

- ***Read Exodus 3:1-10*** Much has happened since we last studied from our Daily Bible Reading in the Old Testament. Last we studied, we considered the providence of God in the life of Joseph, and how God used so many different moving parts in order to accomplish His will for His people.
- Since that time, a lot has taken place. Joseph has died and the ruler who came up after him did not know Joseph nor all the many things that Joseph and his people had done for Egypt. The king became worried with the sheer size and strength of Joseph's people, and he feared what might happen if they sided with the enemy during war. His solution is to have his Egypt midwives kill any Hebrew male children that are born. Thankfully, Shiphrah and Puah are God-fearing women and they protect the Hebrew boys from death. God is pleased with them and He not only continues to bless His people, but He also specifically blesses the families of these two midwives.
- Then, a very important character comes onto the scene, Moses. His mother births him and then hides him in the river where he is found by Pharaoh's daughter and her maid. She keeps the young baby as her own and he is raised as an Egyptian in the house of Pharaoh. Moses grows up, and one day sees an Egyptian beating one of his people. He strikes him down, and the following day tries to break up a fight between two Hebrews. They mock him concerning what he had done to the Egyptian. He fears for his life and takes off out of Egypt to the land of Midian where he lives and works as a shepherd. Our story picks up with what we just read of one day while Moses is out in the field.
- The Lord appears to Moses in a burning bush, but the bush was not consumed by the fire. Moses recognizes that something is special about this occurrence and before he knows it he is in a conversation with God. God is telling him that he has been chosen as the deliverer of God's people. Yet, instead of jumping at the opportunity...Moses is hindered by a few things. In not just keeping with our Daily Bible Reading theme, this lesson will also fit in well with our focus on Serving the Kingdom. There were some things hindering Moses's service to God, and there are some things that can hinder our service, as well. Let's consider 5 things that might hinder us to serve in God's Kingdom in some capacity.

I. Hindered by Focus on Self (3:11,12)

- A. Initially, Moses was hindered to go and serve the Lord because he was too focused on himself. "Who am I?" was Moses's question to God. As Moses considered the work God was going to have him do, he became far too focused on himself and allowed that to hinder his service.
- B. God reassures him that He will be with him and Moses will be able to do anything in God's service because of His being with Moses.
- C. Sometimes, we have opportunities to serve in different ways, but we are hindered from either serving or serving well because we, too, become too focused on ourselves. We might not want to serve because it's not something that we enjoy doing. "I don't like teaching class" or "I don't like cleaning the building", or I don't like this or that. What if that was everyone's attitude. What if we all only served in those ways in which we enjoy serving? If this is the case, then those things no one particularly likes doing will never get done.
- D. Or it might be that we are fully focused on ourselves while serving. We do it for our glory instead of because it is the right thing to do and others are blessed by what we do. That service is with improper motives and God isn't glorified with that.
- E. Instead, we ought to focus on God and the fact that He is with us, He needs us, and we need to strengthen His church through our service. God told Moses that He would be with him, and the same is true for us. God will be with us and He needs us to do everything we can in service to His Kingdom. Sadly, we won't be able to serve His Kingdom well if we are hindered by our focus on self.

II. Hindered by Lack of Recognition of God (3:13-22)

- A. Moses, again, tries to give a reason why he is hindered to serve God by saying that he doesn't know who to tell the people of Israel sent him. He anticipates them asking the name of the One who sent him, and he acts as if that would be a total hinderance from his service. God responds with such authority as He says that "I AM has sent you." He gives Moses instructions on what he is to do in regards how he will carry out bringing the people out of Egypt into the promised land.
- B. The Lord wasn't going to allow Moses to leave not knowing who He was, and we need to be fully aware of who the God is that we serve, so we will not be hindered in our service to others and God.
- C. We might be hindered to serve because we don't recognize that we serve a God and will be strengthened by a God who will give His people the ability to have His will accomplished.
- D. Moses continually threw out perceived hinderances to this work that God had given him to do, but God wouldn't allow Himself to be stopped. He strengthened Moses as we will read, and He will do the same for us. Everyone's favorite verse is still just as true today. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. **(Phil. 4:13)** If there is a way that God or His Kingdom will be served then we can get that accomplished. Our Lord will help us to accomplish His Will. Let us not be hindered by us forgetting who our God is.

