

Moses Returns to Egypt from Midian

Exodus 4:18-31

Exodus 4:18-31 – “So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, “Please let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.” ¹⁹ Now the Lord said to Moses in Midian, “Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead.” ²⁰ Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand. ²¹ And the Lord said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. ²² Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Israel is My son, My firstborn.” ²³ So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.’”

²⁴ And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the Lord met him and sought to kill him. ²⁵ Then Zipporah 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!” ²⁶ So He let him go. Then she said, “You are a husband of blood!”—because of the circumcision. ²⁷ And the Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him. ²⁸ So Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. ²⁹ Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. ³⁰ And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. ³¹ So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.”

Doctrinal Points

1. Obedience should follow God’s commission to serve.

Verses 24-26 are quite hard to understand. What’s going on here, anyway? This episode in the life of Moses needs some explanation.

The sign of the Abrahamic Covenant was circumcision. This covenant was instituted back in Genesis 17, and the Hebrew people were expected to obey God in this matter. “*This is My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised*” (Genesis 17:10). Apparently, Moses had not circumcised his sons, probably because Zipporah disliked this cutting rite and she had resisted it. However, because Moses had disobeyed God by not performing God’s covenant sign of circumcision with his sons, Moses faced death at the hand of the Lord! Most likely he became seriously ill with a disciplinary sickness at their lodging or encampment on the way to Egypt and Zipporah had to do the circumcising rather than Moses, because Moses was near death. Zipporah

reacted with disgust to the ritual, but in spite of her feelings, she did the right thing. She submitted to the will of the Lord, and God restored Moses when he was finally obedient in this matter of circumcision.

There is a lesson here for us. As a believer, do you want to serve the Lord? Well, God expects those who serve Him to obey Him! Are you disobedient in some areas of your life? How about your submission to the authority figures that God has put in your life? What about getting things put right between you and a fellow believer whom you have offended? What about that area of service that the Lord's been talking to you about lately?

Maybe your disobedience is like the disobedience of Moses here. Maybe you've been "overlooking" what you know the Lord wants you to do. Maybe you've been disobedient because of the pressure of a "Zipporah" in your life. Zipporah can represent any number of influencing factors in your life. Listen -- do you really want to serve the Lord? If you're a believer, you're called to serve. We're all called to serve. But before the Lord can use us in His service, we must be ready and willing to obey Him! Obedience should follow God's commission to serve.

2. Worship should follow God's message of salvation.

Verse 27: *"The Lord said to Aaron, 'Go into the desert to meet Moses.' So he met Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him."* The "mountain of God" is Mount Sinai. This verse certainly supports the claim that the true location of Mt. Sinai is in the Sinai Peninsula, between Midian and Egypt – and not in Saudi Arabia, as some folks have suggested recently. So Aaron was coming from Egypt, and Moses was coming from Midian, and they met at Mt. Sinai -- at about the halfway point (depending on the exact location of Mt. Sinai) -- and they traveled back to Egypt together.

When they arrived in Egypt, they assembled all the people of Israel together and showed them the signs that God had empowered them to perform. They told the people all that the Lord had pronounced and promised – the wonderful news that the Lord was concerned about them, and that He planned to deliver them from Egypt! And guess what? The people believed! They believed all that the Lord had spoken -- even though it certainly didn't *look* like the Lord cared about His people under bondage, and even though it *seemed impossible* that there could be a massive exodus of a whole nation from Egypt! But they believed – and they not only believed, but they worshiped the Lord for His message of salvation. *"...and they believed. And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped."* (v31).

Worship is always the proper response to God's message of salvation. I trust that it's your response to God's message of salvation! God's message of salvation is that His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has died on the cross for your sins. Because of His sacrifice, God offers you the gift of salvation—salvation from the penalty of your sin—if you just believe Him and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. Have you believed God's message of salvation and become a Christian yet?

The proper response of a true believer is to worship and thank the Lord for what He's done for you. The celebration of "The Lord's Supper" is a worship service for all believers that's specifically designed for the very purpose of worshipping the Lord and thanking Him for the salvation He has provided for us. Worship should follow God's message of salvation.

Practical Application

Are you willing to return to an unpleasant situation to serve the Lord?

If I were to ask, "Do you want to serve the Lord?" I'm sure all believers would say "yes." But now if I were to go further and ask, "Would you be willing to return to an unpleasant situation to serve the Lord?" I'm not sure we'd get the same response.

Moses was asked to return to an unpleasant situation in order to serve the Lord. Going back to Egypt was not a sightseeing vacation for Moses! What about us? We'd love the idea of the Lord calling us to serve Him in Hawaii, right? Wouldn't you like that? We'd love to be called to a wonderful vacation spot with beaches or lakes or mountains for hiking or skiing! But what if He calls us to an *unpleasant* situation -- especially if it means we must return to a place where we had a bad experience, or to people or places that were not friendly to us in the past? And yet the Lord may ask us to serve Him in an unpleasant place, because we know those people and places like no one else does! You may be uniquely qualified to serve the Lord in that particular situation.

Is the Lord calling you to serve Him in some unpleasant situation? Are you willing? Are you willing to return to an unpleasant situation to serve the Lord?