

Preparation Time
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Read Exodus 3:1-15

Two weeks ago we looked at Exodus 2 and the cry of the people from the midst of their bondage that began the Exodus. God heard their cry and knew that it was time to act. We met the grown up Prince of Egypt who was impacted by a prophetic word from God. Remember, it was what he saw that came as a prophetic word. He saw his own Hebrew people being brutally treated, and he intervened in one particular incident and ended up killing an Egyptian. He became a criminal on the run and escaped to Midian.

The Bible, the Church, us lot, are full of the prophetic word of God. Some of you, like Moses, have seen something that has stirred you, created a holy discontent, that you knew was God speaking to you. Some of you have heard a word from God whether from someone speaking to you, or from a thought or impression that has come into your mind. Some of you read the Scriptures and a particular passage has become so illuminated to you, that you know God has spoken. All of that is your supernatural God acting supernaturally in your life. The question is, what have you done with that word? As James the Lord's brother reminds us, we need to be not only hearers of the word but doers also.

The account of the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt gives a clear insight into the ways the prophetic works to bring out God's desired purpose in the lives of people. It is not always the way that we would choose or even think of doing it. Who would have thought of the Red Sea as a toll of deliverance? Quite often we hear the intended outcome OK, but opt to do it our way and end up not getting the results that God is looking for. The prophetic word runs through Scripture and is there to show us the ways of God and to enable us to know his will for our lives.

Look at Moses. Go to Pharaoh and tell him to let God's people go. I want you to notice something about Moses. Big ask, big vision, big dream. Notice that he was never "hit and miss" in living out the word he saw and latter heard. God wants us to be totally fulfilled in the very centre of his will and the prophetic word helps us to get there and stay there.

When I talk of the prophetic word in this way I am speaking of the ability to personally recognise and know the voice of God to us, and then to obey that voice. [slide – rhema] In the NT this is known as the "rhema" word. This is God's word whether we see it, hear it, or read it, that is quickened to our hearts as it is spoken to us by the Holy Spirit. In John 16:13-15 Jesus says this about the Holy Spirit rhema word. **"13** *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.* **14** *He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.* **15** *All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'"*

When he tells us about the future it is not often about events in hundreds of years. Look at Moses. His rhema word from the Spirit of truth was about events in his life time. Most often, the rhema word as the immediate now word from God is about the immediate now life just in front of us, and apart from a few prophets God allowed to see across hundreds and hundreds of years, most prophecy in the Bible was about Gods intentions and plans for a person in their life time.

Exodus 3 shows us that God is very much interested in the destiny of his people. In reality the Israelites were in bondage. Day after day they slaved away making bricks for rich people's dreams. They were sick of their circumstances. They were enslaved to work long hours. They were enslaved to debt and impossible schedules. Their life-style was enslaved to masters who did not care about anything except bricks. They were powerless, even though chapter 2 tells us they had the numbers to overthrow Pharaoh by force, to do anything about their slavery. What was the issue for them? They had lost the ability to listen for God's voice because life was so crowded. Being miserable shrivelled their faith. It had been so long, before their life-times, since a Hebrew person had lived freely in obedience to a supernatural God doing supernatural things.

The Bible tells us that Moses lived for 40 years as a Prince of Egypt. He learnt a lot from the Egyptians, but he had to learn still more from God. He saw God's word at age 40, received his call to lead the people of Israel to freedom. He actually responded to the call but responded as an Egyptian Prince and not as a man of God. When he challenged the Egyptian over the harsh treatment of a Hebrew slave and the man took no notice of him, Moses acted badly and killed him. He acted with what he knew, but he had to learn to know and act out of what God knows.

He spent 40 years in Midian, in the wilderness, in fact the Hebrew can be translated in verse 1 as the "backside of the desert". He got married, had a family. It took 40 years to learn the ways of Egypt, and another 40 years to learn the ways of God – in the wilderness. I can tell you that the wilderness is the best place I have found to unlearn the ways of the world and learn the ways of God. I have also learnt that wisdom as a gift from God draws on hindsight.

