

WHEN GOD BREAKS IN – MOSES

Exodus 2:11-3:12a

Sermon for Peace Church

November 29, 2009

PURPOSE – Using the example of Moses, teach that God breaks in to people who are broken of heart and lead people to that spiritual condition.

MAIN IDEA – After seeking to do God’s will in His Strength, Moses enters the emptiness of Midian, a place where God meets him to fulfill His calling.

ADVENT OVERVIEW

1. Our Advent series: WHEN GOD BREAKS IN refers to the literal meaning of ADVENT

= “Come” (vent) “to” (ad)

- We worship a God who COMES TO US

(i) In Jesus He HAS COME & WILL COME AGAIN

- and by Jesus’ Living Spirit of Grace & Truth, He COMES TODAY!

A. That’s part of the meaning of Baptism.

Baptism is an act of PRAYER – “God, come to Thomas Reuben ... renew his life ... send your Spirit – that he might know you and love You.

B. The prayer of Advent is “MARANATHA”

Aramaic for “Come to us, Lord” ... Come again to CULMINATE this age ... But also, Come today ... BREAK INTO MY LIFE!

2. To help us pray that prayer, we're going to look this Advent at four people in the Bible of whom it can be said that God broke in their life.

= they are MOSES, SAMUEL, JONAH & MARY

(i) These are 4 people who vary in AGE – one's 80, another's about 10

They vary in GENDER – one female, 3 men

They vary in CLASS – one well-educated, raised as royalty / another a rural peasant woman / another raised in the Temple

A. So it's our hope that in the variety of these Biblical witnesses, you'll find places of identification to ask God to break into your life.

3. Now typically when you think of "Break-Ins" here on the south side of Chicago, they are NOT SOMETHING YOU WANT!

- Break-ins TAKE from your life; DISHONOR your life;

SO ... to prevent them, we CLOSE DOORS; WE LOCK UP!

(i) God's break-ins, however, are of a different nature.

They ADD to life.

– Jesus said, I've come that you might have life and have it to the full – true & purposeful life ...

A. I.e. – In the 4 people we will look at, when God breaks in He dramatically CHANGES their life. God's not about entertainment; He brings transformation.

When He breaks in, He also gives them a TASK to do, a calling

= Their life takes on new PURPOSE

GOD'S BREAK-INS HONOR your deepest desires!

4. Yet we still have a tendency to close doors & lock up to God, afraid of His purposes. We don't like to change. We want to keep control.

Are you open for GOD TO BREAK INTO YOUR LIFE?

- To hear Him call you to some new task?
- To listen to Him address a love-deficiency?
... a relationship to heal? A people group to serve?

Are you willing to let go?

That hymn - “O come, O come, Emmanuel” – is an exciting prayer, but also a vulnerable, dangerous prayer.

ADVENT is a call to pray it! ... MARANATHA

4. PRAYER - Let’s ask God’s blessing on this series & His Word

5. MOSES SKIT I

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Let’s open our Bibles to Exodus 2 (p. 89)

Exodus 3 – when God breaks into Moses’ life at the Burning Bush – is one of the most famous scenes in the Bible.

But I want to back up to Exodus 2:11 – to focus this morning on WHO MOSES IS ... when God breaks into his life.

Read Exodus 2:11-3:12a

2. WHO IS MOSES WHEN GOD MEETS HIM AT THE BURNING BUSH? HERE’S WHO:

Ch. 2:22 – *Zipporah, Moses’ wife, gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, “I have become an alien in a foreign land.”*

- That’s what Gershom literally means, “Ger” = alien // “shom” – there
- Other translations = “stranger / sojourner” in a land not my own

(i) It's a way of saying – I'm a nobody ... I'm a has-been / I'm done / I'm stuck in nowhere

I'm Sammy Sosa or maybe Jim Thome – can't catch up to the fastball anymore ... through!

I'm an alien now in the big-leagues ... I'm empty ... I'm dried up!

(ii) By naming his son, Gershom, Moses was facing that reality and accepting it! That naming was a way of declaring: "This is where I'm at"

= "Son, every time I call your name, I'll be reminded of it!"

Jon & Kathy name their son, Thomas (NT saint) / Reuben (OT son of Israel)

Moses ... GERSHOM!

= I'm an alien in a strange land ... I'm a nobody!

