

Lenten Devotional 2020

Friday, February 28, 2020
Day 3, Exodus 3

Silence Isn't Abandonment

"The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" (Exodus 3:7-8)

Moses has settled down into a quiet life shepherding the flocks of his father-in-law. According to Stephen's testimony in the book of Acts Moses spent 40 years doing this (Acts 7:30). This fits with the Hebrew of Exodus 3 which indicates that Moses's shepherding duties was his regular occupation. This is a key detail to know because at the end of chapter 2 God saw and took notice of the sons of Israel's plight. *And then 40 years passed!*

I don't know about you, but when I am in crisis and I pray to God to help, if things aren't better by the next day I'm wondering where God is and why he isn't helping. Yet Israel languishes in bondage and hardship and continues to cry out to God for help. It seems to me that they can do this, maybe because they have no other choice. Or, more likely, because they know their God. They know his character and his promise to be their God and to deliver them. So, they never give up and they know that silence—even in the midst of pain—does not mean abandonment by God.

So often the New Testament uses phrases about our rescue through Jesus such as "but now" or "at just the right time." These phrases have this sort of situation in mind. A time at which God does not act and then a time when he does. Its sudden, explosive, and powerful. This is such a time. This moment with Moses on the mountain is the right moment for God to act. Perhaps this had to do with the character of Moses. Maybe he is now ready to shepherd a people under the headship of God. It might also do with the leadership of the children of Israel. Are things bad enough now that the elders will cooperate with the divine deliverance being brought through Moses? The text doesn't tell us, it just takes for granted that now God acts by calling Moses to go to Pharaoh.

So, now we have the promise of deliverance, but even that is tinged with hardship. Pharaoh will not let them go willingly. God will need to compel him. However, the result will be for Israel's benefit. Because of this Israel will plunder Egypt.

Are you in a difficult place in life? Hold on. Keep calling on God for deliverance. It may not be instant but you can be sure that it will come at the right time and that even the difficulty will be for your benefit. You may be in the wilderness feeling isolated and alone, but if you look for signs you will find that God is there with you. Your situation is holy ground—separated for the plans and purposes of God. He will speak to you and reveal his name. His name is Jesus and he is the sign in the wilderness—a man on fire who does not burn up. His cross and resurrection is your sure sign that God has acted for you and will complete his salvation in you. *Hold on to Jesus!*

Prayer

I AM, we are labouring hard under the yoke of oppression. For all of us that looks different. But we feel like we are alone in the wilderness looking for a sign. Show us Jesus in the midst of our trials. Remind us that at just the right time you will act and you will bring us through. Amen.