

Series: "Holy Moses!" (Part 1)
"Here Am I – Send Somebody Else"

I am going to preach four sermons on the life of Moses. Moses is one of the most notable persons in the Bible, a man who had a strategic and memorable place in the history of Israel. Moses walked close to God – we can usually learn from people who walk close to God. I've called this series, "Holy Moses!" Moses *was* a holy man, in the true sense of that word, for the word "holy" in the Bible means someone separated, and set apart, to serve God.

We first read of Moses in Exodus, chapter 2. He is born when the Hebrews are *slaves*, held captive in Egypt. Yet, remember these slaves are *Abraham's descendants*. Years before, God had made a covenant with Abraham. He promised Abraham that Abraham would have many descendants, who would become a great nation. They would be a special people through whom God would bless the whole world. Now, God is stirring in the events of history, about ready to set the Hebrew slaves free for this special task. Guess who's going to get the call from heaven to quarterback the job? Right – it is *Moses!*

It happens in a weird way. Moses is in Midian, living a quiet, humdrum life tending sheep. One day he is startled to see a bush on fire – yet the bush is not being consumed. Quickly his curiosity turns to awe and fear. He realizes it is the presence of the Lord Almighty! Exodus 3:4 says, "God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!'" Moses responds, "I'm here!" God says, "Don't come close! Take off your sandals, for you're standing on holy ground!" Scared, Moses hides his face from God. Then the Lord God says this: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians...so come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:7-8a, 10).

Notice, Moses is *called* by God for this great work! ***Most of us don't think of ourselves as being "called" by God.*** Oh, maybe a few important Christians, like Mother Theresa or Billy Graham or Charles Stanley – or somebody who is "called to the ministry" – i.e. a pastor, a priest, a missionary. But *each of us?* Called by God?

Yet the Bible says that God has called each of us! There are many Scriptures that talk about Christians being "called", or our having a "calling" from God. For example, we are called for salvation...called to eternal life...called to share in God's kingdom and glory... called to live a holy life. In the New Testament, the word for "church" is the Greek word "ekklesia", which means a people "called out", or "called together for a purpose". To be part of the church implies that we have sensed God *calling us* to follow Christ and serve Him! In the New Testament letter of Jude, Jude writes "to those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ" (Jude 1).

God doesn't just call famous Christians and professional ministers! God takes delight in calling humble, ordinary people into His service! This is reflected in the words of the Apostle Paul, written to followers of Jesus in the Corinthians church: "Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is

weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God” (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

It seems to me that the people most enthused about their faith, those for whom God is most real, are those who have somehow deeply felt God’s *call* upon their life: His divine hand on their shoulder, that Inward Voice urging them to some God-task beyond themselves.

Do you feel this “calling” from God? Do you sense that you have been called to belong to Jesus and live your life for Him, that you have been “called” to do some things for God that only you can do? I pray that you have experienced the call of God upon your life!

As we look at the call of Moses, we can’t help but notice that ***God prepared Moses ahead of time for the task.*** Remember the story in Exodus? Because the Hebrew slaves were increasing in number, it is ordered that all newborn *Hebrew* boys are to be thrown into the Nile River and drowned. But Moses’ mother hid him for 3 months. She put him in a basket, and it floated down the Nile River. Then he’s picked up by Pharaoh’s daughter – of all people! And somehow, Moses’ *real mother* was then brought into the palace to nurse him! Was that a coincidence? Was it just plain luck? No! God was involved, protecting and preparing Moses for the job ahead!

God works in our lives to get us ready to answer His call! I think of the influence a pastor by the name of Jim Morris had on my becoming a Christian. I was a young boy when he came to my home church. He was young man, and sometimes he acted like an overgrown kid. He played wiffle ball with us in the church yard. I couldn’t get over that a pastor played ball with us kids. My curiosity about being a pastor and what that entailed was aroused, and through him I was drawn to the Lord. He was the one who planted the seed in my mind that maybe I should be a pastor. Are there people God has brought across your path, or events in your life, that God has used to prepare you to be a better Christian, or to serve the Lord in a particular way?

God was preparing Moses for the task ahead. Acts 7:22 says Moses “was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” He grew up in an Egyptian palace, apart from his Hebrew people. But no doubt this helped him later on in dealing with the Egyptians. God also prepared Moses through 40 years tending sheep in Midian, in the Arabian desert. Why did he go there? Do you remember? He fled to Midian because in Egypt he had seen an Egyptian beating a Hebrew man, and in a fit of anger, Moses killed the Egyptian, and buried him in the sand! But several men saw what he had done, and so he had to flee Egypt as a fugitive. Moses was guilty of homicide! He killed a man! Obviously, he was not quite ready yet for the work God wanted him to do! So, out there in Midian, isolated in the desert, tending sheep, he had time to deal with his guilt, and his terrible temper...time to mature...time for God to shape him for the task ahead.

