



The Gateway of Humility

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There is a gateway that every man or woman who has been chosen of God for some great task must pass through. If Yahweh is to bestow authority and power upon an individual, and these endowments are not to destroy them by being mishandled, the man or woman of God must pass through the gateway of humility.

A pattern is revealed throughout the pages of Scripture where we see Yahweh making known to an individual that He has some profound call upon their life. At times the individual will begin to enter into this calling to some small degree, or he will attempt to enter in, only to suffer a sudden reversal. Then a period of many years will ensue in which God reveals to the person that they are incapable in their own strength to accomplish a single positive thing for the Kingdom of God. The man or woman's spirit is broken so that they will never again attempt to accomplish the purposes of God through their own human abilities. Only after this breaking of this confidence in the flesh is Yahweh able to release His divine power through the person to enable them to walk in the authority He gives to them whereby they may accomplish His purposes.

This breaking phase is absolutely essential in the life of God's ministers, and though it brings many to despair of God being able to work through them at all, it is an act of mercy by our heavenly Father that He should lead His children to this honest assessment of themselves. The illusion of self sufficiency must be shattered, and the deceit that we have anything at all to offer God must be completely cast off. Only in recognizing our complete destitution, and our utter inability to advance the purposes of God a single hair's breadth, will we be qualified to be used as ministers of God who can receive the awesome power and authority of God.

These things are best illustrated through real life situations, and the Father has seen fit to provide us an abundance of them. In the Old Testament we can look at the life of Abram, or Joseph, or David, or Gideon, as well as many others. Perhaps the clearest example of a man who knew he had a call on his life, and who then had to go through an emptying of all reliance upon self, is Moses. I have written of him before, but he is such a clear example that I wish to refer to him again. We will then also look at the New Testament example of Peter.

Moses was a Hebrew who was adopted by the sister of Pharaoh. He was raised in the courts of power in the greatest nation on earth. He received the best education available from the ministers of Pharaoh's household, and was instructed in all the wisdom of Egypt. Such an upbringing was not lost upon Moses, for we are told that he was "mighty in word and in deed".

Acts 7:22

And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

At the age of forty Moses was at the pinnacle of his physical strength. His mind was keen and had been sharpened by his educational opportunities, and he was a man who was able to translate his knowledge into deeds. He was comparable to a man today who has been raised in circles of power and affluence, perhaps akin to the Rockefellers of America or the Rothschilds of Europe. His education was no less than the best available at Oxford or Harvard Universities.

Consider then that this man Moses perceived in his heart that God had called him to be used in the task of delivering his Hebrew countrymen from the bondage and oppression of Egypt. Moses must have looked at his training, his mental and physical strength, his understanding of the world around him and the realms of power in which he was raised, and he must have thought that God had well prepared him to perform this task to which he was called. Knowing that God had called him, and deeming himself to be well prepared for the task, Moses set out to accomplish it.

Acts 7:23-26

Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. *For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.*

To deliver his brethren from their Egyptian captors, Moses would have to convince the Hebrews that God had indeed called him to this task, and that God would accomplish it through him. His Hebrew brethren did not recognize this call on his life and therefore his career as a deliverer was short lived. We read of the reaction of his brethren in the book of Exodus, as they asked "Who made you a prince and a judge over us?" (Exodus 2:14).

Didn't these Hebrews understand that Moses was to deliver them from Egypt? Couldn't they recognize that Moses had all the qualities of a natural leader? Weren't they aware of his great education and his prowess in words and in deeds? It is just as well that they were not impressed with these things, for these natural abilities were insufficient to carry forth God's will and to achieve deliverance for the people of Israel.

We know how God planned to bring about deliverance for the people. Yahweh destroyed the nation of Egypt through the plagues and judgments He brought upon her. How pitiful in comparison was the plan that Moses had. Education and natural strength were no comparison to the supernatural power of the God who created the Universe. Could Moses' own strength enable him to bring thick darkness upon the land for three solid days, a darkness so thick that it could be felt? Could Moses' wisdom show him how to divide the darkness between the land of Egypt and the land of Goshen where the Hebrews dwelt? Could Moses call forth plague after plague that would render judgment against the gods of Egypt, and could he put it in the hearts of the Egyptians to give their wealth away to the Israelites? If Moses had somehow achieved the deliverance of the people, who would have gotten the glory?

We can see that when God has some great task to be done that the abilities of man are insufficient to accomplish it. Why then do we find in our churches a host of men and women who are relying upon their own strength and abilities to accomplish the Kingdom purposes of God? Why do men pass out their resumes and speak of their education and degrees? Why do they boast of the deeds they have done, the building projects they have overseen and the churches they have planted or grown? Why do they pass out tapes that show their great oratorical abilities? And why do churches use all these things to determine who will be best suited to lead them into the purposes of God?

Could it be that the Kingdom purposes of God are not being fulfilled in these churches, or by these ministers, anymore than Moses could deliver Israel by his own abilities? Egypt represents the world and the pursuit of the things of the world. Egypt caters to the flesh, and we read in Scriptures of "the fleshpots of Egypt". Few churches today are delivering anyone from their bondage to this world. Many have adopted false teachings that declare that the saints need not give up anything that they truly loved and enjoyed. They are preaching salvation without transformation. They declare that you can have salvation and the fleshpots, too.

What a temptation it is for men and women to look at their skills and abilities and to think that they can use these things to further the Kingdom of God. If the flesh is the instrument that drives the work of the Kingdom, then only that work which man's flesh can perform will

be accomplished. Dead works and religious machinery is the result of such efforts.

