

Exodus 3:1-8  
Moses: Life on Purpose  
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If life were a game, how would you know if you were winning or losing? If at every moment you were surrounded by other people, if it was you against them, how would you know if you are winning or losing? Wherever it is you compare yourself to others, what would a winning life look like for you?

Whether we consciously realize it or not, we in our decision making process and what we give our time to is aimed at living a life that matters. Life with a purpose, life that's worth it. Has anyone in here ever had that thought go through your mind: is what I'm giving myself to at this moment worth it? Having a moment like that right now?

I want to invite us this morning to consider that question together for one very important reason: and that is without intention, without purpose, we will waste our lives. But when we pay attention to what's going on, we stand in a position to see great possibility. Because in that moment, we are aware of our lives as a part of something so much more than ourselves.

This fall, we are in a series of messages on the subject of faith. We're looking at the lives of ordinary men and women who have taken great steps of trust and how this involves each of them taking a step out in faith.

This morning, we are going to be looking at a man named Moses. Probably all of you have at least heard of Moses; he's one of the most recognized men in all the Bible. Moses is a person who takes a leap of faith, and because of it, his life takes on new meaning and purpose. And if there is only one thing I want you to get out of this message, it's this: living a life of faith means living a life that matters, because it is about something bigger than yourself.

Do you see this picture? What are these people doing in this picture? What is the purpose of the game of life? How do you win the game of life?

If we don't live on purpose, we will live for that. Faith is the realization that life is about more than that; it's about discovering your part in God's mission. The Bible paints a very clear picture of God as a divine being who is on a mission, and that mission is to free people who are having a miserable time at life, who are captive to sin and selfishness, and set them free with a new purpose.

The story of Exodus, where we meet Moses, is a story of God's people held captive, and God stepping in and setting them free to live with a renewed purpose. And the way God does this is through an ordinary man, a man who says "I want God to tell me what my life is going to be about," and then he takes a leap.

So turn with me to Exodus chapter 3, if you would. By way of brief background here is where we are: God's people, the Israelites, are being held captive in a land where they were once welcomed, but now have become a threat. They were so much of a threat that Pharaoh, the king, became fearful that they would rise up, so he decided to do something about it. He put in place a policy that said that all the male Hebrew children should be found and killed. And so the people do what any of us would. They cry out to God for deliverance. In this moment, God hears and God acts.

I invite you to listen with me to the way in which God is pictured as his people are being oppressed.

**Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.**

What we need to hear this morning from this text is that our sufferings, our struggles, the things that we see in the world – these things are seen and known to God, and it is God's mission to come down and deliver people from suffering. And this is where, to be a person of faith, it means that God's mission touches you. To be a person of faith means it is impossible for you to look around you and see all the wrong and injustice and not do something about it. God's mission in the world is inviting each of us in our own way to stand up and get in the game. Because when we are a part of God's mission, we are agents of freedom.

But the question that confronts us is this one: how does any person know what God's call or God's mission involvement is in their life? And that's where we can turn back to this morning's text. Some of you might be aware that these words of God come to Moses when Moses sees a bush that is on fire, but one in which the fire does not consume. Now wouldn't it be nice, if we were wondering what it was that God was doing in our lives, for him to light one of our bushes on fire and speak out of it? Wouldn't that be nice? Of course, in this moment, Moses listens.

But to understand why he listens, you have to go back a little ways to chapter 2. You see, as Moses was growing up, he was brought into the court of Pharaoh, and became like a right hand man, and while he was out observing the people going about their tasks of

building, he saw an Egyptian taskmaster beating on one of the Israelites, and it enraged him. So Moses whacked him and buried him in the sand.

I want to ask you, is there some injustice in the world that really gets under your skin? Of course, there is all kinds of inequity, all kinds of struggle, but is there one kind in particular that when you see it, it keeps you up at night? Does anyone feel that?