So when Moses had learnt, was equipped with wisdom and hindsight, God chose the time to act. When you read the story of the burning bush I always get the impression that Moses still wasn't in God's world, still in a world of his own. But when God caught his attention, all that came before made him ready and equipped to hear God speak. And I can tell you, when God speaks in the wilderness you know you are in the presence of a supernatural God who does supernatural things.

God had watched, listened and identified with his people for years. Now his man was ready. It was time to act. This man would be the agent of his peoples deliverance, and he would accomplish it without a stumble.

Did you notice in the dialogue between God and Moses God spoke prophetically. Here is the need – here is my solution. God spoke from his own heart, his own passion, his own foresight and planning. Listening, Moses knew exactly what God wanted him to do, knew

exactly where God wanted him to bring the people to. He went away knowing that his God was supernatural doing supernatural things. Moses had a life-changing experience that would brand his own heart with holy fire. Moses had to experience that for himself, he had to experience the supernatural nature of God for two reasons. First, for his own confidence and courage. Secondly, he had to have this experience before he could bring others to that same kind of experience that would glorify God. We likewise cannot lead other people where we ourselves are not willing to go first.

The burning bush can be marked out as a place and a time when the prophetic voice of God broke through to a man, and from that man, to a whole nation. Just as soon as God got Moses' attention he began to pour out his heart to him. Notice how much of the talking God does. He commissioned the person who was able to listen and go and do what was asked of him in the name of the Lord.

The name of the Lord is "I AM WHO I AM". Yahweh is the best attempt at the name in Hebrew. Always was, always is, always will be. The same, holy, powerful, trustworthy, loving, kind, I AM WHO I AM. And tell everyone that Yahweh sent you. And Moses went. He heard, he knew, he understood and he obeyed.

I am reminded of what Jesus says in John 10:1-5 **1** "I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber!**2** But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.**3** The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.**4** After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice.**5** They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."

Moses knew his masters voice. Hearing the voice of God changes us. Hearing the voice of God helps us to change others. Hearing the voice of God makes us prophetic. Hearing the voice of God reveals the truth of God. Hearing the voice of God releases the life of God. Hearing the voice of God allows us to know the will and purposes of God for our life. Hearing the voice of God opens heaven to us. Hearing the voice of God and obeying it gives true authority to speak on behalf of God. So much depends on our ability to hear the voice of God! From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is about seeing and hearing from God.

A fortnight ago I was brave enough to identify up front an issue for our Church. It is an issue that from time to time has so frustrated us that we have called for a period of spiritual warfare. But we have never had the break through that has been promised by numerous prophecies. The break through is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will fill this Church building to over capacity with people from our community who have discovered the grace of Jesus Christ for themselves. A why stop filling it just once a week. I count seven days in a week, then there is morning, afternoon and evening. For how long have we been told that there is a cloud, an oppression, a Kauri dam holding back what God has in store for us. I have come to realise that these are all descriptions of a spiritual reality that stems from, to use the imagery, of being slaves in Egypt. There are three masters conspiring against us as a Church. The cloud image, the darkness, the oppression, the Kauri damn holding the Spirit back, are their footprints, their strong arms around us. The three masters are, 1. The world.

2. The flesh. 3. Satan. We have become slaves, they are our Pharaoh, we are their brick makers.

What is really telling, is that the bondage of our Church is a reflection of the bondage of our members. Enslaved to Egypt. A short self analysis to check if my insight is correct. The Israelites time was enslaved. The schedule of the world took their time. No time for anything except work. Must work through the Sabbath day to meet the quota set by the world. What about being still to listen for the voice of God? Financially, the Israelites were enslaved. They didn't get paid because they worked for a master who took their income. If you are financially indebted to a master other than God and have no ability to be free financially, to be a generous giver for God's work, you are enslaved. You are in Egypt.