III. Hindered by Lack of Supposed Credibility (4:1-9)

- A. Moses's next excuse and supposed hindrance was a lack of credibility on his part in the eyes of the people. "What if they don't believe me?" was his plea before God. God goes on to show Moses His true power through 3 miraculous signs: Staff into Serpent, Leprous Hand, & Water into Blood. These would be the signs that Moses was credible.
- B. While we might not be charged with the same work that Moses was, there are still times where we might feel hindered by a lack of supposed credibility on our part. A man who wants to preach might be hindered from doing so because he feels as if his past will hold him back. He might need to consider Paul.
- C. Another person might be hindered to serve in a new area because he or she doesn't have enough experience. Sure they might not be polished in that way of serving, but that comes with some experience. Everyone has to start somewhere. Like I mentioned this morning, I was awful when I first started preaching, and I could've used my lack of experience and credibility as a hinderance to ever start serving in that capacity, but I didn't and I've built up at least a little credibility that has allowed me to serve in this capacity in a lot of awesome places.
- D. May we not allow ourselves to be hindered in this way. Moses tried to use it as an excuse not to serve, but God gave him what he needed, and He will do the same thing for us.

IV. Hindered by Supposed Inabilities (4:10-12)

- A. The most famous of Moses's excuses and hinderances to his serving God by going to His people was that he wasn't a very good speaker. "Please, Lord....I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." Now, what kind of speech issue Moses had we don't know, but we're sure that He thought that it was enough of an issue to keep him from serving. God, again, shoots down this hinderance by assuring Moses that He would be with him and supply him with what he needed to get the job done.
- B. While God might not miraculously give us means to serve, He has blessed us with many talents and skills. It might be, though, that we would like to serve in a way in which we might not have some natural ability. We might want to preach, lead prayers, give invitations, lead the table, etc. but not be great at public speaking. We might want to lead songs but not have great musical talent. We might want to teach, but don't feel as if we have adequate knowledge. Many people are hindered by these thoughts in their mind.
- C. Let me suggest that just because these things might be true about myself right now, doesn't mean that they must remain true. I can put in work and effort to refine my public speaking skills. I can learn a little about music so that I am effective in leading songs. I might study hard so that I can be able to teach others about God. These are absolutely things that we can do to become better servants of God.
- D. I believe that more Christians are hindered by this excuse than any other one we will speak about tonight. They see a weakness, and they allow that weakness to define them. God expects far more out of us than to allow ourselves to wallow in self pit because we might not be great at something right now. He expects for us to give efforts to grow in our faith and our abilities to serve.
- E. Moses was going to get away with this excuse, and God won't allow us to be hindered to serve because of some supposed inability

V. Hindered by Supposed Loneliness (4:13-17)

- A. Finally, Moses gives up.....He just tells God to send someone else. It might have been that Moses didn't think that he could do any of this by himself. No one had been mentioned as a companion up to this point, but it is at this point in the conversation that God tells Moses that his brother Aaron will be by his side helping him to accomplish God's purposes.
- B. We sometimes get discouraged when we want to serve because we think that we are the only ones trying to do the right thing. We might think we are all alone in serving the Lord, but just as with Elijah, who thought he was the only one doing the right thing, we are not alone in trying to do what is right. Moses had Aaron, and we have one another to lean on as we strive to serve the Lord.
- C. Moses wasn't left alone in his service to God and neither are we left alone as we strive to serve God in the ways in which we are able, and may we encourage one another as we all strive to serve the Lord.

Moses wrestled with God when the Lord came to him letting him know that he had a great opportunity to serve Him. He was hindered by many excuses, and wasn't going to just simply go and serve. The Lord wasn't content with that and we shouldn't either. We should strive to get past hinderances so that we might be the strong servant of God that He expects for us all to be. May God strengthen us in our service to Him, His Kingdom, and others.