



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. -

Matthew 15:9

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Moses Needed a Push

Why is it I do my best thinking at bedtime? And then when I think it I decide I need to write it before going to bed so I won't forget it?

Last week neither Elkanah nor I wrote anything for this website. I have been in a dry season. Nothing has been coming to me that I felt inspired to write about. I don't know what has happened to Elkanah.

Tonight I was listening to a sermon by Bruxy Cavey and I'm sorry but I didn't get the link to be able to share it with you. If you aren't familiar with Bruxy I recommend you Google him and listen to some of his sermons. He has quite a way with words. But in the sermon I heard tonight Bruxy was talking about Moses having been used by God to deliver the Israelites. His focus was on Moses' reluctance to go do the job. He was a shepherd and wanted to stay where he was. He made all kinds of excuses. Bruxy hinted that God forced Moses to go and deliver the Israelites.

Usually I like what Bruxy has to say and I will listen to him often. But this sermon gave me pause for thought. He didn't come right out and say that God forced Moses to do something he didn't want to do, however, that's what I took from his message. And I'm uncomfortable with that because the God I worship doesn't force people to do things they don't want to do.

How about we look at the story and see what Moses' objections were. Moses encounters the burning bush in Exodus 3. In verse 11 Moses claims to be a nobody therefore he shouldn't be the one to go deliver God's people. In verse 13 Moses claims he can't go because he doesn't know what to say if they should

ask what God's name is.

Chapter 4 starts with Moses fearing that they might not believe him. In verse 11 Moses claims that he can't speak. God has provided all the things that Moses has verbalized he didn't have so he didn't have any more excuses. With nothing else to argue then in verse 13 Moses comes out and says to send someone else. God informs him that his brother is on his way to meet him and will be moral support for him. So Moses went to his father-in-law and asked permission to leave.

If you take a literal reading of the story, which I was taught as a child, and you think about what it says, it appears that God did in fact force Moses to do something against his will. But does that sound like an act of love? Not to me it doesn't. There has to be something going on that we don't see.

I'm not trained as a counselor but I have many years of therapy behind me so I'll make some observations based on what I've learned as a bystander.

The first objection was that he was a nobody. But remember, Moses was adopted by the princess and was at one time heir to the throne of Egypt. He lost that when he killed the Egyptian and ran away when he realized he had been discovered. He was known by Pharaoh. He had been educated in the Egyptian ways. He was certainly not a nobody.

The second objection was that he didn't know God's name. Bruxy mentioned this in his sermon. (So far I'm using my own words to pass along his message.) Bruxy stated that it is pagans who want to know the name of their god, not the Israelites. The Israelites knew who their God was and didn't need a name. And when I read further in the story I didn't see where the Israelites asked Moses that question. It didn't become an issue.

When Moses stated his fear that they wouldn't believe him, God gave him signs to perform to prove that he had been sent from God to deliver them. Moses then claimed he was unable to speak. God sent Aaron to speak for him. Yet when you read the story it seems that Moses was doing his own talking. Moses knew Pharaoh. Moses had been trained as a prince and speaking to royalty was nothing new to him.

So Moses came right out and said that he didn't want to go. But God sent him anyway.

God doesn't usually force people to do what they don't want to do. I would say

that he never forces people but the story of Jonah comes to mind and I don't want to stop and deal with that one right now. So, let's say that God rarely forces. It's possible that there was something else going on with Jonah just as there probably was with Moses. I would hope so because I want to believe that God never forces people to go against their own will. So, I don't believe that God forced Moses despite how it looks.

That puts the monkey on Moses' back, not on God. Why would Moses not want to go to Egypt? Well, he may have feared facing Pharaoh after having committed murder. He may have wanted to go and do the job God had prepared him for, but was afraid of being punished for his earlier crime.

There is the fact that Moses had spent 40 years wandering the desert tending to sheep. He had spent a lot of time contemplating his actions and the outcome. He had been taught in his early childhood that he was to be the redeemer of their nation yet he ended up as a lonely shepherd. Apparently that 40 years in the desert humbled him, and we know that he was humble because he told us he was. His humbleness may have given him a bit of shyness.

There is also something called fear of the unknown.

There are probably several reasons that would have caused Moses to fear being the one who led the Israelites out of their bondage even though in his heart that's what he wanted to do. God was able to read Moses' heart and knew that he was capable and actually wanted to be the one to shepherd the people out of slavery. But he needed a push.

It was the same with Lot. Lot was found to be righteous and the angels were sent to rescue him. Lot wanted to be rescued but he was tied to his life there. Part of his family and all his worldly possessions would be left behind. He needed help to get out. God provided that help in the way of the angels taking him by the hand and dragging him out of the city.

Well, it's nearly 4 a.m. I should get to bed. I have an appointment sometime later and I need to get a nap then get up in time for a shower first. I hope it isn't an 8 o'clock appointment.

Lots of love,

Hannah

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