There really are only two stories in Exodus that are specifically about Moses. The next one comes when Moses flees into the wilderness after whacking the Egyptian. While he's in the wilderness of Horeb, where eventually he sees the burning bush, he sits down at a well. While he's there, he sees some shepherds try to impose themselves on a group of women keeping them from getting the water they need. Once again, Moses cannot stand idly by while injustice takes place, so once again he intervenes. He doesn't kill anyone, but he enables the women to have free access to the water they need and then he waters their flock.

Do you see a theme here? In both stories, Moses sees a strong person trying to use their strength to push down a weak person, and that is something he cannot just sit by and watch. He cannot see that happen and not get involved. When he sees the oppressor taking advantage of the weak person, he simply must get involved.

For Moses, this is a sign. It's a sign of how God is inviting Moses to get in the game. These two stories are exactly what we see in Egypt with God's people. God's people are held captive by someone much stronger than they are, and Moses is called upon to do something about it. Moses' call is the intersection of his deepest passion, down in his heart, and what God wants to see different in the world.

Now I want to stop with Moses there for a moment and turn to you. Because for every one of us in this room, there is something out there, that when you see it, when you see the wrong taking place, you cannot just sit by and do nothing. When you see this injustice, this unrighteousness, when you see this wrong, you also see someone who needs to be delivered, and it makes you want to stand up and fight that injustice.

Do you have something like that in your heart? If you don't yet have something like that, then you're not paying close enough attention to yourself, because every one of you was made to be intolerant of some sort of wickedness in the world that also overlaps with what God does not want to see happening to his people. And the way God invites you and me into his mission is by inviting you to see where your deep passions overlap with God's good plan for the world.

Faith is taking a leap when you see that thing in the world and saying "I'm not going to sit by and let it continue, but I am going to be God's instrument of change and live my faith on purpose and allow God to use me as his instrument of good in his world."

How do you find it? Listen to your heart and ask, "What is it that troubles me so much that I want to get involved in being a part of the solution?" Is it when:

- The strong take advantage of the weak?
- Underdog suffers over and over, and just never gets a break?
- Human trafficking?
- Family conflict that is so terrible that mothers and fathers, sons and daughters are torn apart by discord?
- Plight of the orphan boys and girls in Wabash County who do not have a home, because their biological parents are unable to care for them?
- Seeing people in another country die because they had the terrible misfortune of simply being born in a different continent and that country can not take care of its own?
- Struggle of single parents, or marriages that are crumbling around you?
- The elderly?
- People who suffer with anxiety depression and loneliness, with no one to talk to?
- People who never have the one who is willing to tell them about Jesus?
- Addict who suffers alone?

I'm being specific about this because Moses, too, had a specific mission. That is why God does not just generally call people. God does not just invite us into a status. We're not just invited into a club of people who look and sound and act like us so that we will be comfortable and respectable.

The God we encounter and whose story we hear in this space is at his very core a God on a mission. And that mission, again, is to meet people who are captive to one thing or another and to set them free. And if you are unable to see how you, too, are a part of God's mission to free captive people, no matter what they are captive to, why then I don't believe you fully understand why God has you in this place. Because every one of you is gifted and able to be used and useful for God's good work in the world in one way or another. The only thing it takes is the willingness to come before God and ask in faith, and then have the courage to take that step and follow God into the mission that he has called you to, that mission where your deepest passion and this world's deepest need intersect.

If you do not yet know what that is, or if you are thinking to yourself, *I'm too old, or I'm too young*, I say rubbish. No matter how old you are, God can always use the experiences and wisdom you have to share where you've been. No matter how young, sometimes the most important and prophetic words can come from someone with new eyes, who isn't jaded by a lifetime of successes and failures, rationality and responsibility.

No matter what it is, when you take that step forward, when you see that burning bush — maybe it's not a burning bush, maybe it is a moment of clarity where you understand what you are made for and you have the courage to step forward and follow it — I want to say to you that your life will be revolutionized, you will see everything in a different light, your life will begin anew. You can begin living a life on purpose, a life that makes a difference in God's kingdom, a life that says that the Devil's domain can go only so far, and that's it, because God has placed a call in me, and I will have the faith to follow.