

No Shoes Allowed

Exodus 3:1-15

August 21, 2011

Exodus 2:23-25 establishes the cause of the story:

When God calls Moses' name, Moses responds: *hineni* which means _____.

God's speech: I have _____ the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have _____ their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I _____ their sufferings, and I have _____ to _____ them from the Egyptians, and to _____ out of that land to a good and broad land...the cry of the Israelites has come to me; I have also _____ how the Egyptians oppress them." (v.7-9)

God _____, _____, and _____ the reality of oppression and suffering of the people.

"Know":

The God who sees, hears, and knows is the God who _____ to do something about it.

God assures Moses, _____.

Prayer Concerns:

Monday: Read Exodus 1:8-2:10

This passage establishes the context of the exodus story. There is a new king of Egypt, who feels threatened by the Israelites and establishes a cruel national policy of oppression and death. Against tremendous odds and in the face of great risk, 5 women conspire together to defy the law and save the life of Moses.

* Why did the new king feel threatened? How did he influence the treatment and perception of the Hebrew people? Can you think of any modern example of powerful persons who feel threatened and lash out as a result? According to this passage, how does God feel about this?

* Who are some other modern examples of persons in the U.S. and other countries who defied oppressive and cruel laws in the name of God? Have you ever stood up to defy an unjust rule or law?

Tuesday: Read Exodus 2:11-25

Although he has grown up in the palace, Moses obviously feels a connection to his kindred, the Hebrews. One day he is confronted by their slavery, perhaps in light of his own comfort, and kills an Egyptian who is beating a Hebrew. As a consequence, Moses must flee Egypt for his life when the Pharaoh finds out.

* How do you think Moses felt when he observed the life of his people in comparison to his life as a son of Egyptian royalty? Why do you think the two Hebrews reacted to him as they did in v. 14?

* Have you ever witnessed a person living in poverty or oppression and felt a stir to act? What kind of action did you take? Why or why not?

Wednesday: Read Exodus 3:1-4:17

This is the entire narrative of God's call to Moses and Moses' insistent excuses why he cannot do what God wants him to do. Notice that the list is long, and God listens patiently for a long time. They have a genuine conversation, and Moses is honest about his fears and misgivings.

* Have you ever made excuses why you cannot do something God has called you to do? What are the reasons that you usually decline God's call? What excuses are you making right now?

* What was God's response to Moses' excuses? How might God respond to your excuses in a similar way?

Thursday: Read Exodus 22:21-27

When God leads the people out of Egypt, God takes them right back to the mountain where God called Moses (see 3:12). On Mount Horeb/Sinai, God makes a covenant with the people of Israel to be their God and they will be God's people. In Exodus 19-24 this covenant is hammered out with Moses, who is up on the mountain talking with God. God sets out a lot of expectations for the way the people will live. If they are God's people, they will need to live in a way that mirrors God's character so that their lives and their life together will be a light for the world to see and know God.

* Often when the oppressed are given power, they turn around and oppress others. In this particular passage, God makes it clear that this is **not** to be the case with Israel. Throughout the rest of the Bible, God calls the Israelites to remember that they were slaves in Egypt. How should this memory affect the way that they treat others? How should it affect the way we treat others?

* Notice that God promises to listen to the cries of those who are treated without mercy. Who is crying out today, in your community, in this country, and in the world? What might be the consequence of God hearing these cries?

Friday: Read 1 Samuel 3, Isaiah 6, Luke 1:26-56

All three of these passages are call stories; they are examples of men and women who were called by God and responded with a “Yes!”

* What do these call stories have in common? What kind of person does God choose to do God’s work in the world?

*Walter Brueggemann says that, “An uncalled life is an autonomous existence in which there is no intrusion, disruption, or redefinition, no appearance or utterance of the Holy.” How were each of these person’s lives disrupted by God’s call? How has God intruded and disrupted your life with God’s call?

Saturday: Read Luke 4:14-30

In the Gospel of Luke, this is beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. Verses 18-19 are seen as a statement of what his ministry will be all about. Obviously, it doesn’t take long for the people to shift from speaking well of him (v.22) to wanting to kill him (v. 28-29).

* How does this programmatic statement of Jesus’ ministry connect or compare to God’s programmatic statement in Exodus 3:7-10? What elements are the same? What does this tell us about God and God’s intentions?

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