Your family. What is happening with your partner, your children and grand-children in the things of the faith. Is your family enslaved to the world, the flesh, the devil? These are very real things, hurtful things, desperate things. Is there a cry in your heart that comes from deep within? Oh God, I am miserable with all this. I feel trapped. If I were honest, the joy of my salvation has gone because I am in Egypt. With such a cry from your heart, an Exodus will begin. God's sees, God hears. It is time for him to act – act supernaturally. Our God is a supernatural God.

So what do we do? Call for a time of spiritual warfare where we come together and pray warfare prayers to bring down the princes of heaven and earth that enslave us? No, we don't. It is just like the situation with the Israelites. They had the numbers to rebel against and overthrow Pharaoh, but they couldn't. Pharaoh was smart. As soon as he felt threatened he began to enslave the people. He stole their time, their money, their dignity, their worth. He stole their God in a sense. He stole any opportunity for God to be a supernatural God and do miracles in their midst.

And this is how he did it. This is the strategy that is handed down to every generation by the world, the flesh and by Satan. The strategy is to distract you from listening for the voice of God, and then if you do, to doubt it. The world and the flesh will distract you. Satan will repeat to you what he said to Eve – “Did God really say?”

How much time do you spend listening for God's voice each day? A rushed life has little space for God to talk to you. You may be rushing around prattling to him about your concerns and thinking you are leading a devotional life, but I bet that very few have sat and listened to his concerns this week – his prophetic word about your life-style, your finances, your family. Most of you have finished this week as exhausted as slaves. Your brain is tired, your body is tired, your spirit is tired, and you expect another week just like it. Instead of being able to hear the prophetic word, we have turned pathetic. Pathetic in our powerlessness, pathetic in our fear of living by faith, pathetic in the ability to find God's answers for our hectic lives where time has been stolen from us, God's answers for our finances, God's answer for our kids.

Egypt in us is the source of the dark cloud, the oppression, the kauri dam that blocks the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We have been so conditioned, so influenced, so educated by the world and its ways that we are slaves to its time keeping, to its economics, to its view on

relationships and faith, rather than live simply where we can hear God pouring out his heart, his rhema word, his prophetic word, to us.

In Midian, Moses learnt to hear the voice of God. What I am saying to you is that is how we must prepare for our Exodus. Not by spiritual warfare, there will be time enough for that. But by learning to hear the voice of God. When Moses heard his voice, do you know that his call was fulfilled, he lead the people to freedom, but note, not by the way he first chose, but by a path ordered by Yahweh, I AM WHO I AM.

Many times in life we feel it is safer to stick with what we know, even if we are miserable with what we know. But I want to say to you that you can begin an Exodus journey today, our Church can begin this journey. But it is a journey of faith with a supernatural God who does supernatural things. Faith is trusting God. Faith is being obedient to God. Faith is being willing to travel where we would never think of travelling by ourselves.

Stop and think for a moment. What prophetic rhema word have you either seen, heard or read? That time when you still know that God spoke to you. How did you receive it? What are you doing about it?

As far as God is concerned, every tested and true prophetic word he has given you, given this church, continues to stand. They are still operative, yes, even after many years of being neglected and forgotten. God doesn't change his mind because we doubt his ability in us. We need to listen again – for that voice – that is from the heart of God about us and our circumstance – to know his will and what to do.

I can't offer you logic or scientific truth, just faith. Faith that says "I believe God!" I believe God *"is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.21 Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen". [Ephesians 3:20-21]*

It is our own fear of living by faith that robs us of so much that God desires for us. The prophetic word you have received operates "through his mighty power at work within you." Don't overlook that our God is a supernatural God who does things supernaturally.

To close with this inspiring passage. I Timothy 4:14-16 from the Amplified Bible. *"Do not neglect the gift which is in you, [that special inward endowment] which was directly imparted to you [by the Holy Spirit] by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you. Practice and cultivate and meditate upon these duties, throw yourself wholly into them [your ministry], so that your progress may be evident to everybody. Look well to yourself (to your own personality) and to [your] teaching; persevere in these things – hold onto them; for by so doing you will save both yourself and those who hear you."*

Prepare for your Exodus, prepare for our Exodus. Listen for the voice of God. Hear it. Obey it.