

FINAL PREPARATIONS

Exodus 4:18-31

Background:

You are familiar with final preparations. They are intended to address a number of items and areas that have either been missed or set aside in the readying process. Yet, a failure to attend to these in preparation, often has significant consequences (think passport left at home). That is why we pay special attention to final preparations for the major movements in life (new home, wedding day, etc.).

But friends, what of final preparations of a higher order? What of final preparations for the Call of God? What might those final preparations look like? What might they need to include? This week, as we continue our study in the Book of Exodus, we will see just that, in the life of Moses. I encourage you to preview our passage this week – Exodus 4:18-31.

Call to Worship: II Peter 1:16-21

Scripture Reading: I John 2:28-3:10

Lord's Supper:

Keeping the Truths of the Gospel Alive: Remembering
Judges 2; Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:27-28

Introduction:

Over the past couple of weeks, studying in Exodus, the second book of the Bible, and we have been looking at 'THE CALL OF GOD' in Moses' life. God 'calls' Moses after forty years in the Midian wilderness. In Exodus 3 we looked at a number of aspects to that 'call', including. God's Preparation, God's Initiation, God's Presentation, God's Placement, God's Promise.

But Moses has 'FIVE PROTESTS' to that 'Call of God'. Yet with each 'protest', God mercifully, patiently, and graciously 'affirmed' His presence through each protest. 'I WILL BE WITH YOU'. I will be with your mouth, Moses. I will be with the people around you, Moses. I will be with you, Moses! God addresses every protest and concern that Moses has.

Exodus 3:12

"And He said, 'Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you, when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.'" (NASB)

Finally there is nothing left to be said. The 'Call' has been heard. The 'response' of Moses has been addressed. However, this does not mean that all is ready, and that nothing else needs attention. No. The final verses of chapter four, indicate that there is final and important 'preparedness' that Moses still needs to attend to. These verses are not chapter 'leftovers'. They are absolutely critical issues for Moses' work, for God's service.

Thus, there are three 'FINAL PREPARATIONS' to look at.

I HOME RELOCATION: (vv 18-20)

Exodus 4:18-20

"Then Moses departed and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said to him, 'Please, let me go, that I may return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see if they are still alive.' And Jethro said to Moses, 'Go in peace.' Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, 'Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.' So Moses took his wife and his sons and mounted them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand." (NASB)

Verse 18 is critical. Moses 'returns back to Jethro' his father in-law. Moses has lived with Jethro these past forty years. Jethro's home in Midian has been Moses' home also. It is here that Moses married Jethro's daughter. It is here in the Midian wilderness that Moses has been tending Jethro's sheep these last four decades. It is here that Moses has been caring for Jethro's family and resources these last forty years. This is his current 'comfort' zone.

Exodus 3:1

"NOW Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God." (NASB)

So, Moses has now had this extended encounter with God at Mt. Horeb. God has 'called' Moses to complete a mission for Him. God has responded to each of Moses' 'protests, so that

Moses has nothing more to protest. He returns to Midian, to his father-in-law, Jethro, and 'respectfully' seeks Jethro's permission, his blessing, to leave his shepherding job, to leave the wilderness and all he has known these past four decades. Moses wants to obey God, he wants to leave, intends now to leave Midian and return to Egypt; but he wants to leave his current life with as little upset as possible. He wants his father-in-law's permission, his blessing in his leaving. Yet he asks without giving the whole story to Jethro. He wants as little disruptions as possible. Jethro gives his blessing, and sends Moses off 'in peace'.

And so, Moses takes his family and goes back to Egypt. This is not to be an overnight mission. No. This is a 'relocating' mission. This mission will take some time to complete. This is not a small commitment. It is not a solo excursion. He goes with his family; he takes his wife and sons with him. And we are told that he also takes 'the staff' that God had demonstrated His miraculous signs with (Exodus 4:2-5). And, God tells Moses that those who were 'seeking his life' are now dead (vs 19). God does not need to tell Moses this information. It is a matter of God's grace towards Moses. When God 'calls', that is enough; yet God chose to 'assure' His 'called one'. It is one more reassurance to Moses, that God has every detail in place. The way is clear for Moses to return to Egypt.

