

The Story of Moses – Awakening (Primary Calling)

Introduction – Review

Moses' Awakening

After the introduction of Moses' birth, deliverance, and adoption into Pharaoh's household (only 10 verses), we see the account of his forty-year growth into adulthood and emergence into the public for Israel (only 4 verses!). From there we have the story of Moses fleeing to Midian where he settles down, starts a family, and manages sheep for forty years (only 8 verses). These brief accounts are augmented by Acts 7:20-29 and Hebrews 11:23-37.

Awakening process: Moses' struggle with his identity can be seen as part of an extended Awakening process.

Questions re Egyptian Identity/Expectations

Questions re Hebrew Identity

Self-Understanding/Awareness

Amidst all my royal roles, who am I, really?
What is it that **I** really want?
Why must I pretend I'm fulfilled, if I'm not?

(Who has the God of my people made **me** to be?)
(What is the God of my people asking of me?)
(Is this from God or is there something wrong with me?)

Life Direction

Where is this role going? What value does it have?
How can I do things to make a lasting difference?
Will the gods of Egypt secure my future?

(How does my position contribute to God's people?)
(What has God shaped me to do for Him?)
(Can I trust God if I leave the palace?)

NOTE: Important interpretive questions arise that help us understand God's work in Moses' mind & heart.

Exodus 2:11-12 *What was going on in Moses' killing of the Egyptian?* Was it an act of unbridled emotion without thought? Was it a sinful murder, or an act of justice? Does Act 7:23-25 help explain?

Ex 2:14-15 *Why did Pharaoh want to kill Moses?*

Awakening evaluation: The question posed by the Hebrews who Moses tried to help ("Who made you ruler and judge over us?" Ex 2:14; Act 7:27, 35) forced Moses to do some painful self-evaluation. The question is:

Who do you think you are? It combines both a personal identity question and a leadership authority question.

Personal identity question – God awakened Moses to have the heart to function as an Israelite leader (identify with his people, grieve at their cruel treatment, want to see justice, goes out to deliver them). He took a necessary step in that direction (Heb 11:24-26). But He mistook zeal for all of God's full direction.

Leadership authority question – Moses' education in all the ways of the Egyptians meant also imbibing that culture. Expectations of how leaders are to behave and the kinds of authority they are to use are culturally formed. Moses' leadership authority had been well formed (he was "powerful in words and deeds"). He had attained *knowledge* ("words," education), *skills* ("deeds," administration, military achievement, speaking ability), and *experience* (probably at least in military victories). Had pride taken over his heart? Was leadership pride the Egyptian norm?

Stop & Think!! Share your "awakening" story: Your conversion/new birth submitting to Jesus as Lord;
Or your rededication/committal to walk with Jesus as Lord. Did you struggle with God's "calling."
Can you see how God put together early experiences (losses) to prepare your later service for Him?

Exodus 15:16-25 What was God doing in Moses' life over those 40 years in Midian?

- Moses' new identity emerges

The gift of gradual healing. – An early leadership opportunity (Ex 2:15-18) It was a time to process the deeply painful experience of rejection Moses that happened in Egypt. This prepared him for the way his people would repeatedly reject his leadership over his 40 years of leading them.

The gift of the desert wilderness – Moses' work tending the flock of Ruel (also known as Jethro, Ex 3:1) allowed him to roam across the Sinai Peninsula, learning the terrain, the land routes, places to find water, & dangers.

The gift of a father-figure mentor – That Moses was welcomed into Ruel/Jethro's (Ex 2:18; 3:1; 18:2ff) family was a major gift. This must have met an emotional need.

The gift of patience – Moses settled down into his new life in Midian. With time he realized only God could bring about deliverance (Acts 7:25; Ex 13:3). Only God had the authority to lead His people and to confront Pharaoh. And only God knew the proper timing to do that.

Moses points us to our identity/calling in Christ (Rom 1:6-7; Eph 1:17-18; Col 1:9-12)

Retrospective Reflection (Our primary calling is to Awaken to Christ)

1. *Our stories have a biblical context* – Moses did not provide all the details of the political drama surrounding him, not even the Pharaoh's name. The important drama was God's work around and in him. Trace not only your own story but see how your story parallels the stories of God's people through the ages. Learn from the "great cloud of witnesses" that have gone before you (Heb 12:1ff). Put your story in this context. Hope then arises as we see God at work in the lives of others, unfolding His overall redemptive plan through them. God strategically used isolation in the lives of leaders in Scripture. He will do it again in our lives.

2. *Our identity questions are important* – Awakening comprise a core test all believers wrestle with. What and who determines your identity? What voices in your head are you seeking to obey, what mentors/influencers raise your anxiety? What does your family tree tell you about you?

3. *God uses our failures/rejections* – Joseph, the future deliverer of Israel from famine was initially rejected by his family. Moses, the future deliverer of Israel from slavery, was initially rejected by his people. Jesus, the future deliverer of all who believe, was initially rejected by most all of His people (John 1:10-11). As Jesus' followers we should expect this as part of the cost of discipleship. Jesus told us this (Mt 5:10-12; Jn 15:18-21). God uses rejection to humble our pride, wean us from addiction to the world's approval, and secure our hearts in God's love.

4. *Find security in God's unwavering love.* – We are part of God's covenant people. His unilateral grace for his chosen and adopted sons and daughters brings security. Reflecting on God's committed care expressed through the cross secures our confidence in His promise to provide (Rom 8:28-30, 32). Do our hearts, drifting from the gospel of grace, tend toward self-reliance, toward the assumption that we have to earn God's love?

5. *Embrace the blessings of solitude* – For activist leaders and extroverts, isolation is especially disorienting. Yet God has much to teach us when we quiet down and learn to get comfortable being alone with God and alert to His work in our soul. Learning to listen is the goal. Memorizing, meditating on, and praying through God's word related to our struggle is important. But don't do all the talking! Slow down. Learn to listen with pen and paper in hand. Journal feelings, experiences, insights.

6. *Open yourself to a mentor/coach* – We learn best with a balance of solitude and fellowship. God often seeks to "re-parent" us with father or mother figures in the Body of Christ who can meet vital relational needs unmet by our birth parents. Be open to this, especially in a time when you are pulled away from normal work or leadership responsibilities.

7. *Trust God's timing* – We tend to focus on the *what* and *where* of our placement/work/roles, impatient for *when* it will happen. God's priorities relate to *who* we are becoming. So be patient with your isolation, learn all you can about God and about yourself, grow as much as possible, and know God is writing a really good story in all this! He knows when you are ready for the next phase of your work/ministry and your character/spiritual formation.