Every experience of life can be our “palace training” or “Midian desert” to prepare us to be the person God wants us to be so we can do the task God wants us to do. Look at your past, and see that as God’s way of preparing you for what He wants you to be and do now. Recognize both

the good things *and* the bad experiences as part of your preparation to serve God now in some way. I know a Christian couple whose marriage almost ended in their earlier years, but who as a result have gone to couples struggling in marriage, and counseled them, sharing some of the insights they learned as God healed their marriage. One of the most effective Christians I ever knew was a humble man with little formal education, who helped a lot of people who were hurting or struggling with life. Where did he learn his gentle, compassionate spirit? As his own heart was broken when one of his sons became mentally ill, and was permanently put in an institution.

So, you may have a job skill? Can you see that as God's way of putting you in a place of employment to serve Him there? Are you divorced, or have you been divorced? No, God highest intention was not that your marriage fail. But that "Midian desert" time in your life may help shape you to be more understanding of others when they fail. Wherever you were brought up or educated, look on that as your "palace training", preparing you to be useful to God. Maybe your childhood was not a happy one. You were abused, neglected, wounded in some way. God can use that awful time in your life for some good purpose if you let Him. I once heard a professional Christian singer talk about how she faced rejection after rejection as a child, shoved off from one relative to another – but how God had taken that pain and healed it, and used it to help shape her into the Christian woman she now is.

Do you get the idea? Every experience of life (good or bad), *if we surrender it to God*, can become God's way of preparing you to do the tasks He has assigned you in life! As someone has said, "God never wastes an experience."

God called Moses to an important task, and prepared him ahead of time for the job. How did Moses react when God told him he was the one God chose to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt? ***Moses dragged his feet!*** The dialogue between God and Moses is lively, and actually rather humorous! Try to imagine Moses and God talking, back and forth. God says, "I am sending *you* to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10). Moses replies (no doubt with a lump in his throat), "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh?" (Exodus 3:11). God answers, "I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12). Moses says: "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' then what shall I tell them?" (Exodus 3:13). God shoots back: "I AM who I AM. This is what you are to say...I AM has sent me to you" (Exodus 3:14).

Moses then says to God, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me?" (Exodus 4:1). At that point, God shows Moses a couple of supernatural signs that may help the Egyptians believe Moses. Moses is told to throw his rod down on the ground, and it becomes a snake. Then he picks up the snake and it is turned into a rod again. Moses is told to put his hand into his cloak and it becomes leprous. Then he takes his hand back out of his cloak and the leprous spots disappear.

But Moses doesn't give up his balking: "O Lord, I have never been eloquent...I am slow of speech and tongue" (Exodus 4:10). God says, "I'll help you speak and will teach you what to

say” (Exodus 4:12). Moses, running out of excuses, finally says what he’s really wanted to say all along: “*O Lord, please send someone else to do it!*” (Exodus 4:13). Here am I, Lord....send *him*....send *her!*

You see, it took a while, and it took some persuasion from God, but ***Moses had to learn to be available to God!*** Here’s a question we can all ask ourselves: How available am I to do the things God wants me to do? Sometimes we can be so wrapped up *in ourselves* and our *own agenda*, that we cannot hear God calling us to serve Him in certain ways. Sometimes we love our *sins* too much to break with them so we can become more useful to God. “*Here I am Lord....send someone else!*”

Chances are, God isn’t calling you and me to some history-making task that will grab headlines and make us famous, but don’t underestimate the importance of what you may do for the Lord! God has many jobs that need to be done. He might be calling you to teach a class, or work with children, or be the best mom or dad you can be for your children. He may be calling you to help take care of a sick relative, or address some vital issue in the community. *Don’t underestimate the vital role you can play in helping God fulfill His purposes for His world!*

One more quick point: ***It took Moses 80 years before he was ready to do what God chose him to do! 80 years!!*** It took two-thirds of his life (he lived to be 120) to prepare him for 40 years of service! Forty years in an Egyptian palace. Forty years in the Midian desert. You can be 50 or 60 or 70 years old – and the best years of service and ministry to Christ could still be ahead of you! Isn’t that awesome! Or you may be a teenager, or in your 20’s or 30’s – hopefully with many years ahead!

Don’t wait any longer. Give yourself unreservedly to Christ, and see how God will use your experiences in life up to this point to shape you to serve Him in the days and years ahead. You’re never too old, nor too young, to be usable to God!

So....don’t be like Moses and say, “Here am I, send somebody else! Rather say, “Here I am, Lord. Send ***me!***”

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