3. That's the CONDITION of MOSES' HEART when God breaks in to his life at the burning bush!

- And it's a condition of heart that God STILL brings His people to before breaking into their life.

(i) *Blessed are the POOR in spirit, Jesus said, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

NOT – blessed are the rich in spirit – those who "believe in themselves" ... the full of spirit, strong in spirit

A. NO! the kingdom of heaven comes (God breaks in) to those who are empty, broken, poor ... those feeling like aliens in a strange land ... power-less.

"My strength is made perfect in your weakness" – God said to Paul when he was in his desert of Midian.

SO IF WE WOULD WANT GOD TO SHOW UP IN OUR LIFE, the desert of MIDIAN – that condition of Moses' heart - is a place to get to!

II. HOW MOSES GOT THERE

1. To that end, let's recall how Moses got there. Forty years earlier, he was in quite a different spiritual state. He grew up as DESTINY'S CHILD (to borrow a term from John Ortberg):

- (i) Was Jewish – at a time when the Jewish people were horribly enslaved in Egypt
- (ii) Was uniquely spared death – unlike all the other Jewish boys his age – when set on the water & rescued by Pharaoh's daughter
- (iii) Was nursed & nurtured in his early years by his natural mother – Learning the songs & stories of the Hebrew people – grounded in that identity.
- (iv) Then moves to Pharaoh's palace as a boy – where he receives the finest education & military training anywhere on the planet – can read / write / organize / train / lead / administrate.

He's 40 years old & in top physical condition

2. In that place, when he sees the struggles of the Hebrew people (with whom he still identifies), how could he not be DESTINY'S CHILD – to deliver them out of slavery?!

He's got all the skills & tools anyone could ever have ... plus he's the only Hebrew man his age!

... talk about being RICH in spirit / NATURALLY GIFTED / FULL of confidence / STRONG in spirit.

- If anyone could believe in himself to live the life God wanted, it was Moses!

(i) But when he ventures out to carry out his destiny ... HE BLOWS IT!

He sees an Egyptian abusing a Hebrew slave ... can't stand it ...

Then – v. 12 – a telling line – *“GLANCING THIS WAY & THAT – AND SEEING NO ONE, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.”*

A. “Glancing this way & that” ... where he didn’t look WAS UP!

Glancing this way & that, he didn’t see anyone ... but if he’d glanced UP, he might have seen the One person he needed to see to live out his destiny.

- But he didn’t look that way – His heart was NOT in that condition.

3. It took 40 more years for Moses’ heart to be changed – from being DESTINY’S CHILD ... to GERSHOM – I’m a NOBODY – I’m an alien in a strange land - empty

(i) Looking “this way & that” his eyesight musn’t have been that good – cause some fellow Hebrews did see him kill & bury the Egyptian.

Pharaoh learns of it and fearing execution for treason, Moses FLEES into the desert of Midian.

... Where he meets & marries Zipporah – tends sheep for her father-in-law – wanders from grassy patch to grassy patch for 40 years ... until God breaks in when he’s 80!

4. And YOU KNOW his heart was changed in that time because of his RESPONSE when God broke in. EXODUS 3:

(i) Moses first catches a glimmer of God’s glory at a burning bush!

You never know where God’s glory will break into your life:

- It can be from a line of poetry, a verse of Scripture, a truth in a message
= something transcendent touches you
- It can be from the character & deeds of a friend’s life
- It can be a sighting in nature

(ii) Moses decides to pursue this glory ... “I will go over & see this sight ... I’ll investigate!”

Then he is given to understand that it is the presence of God here on earth
HE IS WITH US

(iii) Then he learns about something that is on the heart of this God:

= the suffering of His people – He hears the cries of the poor & mistreated around the globe

(iv) FROM THAT Moses hears a call to get involved in God’s concerns on earth.

(Whenever he breaks in, God gives us a call according to His purposes)

= “GO! ... I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt!”

(v) THEN COMES MOSES’ telling RESPONSE:

Verse 11 – *“WHO AM I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” ... Who am I? ... Who am I?*

A. = such a DIFFERENT response than would have been 40 years earlier!

- Back then – “Finally God, you recognized my talent! My training, my unique ability & skills, my personality – I kind of figured you’d need me!”

B. NOT NOW – “Who am I? - I’m Gershom – I’m a NOBODY

- “Why put that burden on me? ... WHO AM I?”

