

## One of a Kind – Moses (Part 3)

The accounts of the lives of men and women in the Bible are a gift to us. There is so much that we can glean about God and his heart, his priorities, his purposes, and processes in dealing with us. We have been walking through the pages of the life of a great leader in the Old Testament, - Moses. We will continue to look at His life today, and the dealings of God with him and through Him. I encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and to apply what you learn from the life of this great man.

We are going to pick up the account of Moses where Pharaoh finally agrees to let the Israelites go, and the Israelites head out into the wilderness. How I have structured this message is slightly different to the previous 2. In the previous ones I have literally walked through verses and given revelation and applications from the verses. I wanted to encourage you in your own bible reading to do that. Today, I will draw specific points for us from a few occurrences and situations in the journey of Moses and the Israelites through the wilderness to their promised land.

### 1. What type of relationship with God will you be satisfied with?

#### **Ex 13:17-18 NKJV**

*Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." So, God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.*

I want you to think about that portion of scripture.

Who wrote that? Whomever wrote that must have had God explain His process and purpose in why He was choosing to take the Israelites that route. Wow. He must have had a good relationship with God. It was Moses who is thought to have written the Pentateuch and so the book of Exodus. The book of Psalms tells us:

#### **Ps 103:7**

*He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.*

Moses' relationship with the Lord was such that God made Himself and His ways known to Moses. It seems that the children of Israel were satisfied if their immediate needs were taken care of.

**Ex 20:18-21 NKJV**

*Now all the people witnessed the thundering, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." So, the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.*

Here again, we see Moses showing an understanding of what God was up to, what He was doing, whilst the Israelites had no idea and were satisfied with this.

God led the Israelites through the wilderness for 40 years. It was not the most direct route to the promised land. Why? Because God was doing something deeper in their hearts. God had a purpose for the process.

**Deu 8:2 NKJV**

*And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.*

As we go through life, God takes us through processes, through roundabout means of getting us to the place that He desires to take us. He does this for many reasons, and He always has a purpose in it. The question is whether we will understand what He is doing and why, or whether we will simply follow the process and be like the Israelites who didn't understand what God was doing, and didn't want to seek God for understanding, or whether we will be more like Moses and have a relationship with God where we pursue understanding and knowing God.

The challenge with not understanding, is the inability to position ourselves for obedience and progress.

How would we respond differently to situations if we knew what God was doing in us and trying to teach us?

**Prov 2:1-6 NKJV**

<sup>1</sup>*My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, <sup>2</sup>So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; <sup>3</sup>Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, <sup>4</sup>If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; <sup>5</sup>Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup>For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;*

Jesus Himself taught:

**Mat 7:7-8 NKJV**

*<sup>7</sup>"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

**Jer 29:11-13 NKJV**

*<sup>11</sup>For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup>Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup>And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.*

How much do you want it? What are you willing to do? It will cost. But it will be worth it.

**2. What is in your hand?**

**Exo 4:2 NKJV**

*So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod."*

This was the same rod that God had led Moses to use throughout the confrontations with Pharaoh.

**Exo 14:10-16 NKJV**

*<sup>10</sup>And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So, they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. <sup>11</sup>Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup>Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." <sup>13</sup>And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. <sup>14</sup>The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." <sup>15</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. <sup>16</sup>But lift up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.*

This rod that Moses used, many commentaries say was his shepherd's rod. When God appeared to him, he was shepherding. Why wouldn't it be his shepherd's rod? God used what was familiar to Moses. What he had been using for many years. It was something that felt comfortable in his hands. It was the very thing that God had

used in his season of brokenness and preparation. Some dispute this and say that Shepherding was so despised by the Egyptians that he would never have been able to carry it in to see Pharaoh, therefore it must have been a walking stick... one that an 80-year-old man might use to walk. Whichever the case, the point remains. Moses used it in his wilderness hiddenness. God used it when the time came to use Moses powerfully.

- Are you in a wilderness or hiddenness? What do you have in your hand? Have you asked God?
- Are you in a moment of confrontation? What has God given you? What do you have?

### **The widow of Zarephath**

#### **1 Ki 17:8-15 NKJV**

<sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>9</sup>"Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." <sup>10</sup>So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." <sup>11</sup>And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." <sup>12</sup>So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." <sup>13</sup>And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup>For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.' " <sup>15</sup>So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days.

The widow thought she was going to die. All she had left was enough for one meal for herself and her son. That was all she had in her hand. It really wasn't enough to share. She couldn't see the provision, but Elijah knew what God was up to. He shared it with her, and she obeyed the Lord. Because she trusted God with what was in her hand, she used what was in her hand, and obeyed the Lord, she and her household were provided for.

Don't you find it fascinating that God tells Elijah that He had commanded a widow there to provide for him, yet the widow wasn't yet aware of the Lord's command?

## The Feeding of the Five Thousand

### **Joh 6:4-13 NKJV**

<sup>4</sup>Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. <sup>5</sup>Then Jesus lifted His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" <sup>6</sup>But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." <sup>8</sup>One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, <sup>9</sup>"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So, the men sat down, in number about five thousand. <sup>11</sup>And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup>So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." <sup>13</sup>Therefore they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

- Did they have enough in the natural? No.
- Did they have something? Yes.
- They gave what they had in hand over to Jesus and He multiplied and provided what was needed.

### **3. What has God provided?**

Like what happened with the widow, where she didn't know what God had commanded or provided for her, we too sometimes don't see or recognise the provision of the Lord.

### **Ex 15:22-26 NKJV**

*So, Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore, the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?". So, he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."*

The people complained. Moses cried out to God.

We have a choice in impossible situations: we can complain, or we can cry out to God. In this case the latter caused God to reveal what He had already provided? What is your default in impossible situations?

God often brings us into situations that look bleak from our perspective because He is doing something deeper. He has the solution already provided. He is not surprised. If we really are walking with Him and know Him and trust Him, we would understand this. It would change the way we react or respond in situations.

### **Another example:**

#### **Num 20:2-13 NKJV**

<sup>2</sup>Now there was no water for the congregation; so, they gathered against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup>And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! <sup>4</sup>Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? <sup>5</sup>And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink." <sup>6</sup>So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>8</sup>"Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus, you shall bring water for them out of the rock and give drink to the congregation and their animals." <sup>9</sup>So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. <sup>10</sup>And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebel! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" <sup>11</sup>Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. <sup>12</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." <sup>13</sup>This was the water of Meribah because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

Again, we see, the people complained, Moses sought God. Yes, Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it, but that is a separate issue. The answer came when God was sought. He had a plan. He knew where they could get water. He had a solution. He had made provision. The Israelites couldn't see it.

**In conclusion:**

1. What type of relationship with God will you be satisfied with?
2. What is in your hand?
3. What has God provided?