

The right one for the job

Exodus 2:1-25

September 18, 2005

WANTED!

*Champion of the downtrodden, liberator of the oppressed,
helper to the helpless, giver of hope to the hopeless.*

*A person of compassion who will defend the cause
of those with no one to speak for them.*

A person of courage who will speak the truth to power and defy empires.

*A person of resilience who will not let opposition, intimidation, or even repeated
failure get in the way of getting the job done. A person who refuses to fail.*

Must be willing to work overtime and be ready to take great risks.

Do you want the job?

He was the right one for the job. He had to be! The hand of God was upon him from the very beginning! By all rights, he should have been dead. He was a Hebrew baby boy, born at a time when the Egyptian ruling class was under orders to put all Hebrew baby boys to death, to throw them into the Nile River.

He should have been dead, but the Lord preserved his life! His mother loved him and she hid him. She refused to give him up and let him die. And when she could hide him no more, she put him in the Nile, in a basket, and hoped ...

The king's daughter found him, the daughter of the very king who gave the order to kill all Hebrew baby boys. The king's daughter pitied this one and took this one as her own. She could not save them all -- maybe she would not want to save them all -- but this one she did save.

He was raised in the palace of the king, raised as an Egyptian prince. He had the advantages of privilege, of a good education, of access to people in high places. He had the advantages of knowing freedom and wealth, of growing into adulthood with a spirit unbroken by hard labor and harsh treatment. He had the advantage of hope, shared by few of his fellow Hebrews.

And yet, despite his position of privilege, despite his extraordinary advantages, he did not forget who he was. He did not forget he was a Hebrew, and he did not turn his back on the suffering of his people. He was the right one for the job!

He was the right one for the job ... and then he killed a man! He saw an Egyptian kill a Hebrew. He saw cruel injustice with his own eyes, and he took revenge! It was careful, premeditated, look-both-ways-to-make-sure-there-are-no-witnesses revenge. He was the right one for the job, but then he lost his cool.

He was the right one for the job, but then he lost his courage. He thought there were no witnesses, but there were. He was found out and he was scared. Two of his people, two Hebrew men fighting each other, knew what he had done and they ridiculed his attempt to break up their fight. He was the right one for the job, but then he lost the respect of his own people.

He was the right one for the job, but then he ran away. He ran from danger, he ran from trouble, he ran from risk, he ran for his life. He ran far away, all the way to Midian, to a place that is part of modern day Saudi Arabia.

He was the right one for the job, but then he lost his resolve. He was content to live out his life in Midian with his wife and his children in blissful obscurity. For forty years he took care of his family and tended his father-in-law's animals, far out of sight of the suffering of the enslaved Hebrews, far out of hearing of their groaning and crying. Did he remember them? Did he think of his own people at all? Who knows?

Moses may have been the right one for the job, but he was in no position and in no frame of mind to do anything for his people. But God gave him the job anyway. God chose Moses. Because he was the right one for the job? Did God choose Moses because he was the right one? Or was Moses the right one because God chose him?

Most of us are a lot like Moses in Midian, living out our lives in blissful obscurity. OK, maybe not always so blissful, but certainly in obscurity! We do not fancy ourselves to be great heroes. We are not liberators or prophets or revolutionaries. We do not defy empires. We do not challenge the powers that be. We do our best to stay out of trouble and avoid risk.

We are not selfish or unfeeling people. Like Moses, we have a good sense for justice and genuine empathy for people who are treated unfairly. But like Moses, we are content with keeping our distance, with not getting involved, convinced that we are not the right ones for the job. We know ourselves to be what we are, rather ordinary people who have their hands full making a living and taking care of their own families.

But when people are groaning, God takes notice! And God chooses people -- people like you and like me -- to speak up, to take sides, to take a stand. We may not think we are the right ones for the job, we may well not be the right ones for the job, but God chooses us anyway! God doesn't need heroes. God just needs ordinary people who will say, *Yes*, ordinary people who will say, *Yes*, when God says, *I have a job for you!*

Moses said, *Yes ... reluctantly, under protest, after a long, long time of just minding his own business, but he did finally say, Yes*, and God used him to lead his people out of Egypt. Make no mistake: God is the hero of the exodus. God is the deliverer of his people. God hears their cries, God is concerned for them, God remembers the covenant promise made to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and God sets them free. Moses is God's servant, an ordinary man who simply did the job God asked him to do. He may or may not have been the right one for the job, but he was there, at the right time and in the right place, and he said, *Yes*.

Abram Hosford and John Leavitt, Levi and Mary Worcester, Joseph and Cynthia White. A farmer, a farmer's wife, a banker, a real estate agent, a man and his wife who both farmed and sold real estate. Six ordinary people who said, *Yes*, to God when God heard the cries of his suffering people and called on people of faith to rise in their defense. Six ordinary people who were there, at the right time and in the right place, who did speak up, who did take sides, who did take a stand. Six ordinary people who formed a church in a new and growing town, a church that still meets in that town today after 149 years -- this church!

God still hears the groans of his people, and God stills calls on ordinary people of faith to rise in their defense, speak up, to take sides, to take a stand. You may not think you are the right one for the job. You may or may not be the right one for the job. It doesn't matter. God doesn't want the right one for the job ... God wants you!