5. But GOD REPLIES: *“I WILL BE WITH YOU.”*

That’s why God breaks in to those who are poor in spirit:

- SO HE CAN BE WITH US

- So we can rejoice in His strength / His presence / His character / His honor / His love

Life & mission is meant to be COOPERATIVE!

God designed us for love, not independence!

(i) God doesn’t break in to those who believe in themselves, He breaks in to those who believe in HIM!

HE BREAKS IN TO THE POOR IN SPIRIT – the broken, alien, powerless, dependent, empty of heart.

III. APPLICATION

LET'S APPLY THIS TO OUR LIFE.

- Where can you identify with Moses in this story?

(i) We began our service this morning with a call to worship from the prophet Isaiah (ch. 40):

Prepare the way of our Lord ... make a path for Him

EVERY VALLEY WILL BE EXALTED / RAISED

EVERY HILL & MOUNTAIN LAID LOW

The idea behind that verse is ROADBUILDING - so that the way may be level, easy & open for God to come.

1. We first see began by seeing Moses on a HILL! ... probably a MOUNTAIN!

= I am "DESTINY'S CHILD"

(THAT mountain had to get knocked down!)

CAN YOU RELATE?

(i) Is there some God-project that you're working on too independently?

= trying to repair a relationship

= trying to build a marriage / trying to build a business

= trying to build the church

Are WE on a hill of independence & fullness of self-spirit that needs to be laid low?

A. That "project" may be your life as a whole:

- Up to now, you've been going at it in your own natural abilities ... but you're beginning to realize, this isn't enough. It ain't working - there are deeper longings in my heart that are not being satisfied.

(ii) Moses fled to the desert of Midian where his heart was changed.

- It was a place to reckon with his source of confidence ... and lose it in HIMSELF (Not that God won't eventually use his gifts & training, but bottom-line, where's his confidence?)
- The desert was a time of repentance – of the pride that led to murder. At root repentance is emptying.
- Where is the desert of MIDIAN for you?

Prepare the way of the Lord ... every mountain & hill will be laid low.

2. ... And every VALLEY raised!

(i) Maybe you can readily identify with Moses in naming his son, GERSHOM.

- That's how you feel – empty / alien / a “has been” / powerless / wasted / broken / a nothing!

A. If so, this is a story of HOPE!

It is a story about a God who COMES TO those people

It is a story to PRAY FROM!

It is a story given that we might know God & call on Him from His Word.

It is a story given to encourage FAITH!

- SO THAT VALLEYS ARE RAISED.

(ii) *“Prepare the way for the Lord”*

= the HILL / the VALLEY

= Repentance & Faith

IV. CONCLUSION

As He did for Moses, God who PROMISES to the “poor in spirit”: I will be with you!

1. That promise is in the meaning of the Lord’s Supper – which we partake of now. We worship a God who comes to us in Jesus.

(i) In Jesus’ complete emptiness - death on a Cross - God came to Him – raising Him from the dead.

Jesus’ death & resurrection is the SIGN 7 SEAL of God’s promise to be with us ... to come to us!

2. *BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.*

Let’s come before God now in repentance & faith, as we partake in the table.

* SONG – Let’s stand to sing of the PROMISE of the Table
“GIVE THANKS”

Prayer of Preparation – Valley / Hill (Repentance / Faith)

THE LORD'S SUPPER

3. Institution / INVITATION / Hold Elements till all have been served both.

4. PRAYER: BROKEN THINGS (Allegra McBirney)

I can't get over, Lord, how often in the pages of your Word

You've told of using broken things in working miracles:

The boy's five loaves of bread, broken, fed a multitude

A roof your followers broke up to lower that poor palsied man into your presence

The lamps which could then shine forth and implement a victory

And, too, the alabaster box which Mary broke in order to release its fragrance

As she worshipped at your feet.

Your Son's own body – broken for the miracle of forgiveness

You've spoken to my heart, Lord;

Now, somehow, I feel that brokenness – of heart, of will –

Must be the starting point if you would work a miracle through me (us).

And so, break me – that Jesus might live in me

To feed a multitude your Word

To bring the ill-in-heart into your presence;

Shine in victory from my life, and send forth a fragrance of praise to You. AMEN.

5. PASS OUT ELEMENTS / CHOIR – “I Come to the Stable”

6. PARTAKE

7. MODERN DAY MOSES

8. * Song / Blessing / Song / Postlude