Let us consider, ponder on, the realities of, 'home' and 'God's Call':

The Implications:

When God 'calls', our home is disrupted. We expect home to be a place where we are comfortable, warm, and cozy. It is our place of familiarity. But for Moses, home now means 'relocation'. After forty years of quiet comfort as a shepherd, Moses must now pick up, and relocate. Moses has had a good life in Midian for these past forty years, a quiet life, a comfortable life as a shepherd, tending sheep, a peaceful setting. He has not had the hard life of those in Egypt making bricks and working with mortar. But now Moses has been 'called away' from tending sheep, 'called away' from his comfortable home and life, 'called away' from Midian. Moses has been 'called away' from the Midianites, and 'called to' serve God's people, the Israelites. When you are 'called', home is relocation. Moses will now be a 'visitor' to Midian, not a resident. He will no longer be among the Midianites, instead he will now be with God's people. He will serve them, live among them. This is now his new home. This does not mean that Moses is going home to Egypt. No. Moses is going to be with 'His people' but he is going into 'hostile' territory. This is no different for us today. Our home base is 'serving' God's people, but we do so in a 'hostile' society. We are at home with our people, but we live in a 'hostile' land. This understanding/truth is relevant to us today.

Matthew 10:35-36

"For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER IN-LAW; and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD." (NASB)

Jesus explains by this that there is a 'cost to serving'. Christ did not come with a 'killjoy' agenda, did not come to wreck homes, to disrupt homes, nevertheless, by implication, Jesus' coming will disrupt homes, will cause disruption. Because of who Jesus is, by the very nature of who He is, He breaks up 'dead lives'. When God 'calls' it is going to turn one's life upside down. Like a snow globe, the quiet world will be unsettled, there will be a shifting, and everything will be 'relocated'. Home cannot remain the same, cannot be 'unaffected'. We cannot keep Midian as home; we must let go of Midian when God calls. Home base is 'relocated'.

In Mark 10, the rich young man wants to keep his Midian. He wants to follow Jesus, but he wants to do so on his terms, with his rules. He is okay with a few rules, but he cannot give up everything for the cause... He wants to hang on to his 'home', his Midian, his comfortable lifestyle.

Mark 10:17-22

"And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and began asking Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.' And he said to Him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.' And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack; go and sell all you possess, and give it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come follow Me.' But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property." (NASB)

But this was not to be so for Moses. Moses' final preparation meant a new home, and a new place of being. It meant 'home relocation'.

II HEART REVELATION: (vv 21-26)

Exodus 4:21-26

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Israel is My son, My first born. So I said to you, 'Let My son go, that he may serve Me; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your first born.' Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, 'You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me.' So He let him alone. At that time she said, 'You are a bridegroom of blood' --- because of the circumcision.'" (NASB)

And now we turn to the matter of 'the heart', specifically, Pharaoh's heart. God tells Moses exactly what He is going to do about Pharaoh. He makes a clear statement. He declares His purpose. "I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go" (vs 21b). Moses is instructed that he is to 'perform all the wonders', the miracles, that God has shown him to do, and given him the power to do (Exodus 4:1-9), perform them all before Pharaoh, but Pharaoh will not be moved to let the Israelites go even so, because God has said He will 'harden' Pharaoh's heart. God will do this, will 'harden' Pharaoh's heart more than once in this Exodus deliverance. That He does so seems unfair by some, seems perplexing, seems provoking. Some react to this and reject that God's Sovereignty can reach the human heart, and some redefine sovereignty to better please their understanding. 'What about my heart, and my free will?' they protest. (This theme will be covered in depth in the chapters and messages ahead.)

What is God saying in all of this? What is the Bible teaching us? A few observations to note:

1. It is plain reading. The message is clear. There is no fancy wording. 'GOD WILL HARDEN PHARAOH'S HEART'. We may not like it, understand it, or want it to be so, yet it is true. Our 'opinion' doesn't matter. Grammatically, God uses three Hebrew words to prove it, three ways to say 'hardening'. We will see this come to pass in the weeks/months ahead.

2. This is not an 'isolated' thing of God. The consistency of God's Word is everywhere. Before entry into the 'Promised Land', for example, God hardens King Sihon's heart.

Deuteronomy 2:30

"But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through his land; for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, in order to deliver him into your hand as he is today." (NASB)

And a few months later, under the leadership of Joshua, we read that again, with the same language, God has 'hardened hearts'.

Joshua 11:20

"For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them, that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses."

A hardened heart always has purpose behind it.

3. God is Sovereign over our heart. It is God that controls our heart. His Sovereignty works in everything, even to turn our heart.

Proverbs 21:1

"THE king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes." (NASB)

Ezra 6:22

"And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel." (NASB)

And so a pattern emerges. God's Sovereignty is seen reigning in our hearts.

God regenerates our heart.