I do not want to cast any rocks at those who have through the power of their own natural abilities attempted to fulfill the call that God has placed on their life. I have also sought to do this, and I suppose that all are tempted in this way. Moses, however, shows us the end of such efforts, and the sooner that we realize our own inability, the better off we will be.

When one has a call as large as that which was placed upon Moses' life, it doesn't take too long to learn how incapable we are. Yet many saints persist their entire lives in works of the flesh for they are seeking to fulfill a much smaller calling. Perhaps a man cannot deliver an entire nation, but he may feel adequate in himself to shepherd a single body of believers. If God is merciful to such a one, He will show him that even this much smaller task is beyond accomplishing through any human effort and skill.

After this mighty Moses met with dismal failure, he fled into the wilderness of Midian where he spent the next forty years using his great education, his natural strength, and his knowledge of court politics, to herd sheep. Picture an Oxford graduate from the wealthiest part of society fleeing to Guatemala to take a job in a McDonald's flipping hamburgers. Forty years later he is still flipping hamburgers. Now there is nothing wrong with flipping hamburgers in a McDonald's restaurant, but when you know you were called to deliver your people from bondage, and year after year no progress has been made in this direction, and you have every year seen more and more clearly that you are incapable of accomplishing anything of value for the Kingdom of God, then despair begins to set in.

Moses actually died to the vision he had of seeing Israel delivered, and if perchance he still thought it might happen, he knew absolutely that he wouldn't be the one to do it. After forty years with the sheep he was no longer a man mighty in words and in deeds. No longer was Moses a man of the world, and the cream of society. He no longer carried any illusions about having some innate capacity to deliver his brethren from their captivity.

I have heard a number of people declare that God used Moses' time in the wilderness to prepare him to lead the Hebrew's for forty years in the wilderness. These ones have missed the whole lesson here. God is not seeking to use our natural abilities to further His kingdom. It is not our strengths that He needs, for the principle is true that when we are weak then His power is displayed through us. Besides, nothing in Moses' experience in the wilderness prepared him to lead millions of people for forty years in desolate places. Moses did not learn how to make manna while he was watching the sheep. He didn't practice striking rocks to see how much water he could get to gush forth from them. He didn't spend his time

building models of tabernacles, or arranging the sheep into orderly companies so that they could march out in unison. What Moses learned in the wilderness was humility.

The wilderness was the place where Moses' pride was destroyed. Moses entered the wilderness as a man mighty in words, and he left it as a man who declared that he could not even speak. He entered the wilderness as a man mighty in deeds, and he left as a man who declared that he could do nothing, arguing that God had chosen the wrong person. When Moses entered the wilderness he had a great reliance upon his own abilities, and when God called him he was broken and destitute, seeing nothing within himself that would be an asset in accomplishing the call of God on his life.

This is where God must lead all of His ministers. He must bring them to a place where they consider that they have not one asset that God needs. What a mercy it is for God to so resist a man's natural efforts that he has not one solitary success that he can point to, but all of his efforts have remained barren and without encouragement. I have concluded through observing my own vain efforts that I am incapable of convincing one single man of the truth. I am not able to overthrow a single deception that a man has embraced. I am impotent to lead a single sinner to the light of truth. I cannot impart God's vision to a single soul. It is impossible for me to achieve one positive effect for the Kingdom of God, though I throw all of my natural abilities into the effort and labor with persistence and great zeal.

What a deception it is when the saints look to those who are successful in the world, and they think, "If only this one got saved, think what great things they could do for the Kingdom of God." Such thoughts are vain and misguided, for God does not need the strength or the talents of any man. What He is seeking is those who are humble and of a contrite heart. He is looking for those who know not to place confidence in their flesh. This is why we read:

I Corinthians 1:26-29

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.

All men must come to a place of personal destitution in order for God to use them to show forth His power and might. I mentioned that we would look at the life of Peter as well. Peter was also a leader among men. He had great confidence in his own faithful and stalwart character. He made the boast, "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not" (Mark 14:29).

On the very day that he spoke these words he denied his Lord and Savior three times. God showed Peter that his own strength was not sufficient to hold him to the course set before him.

A great danger of coming to this place of recognition of our impotent and sinful nature is that we might give ourselves over to despair. Both Moses and Peter did so. We must understand that in our own strength we can do nothing, but through the power of Christ in us we can do all things. Moses denied that God could even use him. He said that he could not speak and no one would pay heed to his words. This was true enough in a natural sense, but God would give Moses a supernatural ability to perform His will. The one who made man's lips would teach him what to say.

It is not good to despair of God's ability to use us. Such reasoning is built upon the false idea that we must have something for God to use. God only needs a willing vessel. He does not need a man of ability, or of great and noble character. Peter also despaired, for he gave up all hope of being a fisher of men, and he went back to his boat and nets to catch fish in the Sea of Galilee. God had not discarded Peter because Peter did not have the courage or fortitude that he thought he had. God merely wanted Peter to be emptied of any reliance upon his own self.

God has a call upon my life. I realize that I have no capacity to see it fulfilled. I am reminded of the Scripture:

Isaiah 26:18

We were pregnant, we writhed in labor, we gave birth, as it seems, only to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, nor were inhabitants of the world born.

This is the condition of all men. We cannot accomplish deliverance for the earth in our own strength. This is why Yahshua told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they be clothed with power from on high. Their lowly power was not enough. They needed power from on high. May we all realize our destitute nature. May we die to all effort of our own to bring forth deliverance on the earth. Only then will we be able to enter in through the gate of humility and be clothed with the power and authority of the Kingdom of God.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days.