

Journey to Freedom

PART 3 - A GIFT FROM GOD



Welcome to Part 3 of our "Journey to Freedom" series. We're going to be looking at the birth and early years of Moses. We're going to go off the beaten path and explore a remarkable insight that this account reveals to us about the nature and function of God's gifts to us and our response to them... The Bible reveals that God loves to give us things; He gives us our personality, our talents, our passions, our strengths, our desires, our dreams and visions; all of these things are for the fulfilment of His purposes on this earth. They make us who we are. They make us different to everyone else. They give us significance and make every single one of us absolutely vital to the fulfilment of God's plans right here as a part of this church in this town of Waiuku.

But there are a few things we need to know about and do in relation to the things God gives us...



Read: Exodus 2:1-10

Let's recap for a moment and try to set the scene:



Why did Moses' parents have to hide him and then put him in a basket in the Nile? (See Exodus Ch.1)

What reason was given for hiding him for 3 months rather than putting him in the Nile at birth?

Who found baby Moses in the Nile?

Which Hebrew woman was able to raise him for a time before returning him to Pharaoh's daughter?

Moses had a pretty eventful life even before he was a few months old! We know from Exodus Chapter 1 that Pharaoh had become paranoid about the explosive growth of the Israelite population in Egypt and had decreed that all male babies born be thrown into the Nile. Moses was born, and his parents' recognised there was something special about him and risked everything to hide him from Pharaoh. As he grew this became harder and they were forced to make a tough decision. Trusting God with their baby boy, his mother placed him floating in a basket among the reeds on the edge of the Nile where he was discovered by the Pharaoh's daughter. As it turned out, Moses' own mother was able to nurture him and raise him until he was a bit older. From here he was returned to Pharaoh's daughter and raised as a prince of Egypt.

We can see an amazing pattern in this account which reveals a five-step process of interacting with God because of, in response to, and for the sake of what He gives us. For this discussion we're going to be referring to our talents, our gifts, our visions and dreams and our passions when we talk about the 'things God gives us' or His 'gifts to us.'

1. RECEIVE

The first step we see is that we RECEIVE from God.



Read: Exodus 2:1-2a

Moses' parents received a literal, physical, gift from God – a baby. For our application we're going to take this metaphorically in that what we have, we RECEIVE from God.



Why is it important to remember that our gifts (talents, skills, passions, dreams etc.) are from God?

What could happen if we forget this or if we think that they're just 'ours' and are not important?

When things don't seem to be working out or when we feel like we're hitting a brick wall; when we wonder why we're frustrated or begin to question whether we're doing what God's created us to do – remember that the gifts you have are from God. The passions you have are from God – the one's in-line with His character anyway! We may look at the things which make us 'us', and ask how can they be significant in the plans of God – especially if we begin to compare them with other obviously 'spiritual' gifts – but we must remember that what we have we received from God.

2. RECOGNISE

Receiving is one thing; the first step in actually beginning to use our gifts for the purposes God gave them is to RECOGNISE the gift. We need to identify our gifts and value them.



Read: Exodus 2:2b

The NIV Bible says that Moses' mother recognised that he was a "fine child". The NLT says that "he was a special baby". We get a stronger sense of what Moses' parents saw when we look to the New Testament and the way in which the Jewish writers understood this:



Read: Acts 7:20; Hebrews 11:23

It's one thing to have a gift; it's another to consciously identify it and to accept that it is from God and, most of all, to cherish it and recognise that what we have been given is "no ordinary thing."



***What happens to our sense of being able to serve God and others if we see our gift as nothing special?
Will we value what we can contribute if we don't think it's important?
How will this affect our attitude and vision?***

Your gift from God is no ordinary thing and we, as members of God's body with you in this church, cannot do without you using your talents and gifts - God gave them to you and they are all absolutely vital in seeing the potential God has placed within you, this Church and this community realised!

3. RELEASE

One of the interesting things with gifts is that they don't do us any good just hanging around with us. In fact, they're never going to be able to fulfil the purposes God gave them to us for if we don't do something with them.



Read: Exodus 2:3-6

The first aspect of this is that there came a point where Moses' mother couldn't hold onto the gift any longer. When we've been given something from God it needs to have an outlet, we need to release it. Jeremiah expresses this beautifully when he describes the gift of prophecy God gave him (see Jeremiah 20:9); We need to release what we've been given. The second aspect is that there was effort involved; there was a degree of preparation required in order to release the gift. Moses' mother had to go and find tar and pitch and a basket and coat the basket, making sure it would be waterproof. The third aspect is that sometimes we need to 'give' our gift to God and entrust it into His care. Moses' mother entrusted her precious son to the Lord's care.

Sometimes we cannot see how we can use our gift for God. Sometimes we cannot seem to find an outlet for a passion burning within us. Sometimes we may have used a gift for the wrong purposes and felt a need to lay it aside for a while. All of these situations are also times when we need to release our gift to God.



***If God gives us these gifts, does it seem likely that He would make it hard for us to use them?
When God's given us these gifts what does He expect us to do with them?
Do we have to understand the 'big picture' or can we a times just try releasing our gift however we can?***

4. RENEWAL



Read: Exodus 2:7-9

When we release our gift God brings RENEWAL to it and us. By trusting God and releasing her gift, Moses' mother experienced a renewal that only God can bring. She was given more time with her son and knew that He would be raised in an environment where he would be able to realise his potential far greater than had he grown up as a slave. Not only was her gift restored to her, but God renewed it with interest; in verse 9 we read that Pharaoh's daughter paid Moses' own mother to raise him!



What was most likely to happen had Moses' mother not released him (her gift) to God?

Releasing our gifts to God, whether it's trusting Him to use them, or whether it's beginning to use them and serve does not mean we lose them; it's an opportunity for growth and renewal that will not otherwise happen.

5. RESULTS

Our final step here reveals the ongoing and perpetual nature of our interaction with God – our life with God is an ongoing journey...



Read: Exodus 2:10

Moses' mother has to release her gift again. What we get from this is the realisation that our journey with God and the fulfilment of His purposes in us require an ongoing, almost 'ping-pong' process of releasing and renewal. In our lives, as we grow as Christians, walking with God, the gifts He placed within us before we were born are intended to be used and to grow. It's only by continued release and renewal that we experience the RESULTS God has created us to fulfil.



***What does this tell us about our response when we try using our gifts and it doesn't seem to work?
If we feel our gifts are not growing or seem stagnant, what do we most likely need to do?
Discuss practical examples of 'real' gifts; how we could 'release' them & what 'renewal' might look like in regards to them.***



RECEIVE, RECOGNISE, RELEASE, RENEW, RESULTS - God's pattern for you to achieve all He's created you for!

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