John 3:3-8

"Jesus answered and said to him (Nicodemus), 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a man is born of

water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is every one who is born of the Spirit'." (NASB)

By way of the New Covenant, God will write His Law on our hearts and minds.

Hebrews 8:10:

"FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL
'AFTER THOSE DAYS', SAY THE LORD:
'I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,
AND I WILL WRITE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS,
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,
AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE'." (NASB)

God, in His Sovereignty, works through us for His good will and pleasure. God is meant to be 'supreme' in our hearts, and therefore, His Sovereignty is before and above our own wills. The Apostle Paul points out:

Philippians 2:12-13

"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (NASB)

One cannot/does not complain about the Sovereignty of God in one's heart, for indeed, we need it; our desperately wicked hearts need God to direct our ways.

4. Pharaoh hardens his own heart. God hardens hearts to serve His purposes, but it is a fact that we harden our own hearts also. Pharaoh displayed unbelievable rebellion against God and His wondrous works. Ten times in Exodus we find Pharaoh hardening his own heart. This demonstrates to us that we are not 'passive' robots, fatalistic creatures, whose choices don't matter. NO. We recognize that we do have choices, and that we are most accountable for our choices.

Exodus 4:22-23

"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, "Israel is My son, My first born. So I said to you, 'Let My son go, that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your first born'." (NASB)

So, Pharaoh is given the choice, 'Let my people, Israel, my firstborn son, go, or I will kill your firstborn son'. If Pharaoh refuses, his firstborn will die. He has a choice. If he refuses, he will suffer the consequence of God's response to his refusal.

First Cause: YIELD TO GOD. God is Sovereign over the heart. He is the great decreer, the sovereign initiator. We are operating under that.

Second Cause: OUR WILLS ARE REAL. Yet He will work through our wills to bring about His will.

Now Pharaoh is not the only one whose heart is in God's Sovereign Hands. We also see Moses' heart in the hands of God, in a situation concerning Moses. While the details are limited, stark even, we can piece the situation together, and see the picture of the matter. Moses has been 'harbouring' disobedience. He has neglected to act on a matter that was required by God, held back, quietly resisted. His failure to obey, is made known by God. We discover about this disobedience here in Exodus 4. It has to do with Moses' firstborn son, and the fact that Moses had failed to have him 'circumcised' as God required.

Exodus 4:24-25

"Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, 'You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me.'"

Let us look at the context, the circumstances that form the background for this circumcision requirement. Hagar, the Egyptian servant to Sarai, gives birth to Abraham's son, Ishmael. Abraham is 86 years old at the time (Genesis 16:15-16). When Abraham is 99 years old, the Lord appears to him once again and restates and affirms the Covenant which He made with Abraham in Genesis 15, stating that Abraham's 'descendents' would be granted 'Promised Land' (Genesis 15:18-21).

Genesis 17:1-8

"NOW when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him,

'I am God Almighty;

Walk before Me, and be blameless,

And I will establish My covenant between Me and you,

And I will multiply you exceedingly,'

And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,

'As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you,

And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

No longer shall your name be called Abram,

But your name shall be Abraham;

For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.

And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you.

And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.

And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God'." (NASB)

And after God had reconfirmed this 'promise', He proceeded to establish even more fully their 'intimate relationship, by making a new point, the 'covenant of circumcision', which was to be the 'the outward sign' of the 'original' covenant between God and His chosen people.

Genesis 15:9-14

"God said further to Abraham, 'Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you; every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of

his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." (NASB)

Be circumcised (at eight days), or be cut off from the people. This was the 'sign' to be done, the imperative thing to do, crucially important, because God had commanded it, and warned sternly that to fail to do was to disobey, was to break covenant, and thus would be 'cut off' from the people.

And so, while we have few details, Scripture notes the matter, and we get the picture. From the Genesis covenant to this time in Exodus chapter 4, four hundred years have passed, plus another forty years during the time when Moses was living his life of bliss in Midian. Moses has been far away from God's revelation and God's people, both by time and place. And now, by implication, we learn that Moses' firstborn son, Gershom (Exodus 2:22), has not been circumcised. God has 'called' Moses, but Moses has still failed to do/failed to obey, this standard, this command. This points to neglect. Living in the wilderness these many years, Moses has not been focused on God's Word. And even having been 'called', Moses has still not done anything about this. Therefore God seeks vengeance for this neglect, this disobedience, this ongoing sin by Moses.

