly with me. The first part of favor is KNOWING absolute protection.

Sin for the Christian is imagining separation from God in even the slightest way. The Blood of our Passover means that no thought of separation from God can come near us.

Yet Passover is for journey, and so we go on to know the Lord, yet not as the Israelites did, for as Paul said, they also represent what we do not do. The Israelites danced on the other side of the Red Sea; we dance before the Sea opens.

Red Sea. **“Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace”** (Exodus 14:13-14).

This is the second mighty connection of God with each individual person among the children of Israel. Redemption is a two-step process, under blood and through water. Here we have the stick as God’s simplicity, and the stick, of course, is the cross.

Can you never call yourself by yourself? Can you SEE Jesus alone? Can you accept that Jesus does His will in you?

Proving. Favor is walking in the seeing and the experience of an invisible God utterly with me. Favor is KNOWING the proving of Christ alone, with NO prating about myself.

Just as redemption is a two-step process, so the birthing of God through us into our world is the same. Every child is birthed through the parting of the waters.

We're talking about a people who live utterly and only inside of God and God inside of them, in their knowing, walking in the thickness of God, in all goodness and favor. Jesus alone proves Himself, through our confidence that He is and does. We dance before the Sea opens.

Manna and Water. This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. – Take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink (Exodus 16:15 & 17:5-6).

A simple word, bringing bread to eat – and the stick again, this time striking the Rock and water flowing out.

Later, when Moses needed water again, God told him to speak to the Rock and not to strike it again. **Can you speak Christ alone without any “second” death?**

Provision. Favor is walking in the seeing and the experience of an invisible God utterly with me. Favor is KNOWING the abundance of God through me for others.

These people SAW the mightiest demonstration of God in human history, yet within two days they were weeping over scarcity and loss. **We are not like them; we celebrate God's provision BEFORE it comes.** We walk in the certainty of all abundant provision flowing into our lives at the moment it is needed.

The expectation of goodness is the expectation of God. Our job is to cultivate the spirit of our mind that God is with us.

Amalek. **And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed... And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek...** (Exodus 17:11-13).

It's no longer the stick; it's just Moses' hands, raised in the air, the most "hands-off" position a man could take. No sufficiency in ourselves – that we should not be confiding upon ourselves, but upon God.

In this metaphor, Moses is you and me, while Joshua is Michael and his angels. We enable them to do their thing.

Victory. Favor is walking in the seeing and the experience of an invisible God utterly with me. Favor is KNOWING the already finished victory of Christ through me.

Consider this line from Deuteronomy and Joshua. – “an altar of uncut stones on which no iron tool has been used.” An “iron tool” upon the stones of the altar represents fixing ourselves, as if Moses had tried to fight himself. God wants us to offer ourselves to Him, but only that which He made, and NOT our efforts to appear “like Christ.”

The confidence of Favor, of God with me, is the confidence that the victory is Christ, regardless of my ANYTHING.

Split-Earth. **Then they fell on their faces, and said, “O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation?”** – The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up (Numbers 16:22 & 32).

Numbers 13, 14, and 16 are three of the most important chapters of the Old Testament, for the writer of Hebrews uses this story to ground the sixth and seventh most important verses in the Bible into the Salvation of God.

We will look at the issue of refusing to enter into all that Christ is and means in an upcoming lesson. Here we want to know the real issue that requires the fear of God in any who would minister in His name.

Fear. The issue with God is one thing – putting out your hand to manipulate and control your **brother or sister in Christ (for their good or not)**. It is the sickness of Adam's rebellion. There is one answer only for all Christian rebellion – **the simple response of placing one's forehead upon the ground**.

Can you do that? Can you drop under a cross you CANNOT carry and place your forehead upon the dirt? When a man or a woman is found doing such a simple thing towards God, there is one thing you will never find.

You will find NO thought in their mind of manipulating or controlling God's people.

Rest in KNOWING. We rest utterly in knowing God-with-me. Never does any other thought come into our mind.

And you cannot KNOW God-with-me unless you place God-with-me upon yourself when you are at your worst. **Inside your human agony, call it "God-with-me for the sake of others."** Call it to be so AGAINST your human judgment. Every "particle" that is God utterly with every "particle" that is ME, connected always by Jesus.

As we REST in God-with-me in reckless confidence and in profound humility (face on the ground), so we walk inside of dynamic and absolute, living and personal FAVOR.

Reading for Next Time. The next lesson is titled "The Man Who Stood Between." We are looking at Moses carrying God's people inside his heart before God.

For next time, read Exodus 18:13-26, Chapters 32 & 33, and Deuteronomy Chapters 4, 8, and 9. As you read in Deuteronomy remember that God as our SOURCE is always the ISSUE, but for us it is symmorph, not law.

And I fell down before the Lord... because of all your sin which you committed... But the Lord listened to me at that time also. And the Lord was very angry with Aaron... so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.

Our Prayer Together. In our prayer together now, we will alternate from one session to the next between, first, calling God into our world and, second, calling the Church into her place. We have never done such a thing, and we have no idea what we are doing. That will not slow us down, however.

In each prayer, then, we will draw from the lesson to focus and direct our thoughts.

“Father, You fill our hearts with all overflowing abundance of favor. Father, we know that the birthing of Your Kingdom is the birthing of You into our world, that You would be part of Your creation in all joy and goodness.

Come Through Us. “Father, we have no idea what we are doing, but we know You. And You told us to think the same way Jesus thought, as He called You to become visible through Him.

“Father, we call You to enter into our world through us, that You might be our gentle touch, our kind words, our love for one another.

“Father, we call You to be protection for Your people through us. We call You to be the proving of all Salvation in Your Church. We call You to be all provision of need through us. We call You to be total victory over all who oppose Your people. And Father, we call You to be, through us, all humility, all “hands-off,” all absolute trust in You.

Into Our World. “Father, we know that it is You, the All-Carrying, coming through us to be part of our world. We know that God-with-us, that is, LOVE, is a miracle of faith.

“Father, cause us to know Jesus in our hearts, the very FAITH of the Son of God, the only faith we are, that we might expect, every moment, that we are walking in a thick God, in all outpoured goodness and favor.”

Note: God cannot be known, throughout all future ages, except THROUGH our confident expectation that He does, is, and has. We are the ones that look at everything and call it “God with us,” and “All-Goodness.” And so alone does it become good.