

The Champion Within

On Sunday, we moved out of the book of Genesis into Exodus, looking for lessons from the life of Moses.

1. Warm-up Question: The story of Moses challenges us to think about how we see ourselves. What's a word that describes how you see yourself when you're at your best? And a word that describes how you see yourself when you're at your worst?
2. Though born to slave parents, Moses ended up being adopted by Pharaoh's daughter (through a roundabout series of circumstances) and grew up as Prince of Egypt. Upon learning of his true identity, Moses developed deep empathy for the people, the Israelite slaves. Then came a pivotal turning point in his young life.
 - a. Read Exodus 2:11-15. What do you think Moses felt when he saw the Egyptian beating the Israelite? In the aftermath of the murder, what thoughts and feelings must have run through his mind?
 - b. Forced to flee Egypt and hide in the wilderness, Moses lost everything and everyone dear to him. What are some of the things Moses lost upon fleeing Egypt?
 - c. How do you think Moses thought about himself, and felt about his life, at this point in the story?
3. In the wilderness, Moses built a friendship with the priest of Midian, married one of his daughters, and became a sheep herder. Read Exodus 3:1-12.
 - a. Moses saw an amazing burning bush that just kept combusting without being consumed. Have you ever seen something your eyes couldn't believe? What was it? How did you feel?
 - b. When God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, how do you imagine Moses reacted?
4. Encountering God in the wilderness – at a low point in his life – was probably the last thing Moses expected. And therein lays the first of three key lessons Jeff emphasized on Sunday. **Lesson 1 – God goes with us in our misery; you are NEVER alone.**
 - a. When have you felt most miserable and alone in your life?
 - b. When life is going awry, we are tempted to feel godforsaken, like maybe God doesn't like us and has turned away from us. In those times, it's critical that we be grounded in what the Bible says about how God truly feels about us. Jeff described how Pastor David feels about their cat Ms. Girl – doting on her, delighting in her, watching her every move, and worrying about her wellbeing. Who is someone you have felt that way about?

- c. In your heart of hearts, do you believe God feels that way about you?
 - d. Read Matthew 10:29-31. Sparrows were considered to be the least of the birds – cheap and expendable. What point is Jesus trying to make here about how God feels about us?
 - e. Read Psalm 139:7-12. What's the point here?
 - f. Psalm 139:18 adds, "When I come to the end – I am still with you." What do you think that means?
 - g. What area of your life right now are you most tempted to see as godforsaken? How might it change the dynamics of that situation if you saw it as the place in your life where you are most likely to encounter God in a powerful way?
5. When God told Moses, "I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt and have come down to deliver them," Moses must have been ecstatic. This is what he had been asking God to do his whole life. But then, when God went on to say, "So come, I will send you to Pharaoh," Moses panicked. "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?"
- Lesson 2 – God wants to work *through* you in surprising ways, in dynamic partnership, so you can discover the champion inside you.**
- a. Jeff said, "Each day of my life, I get to choose to see myself as the weak intimidated boy who shivered in the face of Jeff Hanny's taunts or the champion who sunk 53 free throws in a row as his teammates cheered in amazement." Pick two experiences from your formative years that represent yourself at your best and worst. Briefly describe them. Which of those experiences most often influence how you see yourself?
 - b. Where in your life right now are you tempted to say, "I don't have it in me; I'm not strong enough; God can't use me in that way"? Do you think it would help you to consciously shift your internalized script from powerlessness to power?
6. What finally tipped the balance for Moses and gave him the courage he needed was when God said, "I will be with you." Exodus 3:12. God wasn't just saying, "I'll keep you company and comfort you." God was saying, "My power will be with you."
- Lesson 3 – God's power is with you, just waiting to be tapped into."**
- a. When have you felt God's power working in and through you to do something amazing that you never thought you could do?
 - b. Why is it so hard to believe God cherishes us and wants to partner with us and empower us?
 - c. Read the Marianne Williamson poem on the next page. How does the poem hit you? What does it cause you to think or feel? Is God speaking to you through it? If so, how?

Our Deepest Fear

By Marianne Williamson

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness
That most frightens us.

We ask ourselves
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?
Actually, who are you *not* to be?
You are a child of God.

Your playing small
Does not serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
So that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine,
As children do.
We were born to make manifest
The glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us;
It's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we're liberated from our own fear,
Our presence automatically liberates others.

(From Marianne Williamson's book "A Return To Love.")