

May 8th

THE RIGHT ACT IN THE WRONG WAY

“One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?” He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.”

EXODUS 2:11-14

Doing the right thing in the wrong way. We’ve all been guilty of it haven’t we? As men we work at solving problems. We see an issue, we work to correct it. But often we haven’t thought through our actions. We can be impulsive and jump to conclusions. One of our biggest strengths quickly becomes a glaring weakness. It’s no different with God’s man Moses. James Boice titles his chapter on Exodus 2, “Doing the right thing in the wrong way.” And he’s so right! We are already beginning to see that instead of Moses being a spectacular example of God’s chosen one, he is more of a weak failure. Moses is a lot more like us than we first realize. What is God showing us here through Moses?

Here in Exodus 2 we see Moses’ character and his sin. He was a man of action. He “looked on their burdens” and intercepted an Egyptian beating another Hebrew. But he did more than interrupt. He knows what he is going to do to the Egyptian. That’s why he “looks this way and that, and seeing no one, he strikes down the Egyptian”. He hides him in the sand to cover up his deed. Men, this isn’t the cartoon version of “Prince of Egypt.” This is no accident. Moses is beating another Egyptian to death. He is decisive in killing another man. And he sees his act as completely just. How do I know this? All you have to do is look at Stephen’s sermon in Acts 7:24: “And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian.” Revenge! Justice! Moses had been plagued for 40 years in being a part of the Egyptian royal family. Enough was enough. He rejected that life to live with his people. He couldn’t bear to see the injustice anymore. He took action into his own hands to deliver his people.

The key to Moses’ motive is found in the next verse of Stephen’s sermon: “He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand.” Put yourself as a fly in the sky among the mud of the Hebrews here. “Don’t you see that I have a privileged position? Our God has placed me here to overthrow the Egyptians! Follow me and we will get out of here!” But Stephen describes the truth: “they did not understand.” Why wouldn’t they understand? Seems simple to us doesn’t it? A spy in Pharaoh’s court! Now they can get out from under this tyranny! But God. Moses gets in front of God’s plan instead of behind God’s plan. God is the leader, not Moses. And God has much to teach Moses before He uses him. Another 40 years to be exact.

Men, how often do we commit the same sin as Moses? We are planners. We strive to execute our plans. And they look and sound so good in our minds! But God. This isn’t about your story and your strength to accomplish some grand plan. This is about God using your weak and sinful self to fulfill His purposes. We also can do the right thing in the wrong way. For those of you who are married, you know exactly what I’m talking about. God doesn’t need you. He never did. But in His grace, He uses you to fulfill His purposes. Will you work at today giving yourself to God’s plan rather than asking God to bless your own plans?

Spend some time confessing to God your pride in trying to do even right things in the wrong way. Ask Him for discernment in seeing His plan and submitting to it.

For Further Reading: Hebrews 11:17-31