The Sovereign Holy God, the architect and creator, has declared a standard, a standard representing the covenant between God and His people, and therefore He can call into judgement this failing of Moses, because it is His sovereign right, His prerogative, to do so. We lose sight of this fact. God had made His standard clear, had commanded it to be done, had even given Moses additional time to attend to the matter, and still Moses does nothing. And so, Moses has brought judgement on his own family. God seeks death as judgement. "... the Lord met him and sought to put him to death." Exodus 4:24 (NASB) But Zipporah, Moses' wife, steps up and does the deed, taking 'a flint and cutting off her son's foreskin' (Exodus 4:25). She presents the foreskin evidence to Moses, throwing it at his feet, saying to him, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me." Exodus 4:25 (NASB) Blood serves as part of the covenant relationship. This blood work was enough. "So He (The Sovereign God) let him alone." Exodus 4:26a (NASB)

This near death experience is significant. Blood was shed, blood was presented (thrown at Moses' feet), and blood covered the sin (only 'blood atones'). And so, Moses' life was spared, because the blood touched him. It is a 'shadow' of what we will see in Exodus 12, The Passover, when blood shed touches the door, and spares the people from death. It is the

foreshadow, ultimately, of the 'new covenant', not a matter of circumcision, not a matter of animal sacrifice, but rather, the shedding of the 'perfect blood' of the God/Man, the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ, shed for His people, those who would repent and believe in Christ. The Father's wrath is satisfied because of the Son's shed blood.

Other Takeaway Truths to Note from Chapter 4:

1. God calls sinners!

Past, current, or present, sin is not a 'blockage' for God calling you. There is no need to protest about 'having to make myself right first'. No. God called Moses even with this big sin hanging on him. And God called Saul in the midst of his 'sinful rampage' against the Christians (Acts 9). Christ stops him on the road, and turns his life around. The issue is not what you need to do before God will call, but what you need to do when God calls you. **GOD CALLS US OUT OF THE SIN!**

2. God takes notice of sin and is displeased!

God never overlooks sin. There are no free passes. Sin is never okay. When you are God's people, then all the more, **SIN IS NOT OKAY!** Scripture assures us that this is so. There is no 'cutting slack'.

We learn the seriousness of 'sin' through the story of Achan. God had been faithfully walking with Joshua, bringing victory to the Israelites as they sought to 'take possession' of the Promised Land. But when Jericho was captured, the city was placed under a 'ban'. Nothing was to be taken from the city, except for Rahab's family's belongings, and this was made clear to them. And so the city and its contents were destroyed, except for the gold, silver, bronze and iron items, which went to the Lord's treasury.

Joshua 6:17-19, 20b,21,24

"And the city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, lest you covet them and take some of the things under the ban, so you would make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it. But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the LORD; they shall go to the treasury of the LORD... and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed everything in the city both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the

sword... And they burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD." (NASB)

With such extreme measures, one might suppose that no one would dare to break the rule, the expectations, but Achan chose to do so, and his disobedience, his sin, was to have significant consequences, for both himself and Israel. The Lord was angered, and He removed his favour from the people so that in their next campaign, Israel was defeated; Israel had become 'accursed'. God was very clear with Joshua about the matter; He would no longer be with them as a people UNTIL THE PROBLEM WAS RESOLVED. And so began an involved process to sort out who had dared to take the 'banned' items, who had disobeyed and disgracefully acted against the covenant. And we learn that it was Achan, and once 'exposed' for his greed and disobedience, he and his family were put to death.

Joshua 7:1,5,10-14a,15,16-26a

"But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel... And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water... So the LORD said to Joshua, 'Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things. Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you any more unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst. Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, "Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the LORD, the God of Israel has said, 'There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst. In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes.... And it shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel'." So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. And he brought the family of Judah near, and he took

the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken. And he brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken.

Then Joshua said to Achan, 'My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me.' So Achan answered Joshua and said, 'Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did; when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them, and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it.' So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent and behold, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it. And they took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the LORD. Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons and his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his heep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, 'Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.' And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger." (NASB)

Another Biblical example of God not overlooking sin, was in the life David, when because of David's sin with Bathsheba, and it's sinful fallout, David would lose his son to death.

II Samuel 11:26-27

"Now when the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba) heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD." (NASB)

And the Lord sent Nathan to David, and Nathan speaks of a tale which has similarity to the heart of what David has done. David reacts in anger to the story of heartlessness, and Nathan turns the story to David and 'reproves' him for his sinfulness, giving to him God's message of displeasure.

II Samuel 12: 7-14

"Nathan then said to David, 'You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uzziah the Hittite to be your wife." Thus says the Lord, "Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your companion, and he shall lie with your wives in broad daylight. Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun." Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD.' And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die'." (NASB)

Yet another example of God taking notice of sin and being displeased comes to us in Acts with the story of Ananias and Sapphira who are called to account for the sin of lying. Their sin is not 'put aside', but rather, they are 'put to death' for their sin.

