

Let's Talk About the Dash

Exodus 3:11-22

INTRODUCTION: Life is filled with the sort of moments these graduates are experiencing. These rites of passage where you transition from one season of life into another. It is times like these that the wise person pauses for a minute, considers the path they are on, thinks about the future and course correct where necessary.

It's like that halftime trip to the locker room at the end of the 2nd quarter. **That period in the game where both teams get to:**

1. Take stock of the first half
2. Evaluate their performance
3. Open the playbook and decide the best strategy going forward
4. Stir the teams emotions, and build their confidence for the 2nd half

You see I am convinced that there are times in life when we enter the locker room for a sort of half time.

1. Organizations have half time phases when they decide how they are going to function, what they are going to accomplish, and why they exist.

- **Nokia** once was known for making rubber boots
- The gas company **shell**, at one time actually imported shells.
- **Berkshire Hathaway** - known as a premier investment firm led by Warren Buffett was originally a textile manufacturer.
- **Nintendo** began by producing playing cards, but it had a half time when it decided to reinvent itself.
- **National Geographic** - was a magazine company. Few people today hold subscriptions to the magazine but most of you have a subscription to the NatGeo television channel.

2. Artists have half times

- We are all familiar with the metamorphosis of artists like **John Lennon** who moved from bubble gum pop like, "I want to hold your hand" to "imagine"
- Film makers like **Stephen Spielberg** who move from E.T. to Schindler's List.

Those who fail to reinvent themselves slowly loose their audience.

If you are wise you will emerge from this season ready to move from **SURVIVAL** to **SIGNIFICANCE**.

CONTEXT: Moses had just this sort of locker room experience there in the dessert of Midian, when he saw a fire emitting from a bush, but something was missing... no smoke, no crackling of burning leaves, no scent in the air. He drew aside and walked closer when God spoke to him out of the bush and gave him a mission that would literally change history.

Some aspects of Moses encounter with God, we will never be able to relate to, it is highly unlikely that you will be summoned to lead an ethnic people group out of slavery as God doesn't miracle after miracle to make it possible.

But there are some correlations that you should expect. There are principles in this story that will align in your story if you are watching for them.

We pick up with Moses's objection to God's call...

TEXT: Exodus 3:11–22 (ESV)

¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

The first word is the word....

1. Partnership - God wants to work ***with*** you.

Think about this - God didn't need Moses to do this great work, but God chose not to do it without Moses.

Use your sanctified imagination and dream about the myriad of ways God could have set Israel free:

- An Angelic Army could have invaded Egypt.
- The earth could have opened and swallowed Pharaoh.
- The Hebrews could have sprouted wings and flew away.

The possibilities are endless. But God choose to accomplish this great work, through an ordinary man - Moses of Midian. In a sense, his entire life had been a training ground for what was about to happen. Now he stands before God, alone, and objecting to the call.

Isaiah volunteered, “Here am I, send me!”. But Moses objected.

What was his objection? Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh? Hindsight is 20/20 we look at Moses as the perfect candidate. A great mediator who could relate to Pharaoh in his royalty, but also to the Hebrews in their plights.

We see in Moses a foreshadowing of Christ, who also had the unique ability to place a hand on the Father and upon His sinful creation and bring peace between the two.

But Moses at 80, saw himself as a Shepherd of Midian. Not a General, not a Commander, Not a Leader.

How do you see you? That’s important - but it’s more important how God sees you.

You see your **PAST**, God sees your **POTENTIAL**.

You compare yourself with your **CLASSMATES**, God compares you with your **CAPABILITIES**.

God can do it without you - but he won’t. Not because He needs you, but because you need the journey.

ILLUSTRATION: Someone once imagined the day after Jesus ascended into Heaven. Gabriel the ArchAngel to Lord, “*Master, You have done it - shall I rally the angels and proclaim the good news to all of mankind?*”

To which the Lord replied, “No, I’ve left it in the hands of a few capable men”. Gabriel answer, “Not to question your wisdom, my King, but, seriously? Have you seen them? They are so easily frightened... and their leader, Peter, he was denying you with a curse just a few days ago. Are you sure this is a good plan? To which the Lord replied, “I have no other plan”.

Have you ever considered - YOU are God’s plan to reach to reach somebody... and he has no plan B. He doesn’t NEED you, but he refuses to do it without you.

Their eternity rides on your faithfulness.

Not only Partnership... Notice secondly...

2. Partnership - God wants to work ***with*** you.

¹³ Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God

of your fathers has sent me to you.’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?’”

Remember - Israel had been in the Pagan land of Egypt for 400 years. They were surrounded by temples to the myriad of Egyptian deities. Egypt and most of the world was polytheistic. They believed in the supernatural but they had created 1000's of explanations for the inexplicable - creating gods, idols in the image of fallen man.

So Moses assumes, “they will want to know which God you are, what do I tell them”. Are you **AMUN RA** the chief deity of the Egyptians?

Moses had married the daughter in law of Jethro, most likely a **DRUZE** priest. We will see next that Moses and Jochebed have not yet circumcised their two boys as a sign of Abraham's Covenant with Yahweh, something that will cause God to set out to kill Moses before he ever leaves Midian - you will not want to miss that next week.

How will God introduce Himself to Moses?

¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I am who I am.”

This is not so much a proper name as it is a VERB. I AM. The complexity of the Hebrew language, the translation into English, combined with the fact that this story is told in third person causes God's answer to lose some of its original impact.

Moses would have heard something more like - I CAUSE TO BE, THAT WHICH I CAUSE TO BE.

