

St. Matthew AME Church
Bible Study
Monday, October 4, 2010
Spiritual Leadership Part 3

- I. The only thing we know about the life of Moses, separated from his people, is him shepherding his father in law's flock.
 - A. The image of the shepherd implies authority and concern, as well as humility and obedience. Most shepherds did not own their flock, but worked for someone else.
 1. One of the questions facing Moses was could he, removed from his Israelite origins and kinfolk, overcome his personal circumstances and fulfill his destiny as the leader of his people?
 2. The same question applies to you and me. Can we, many of whom carry family baggage overcome our circumstances to fulfill our destiny as leaders? Oftentimes the families into which we marry, religious and social backgrounds affect how we are perceived and function as leaders.
 - B. The manner in which Moses tends to the sheep indicates the type of leader he will become. (Exodus 2:15-17)
 1. Moses shows a great deal of the character, maturity, and capability- qualities necessary to be Israel's leader.

- II. The burden of slavery was very great upon the people of Israel. They cried out of their bondage and their plight was both heard and felt by God. (Exodus 3:7) God is moved by the plight of His people.
 - A. By this time Moses has not only left Pharaoh's Palace (after killing Egyptian) but he has also married Zipporah, daughter of Ruell (also named Jethro), who is a shepherd.
 - B. One day while Moses is at Mt. Horeb, watching the flock of his father in law in the back of the desert he notices an unusual sight, a bush that burns but is not consumed.
 1. Mt. Horeb interesting because biblical scholars debate whether Mt. Horeb is also what is called Mt. Sinai. Mt. Horeb means "mountain of God." Biblical evidence suggests that this is the same mountain which is later called Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19, Leviticus 19:20; 24:13-18) where God gives to Moses the Ten Commandments. What makes both Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai so compelling is that fire is considered a symbol of the presence of God. On Mt. Horeb there is fire, (a bush that burns, though not consumed) and on Mt. Sinai there is fire (God gives Moses the Ten Commandments).
 2. The burning bush is Moses second experience Moses has which impacts him and helps to define him (what I call the Desert Experience). This experience is important as it relates to preparing Moses for leadership. Moses does not just become a leader, he must be prepared. Likewise, we do not just become leaders; we must be prepared to become leaders.
 3. Moses experience at the burning bush is the beginning of God doing what he needs to do to prepare Moses for what lies ahead. God will send Moses to Pharaoh to give Pharaoh a message from Him. In the Hebrew the term for fire used is "b'labat aish" meaning the "heart of fire." In Scripture and in Greek philosophy the combination of heart and fire together add up to courage. Courage is absolutely necessary in any leader. Any leader without courage will be a burden to those they seek to lead and will cause much frustration and turmoil.

- C. Leaders develop personal characteristics and skills over time; it requires a series of experiences, each one building on the other, to provide growth. Leadership is not born overnight.
 - 1. Moses experience where he kills the Egyptian is added to the experience now at the burning bush. Both experiences shape and prepare Moses for the leader he will become.
 - 2. Stop and consider some of our own experiences and whether we learned from them and if they have helped to shape us as leaders.
 - a. Every life experience is either treasure or trash, dependent on whether we learned anything from them.
- III. When Moses sees the bush burning but not being consumed, “he turns aside” to see why it is not burning.
 - A. God takes note that Moses turned aside. Take note that God notices even what may be considered small things. (Exodus 3:3)
 - B. Moses turning aside is another example of Moses leadership qualities. He is inquisitive. Leadership requires us to look beyond what we know and what we are comfortable with.
 - 1. Many would have been scared and run or would have ignored what they saw.
 - C. Because Moses turned aside or sought to see why the bush wasn’t consumed God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses.” God doesn’t just call out, but calls his name. Incident becomes personal. God preparing us leadership is always personal.
 - 1. Moses cannot comprehend that God is calling him personally. After all who is Moses but a simple shepherd caring for his father in law’s sheep? When he hears his name he hides his face and is afraid to look? (Exodus 3:6)
- IV. God introduces Himself to Moses and explains why He is revealing Himself to Moses. (Exodus 3:6-9)
 - A. God charges Moses to go to Pharaoh to speak on His behalf, but Moses has self doubts. (Exodus 3:11)
 - B. Moses like us has serious questions about our ability to lead? This is particularly true of people who are provided opportunities for leadership in the local church.
 - 1. He’s afraid of facing Pharaoh who has issued a warrant for his death.
 - 2. He fears the people of Israel. He is convinced that the people of Israel will neither follow him nor listen to him. Even though God assures him they will. (Exodus 3:18) Moses is projecting his own fears onto the people. (Exodus 4:10)
 - 3. Moses insecurities mirror our own. We are afraid that those we lead will ultimately discover that we are not as talented, capable, committed or compassionate as we seem to be or need to be.
- V. In response to Moses feelings of inadequacy, God tells Moses that he is not alone. “I will be with you.” (Exodus 3:12) Even though Moses feels he is not up to the task assigned to him, God is there to support him in every way.
 - A. Leaders must recognize that we are not alone in fulfilling the task for which we have been called to lead.
 - 1. Others are there to help, to support us in ways that compensate for any shortcomings.
 - B. All spiritual leaders derive their authority and power from the people’s perception of their intimate relationship with God.