Acts 5:1-10

"But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.' And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came upon all who heard of it. And the young men arose and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, 'Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?' And she said, 'Yes, that was the price.' Then Peter said to her, 'Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the

feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out as well.' And she fell immediately at his feet, and breathed her last; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband." (NASB)

Indeed, Moses notes later in Scripture, that sin will find you out! It will not be overlooked. It will not be set aside.

Numbers 32:23b

"... behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out." (NASB)

If God calls you, your sin needs to go. This is a serious matter. WHEN CALLED, WE MUST ADDRESS OUR SIN, CONFESS OUR SIN, AND PUT AWAY OUR SIN.

3. No circumstance or office is an excuse for being accountable!

No position matters. Missionary or elder, or whatever the position is, does not provide 'excuse' for disobeying the commandments of God. We must be 'active' in heart, dealing with our sin, no matter what role we carry, lest we prove to have 'heart disease'. Let us be thankful to God that He rules our hearts. We cannot say 'I have a little control'. No. We need to be glad that God controls the heart. Let us be eager for God to take it all. Praise God for doing so. Praise God that He does whatever He pleases with our hearts. Praise God for being Sovereign over our hearts. Pray that God will take it all! Why, you ask? Because, unlike us, God is perfect, and He will make things right, correct, something that we ourselves cannot do, even while it is to be our aim. But He is a 'just God' and He will make the crooked paths straight. HE IS A GOOD GOD!

Matthew 5:48

"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (NASB)

Genesis 18:25

"Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (NASB)

Psalms 23:6

"Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." (NASB)

God is perfect, just and good. Therefore, HE MUST RULE OUR HEARTS! We cannot.

III HELP RECOGNITION: (vv 27-31)

Exodus 4:27-31

"Now the LORD said to Aaron, 'Go meet Moses in the wilderness.' So he went and met him at the mountain of God, and he kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which He had sent him, and the signs that He had commanded him to do. Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped." (NASB)

And so, Moses meets Aaron and shares the Word of God. We recall that Moses had protested earlier, 'Lord, send someone else.' But God was not to be put off, and met the problem, in the person of Aaron, Moses' brother.

Exodus 4:13-14

"... Please, LORD, now send the message by whomever Thou wilt."

"Then the anger of the LORD burned against Moses, and He said, 'Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you, when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart'." (NASB)

And so now, the promise of God is 'fulfilled' by God. Aaron and Moses meet. The many details of what is to happen are relayed to Aaron. Aaron has now been debriefed about the words to be said, and about the signs to be shown. When Aaron meets Moses and greets him warmly, this is not a 'family' visit. This is God 'working out' the details of His purpose for His people. He is to be 'a help' to His people. The mission must be completed in God's way.

And so Moses and Aaron, now ready, move ahead. They do not try to usurp authority 'over' the elders, but rather, doing it the 'right' way, they go to the leaders, they "assembled all the

elders of the sons of Israel" (vs 29), and Aaron, as the 'mouthpiece' shares how God has been concerned, how God has spoken to Moses, and the 'signs' are performed so that the people will know that this is God who is working this through.

Moses had been concerned about how the people would 'receive' this message, but he need not have been, for God meets the issue of Moses' protest, and fruition is accomplished. The people listened, they heard, the 'people believed', and they worshipped. And no longer is Moses blocked, by fear and anxiety, or by his past. The mocking words of the Hebrew man, questioning Moses as to 'Who made you a prince or a judge over us?' (Exodus 2:14a) were no longer an issue. God's people were now behind Moses. Moses was not alone, and God was with him, and God had given him his brother, Aaron, to help him. Moses is now assured of the elders' support and backing. There is the sense of a 'corporate repentance' among God's people, for they 'worshipped'. Moses worships God with his own people. This is a most positive step forward, for earlier God had assured Moses that this would be so. He said, 'Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.' Exodus 3:12 (NASB)

And so, chapter 4 closes. The final preparations have been completed; there is nothing left to attend to. Moses is prepared. He is now ready. He is not alone. God is with him, his brother and the elders are his support people, and the worshipers of YAHWEH are with him.

Now GO, Moses! Your Home is Relocated, the Heart is Revealed, and You have Recognized the Help Around You. You are prepared, Moses. Go forth to Egypt. Face Pharaoh's Court. Proceed with God's Mission for you. GO!

Benediction:

Matthew 28:18-20

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" (NASB)