I am the first cause, the Ultimate, before some silly man conceptualized the fictional concept of AMUN RA, I knit that man's brain together in his mother's womb. I AM, THAT I AM.

Three seconds after the first wave of light shown into the dark expanse of the formless void the echo of my voice could be heard. I AM, THAT I AM.

YOU ARE, BECAUSE I AM.
EVERYTHING IS, BECAUSE I AM.

14b. And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’ ”

Now the world is filled with people who are fine with that introduction of God. The great first cause, the ultimate being, the highest of higher powers. But God doesn't stop the introduction there...

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of **Abraham**, the God of **Isaac**, and the God of **Jacob**, has sent me to you.’

The GREAT I AM associates Himself with specific events in history. This is not some distant power... God says, “Remember the stories your mother told you? About Father Abraham meeting God in Ur of the Chaldeans? That was me... About the appearance of God to Isaac, saying, “Stay in this land I promised to your father Abraham”. That was me. The appearance to Jacob saying, ““Know that I am with you; I will protect you wherever you go, and bring you back to this land. I will never leave you until I have done what I promised you” THAT WAS ME.

You see God does not present Himself as a BLANK PAGE - Revelation has occurred. He has made Himself known to Humanity. If you want to know who He is, read the book.

But Pastor, the book is so old... certainly God has evolved with the rest of us. Read the last part...

15b. This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

As you walk the halls of the University you will hear things that made your most liberal high school teacher sound like Jordan Peterson. But I AM has not changed.

- He will not accommodate your world view.
- He will not react to the latest twitter controversy.
- His agenda is His own.
- He is called the Ancient of Days, not the next big thing.

ILLUSTRATION: Like those ancient mariners that sailed the seas just east of us. Beware of charting your course by movable objects like the flashing Meteor - hear today but Gone tomorrow. But find those objects that have remained fixed for generations. Look to the Polaris of your Soul - the Great I AM.

Partnership, Perception...the third word is...

3. Plan - God works through order and careful planning.

¹⁶ Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them,

Interesting, Moses, this is about you, but this is not just about you. You will lead, but you will lead through other leaders.

You see, back in Egypt, a government was already forming among the settlers of Goshen. Men of wisdom and discernment were already there. If Moses would lead Israel, he must lead these men.

Graduating Senior - God has been at work on the campus you are about to attend long before you ever applied for admission. He has his people there. They will be your tribe. They have leaders already - learn to identify them quickly. LEAD THROUGH LEADERS.

16b, Say to them ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, “I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt.¹⁷ and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.” ’

¹⁸ And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt

Incidentally, begin now to Pray for favor with leaders.. don’t attempt to influence the multitude, until you have influenced the leaders. If you can lead the leader, you can move the multitude.

18b. Go to the King... and say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.’

This is another case where the weight of the request is lost in translation. Three days, half a week, doesn’t seem like they are asking for much. But this is a middle eastern colloquialism -

ILLUSTRATION: If I say to my daughter, “*Would you please hand me the remote?*” that is actually a way of saying, “WE are going to watch, what I want to watch”. You see?

If someone says, “How much money do you have on you?” It is actually a way of indicating, “I’m planning to borrow some money from you and I am trying to discern which loan I should apply for.”

In particular, English-speaking cultures do this sort of thing with requests for time; “Have you got a second?” is not literal at all but really is a way of saying, “I’d like to take an indefinite amount of your time,”

So in the middle eastern context - a three day journey meant, “we are going to be gone for a while”.

*God continues...*¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. ²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.

Hmmm... same phrase, remember 40 years ago, Moses saw an Egyptian strike a Hebrew, then Moses struck the Egyptian, not God says, “I’m going to strike Egypt” He is saying, Moses, I’m going to do what you did, but I will do it much better than you do.

Partnership, Perception, Plan...

4. Plunder - God delivers people, who in turn deliver things.

²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty. ²² but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.”

Throughout church history - this idea of plundering the Egyptians has been used for how a Christian Interacts with Culture. St. Augustine used it in this way to refer to a Christian system of Education.

When you get to Gainesville, or Jacksonville, or Orlando.. you are going to see and hear things that you were not accustomed to in Nassau County.

There are really only three ways you can respond:

1. You can RECEIVE -
2. You can REJECT -
3. You can REDEEM -

Let me explain -

1. **You can RECEIVE** - Something you learn in college are just true, receive them as true. Perhaps you will learn facts about mathematics that are neither moral or

immoral - just receive them and leverage your knowledge for good.

4. You can REJECT - You will hear ascertations about reality that are in direct contradiction to what scripture teaches. Reject those. For example, practically every observable reality will be explain from an evolutionary worldview. Mark it down. When do men do what they do - because they have evolved to do so. But you know that man created God in His own image, you know that the image of God in man was effect by the fall.

They will show you the grand canyon and say, "Behold the power of a little water over millions of years" But you will hear the echo of your fathers saying, "Behold the power of a LOT of water over 40 days".

Same observations, different narratives.

5. You can REDEEM - There will be many times in the days ahead that you will need to redeem, ideas, concepts, skills, how can you take what you have learned and leverage for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ? In doing so, you will plunder the Egyptians.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION:

My son is in this graduating class. I did something the other day that gave me a lot of perspective. I imagined his tombstone. Elijah Cole Terry... below his name 7/22/2003... then a dash... we don't know what numbers will follow, but they will follow, I believe they are predestined, predetermined, God knows. The day of his birth and the day of his death he has very little to do with. But the dash... that's up to him and God. You too have a dash... what are you doing with it?