

DRAWING CLOSE TO GOD

Numbers 12:6 - 8

INTRO

- Maybe like me ... as you read the stories of those great characters in the Bible ... you wish you could enjoy a more in-depth relationship w/ God
 - Scriptures share an amazing truth: **God wants** to have that kind of close, personal relationship with each one of **us**
- **P-2 James 4:7, 8** ~ 'God **will** draw' ~ a conditional promise
 - Conditions ~ 1) submit to God ... 2) resist the devil ... 3) come close God ... 4) stop doing bad things ... and 5) purify our thoughts
 - God won't draw close to sin ~ as it's too repugnant for Him
- **Acts 17:27** ~ tells us God is not far from any one of us ... **none-the-less** He does expect us to **seek** Him: **2 Chron 15:1, 2 b P-1**
 - Out of His end-less **love** for us ~ God has given us the **Bible** so we'll know **how** to come close to Him ... and have that intimate relationship
 - For me ... the best example of intimacy with God is: **Moses**
- **Moses** is one of the most important characters in the Bible
 - Holy Spirit used him to write the first **5** Books of the Bible
 - When **Jesus** was transfigured **Moses** was there w/ Him
 - He was unique: **Deut 34:10 [A]** ~ **face-to-face** → **unique access**
- Though **Moses** had an intimacy w/ God unparalleled in the Bible ... we must remember he was still a **sinful human** ... just like **us**
 - The main characters in God's Word are fully revealed ... **warts** and all
 - The sins & shortcomings of **Moses** are there to encourage us ...
 - ... so we might know God uses imperfect people just like **us**

- To see **how** God draws us closer to Himself ... let's understand **three** things:
 - **1)** God has **plan** for our lives; **2)** God has a **purpose** for our failures; and
 - 3)** How God **provides** us our own "desert"

FIRST ~ GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIVES

- We are **not** here by accident ... each of us are a part of God's Divine master plan
 - Regardless of your circumstances when you were born ...
 - God has a plan for your life: **Psm 139:16** [**B**]
- To see this Biblical truth in the life of **Moses** ~ we must go back some 4,100 yrs to the time of **Abraham**
 - God promised that thru Abraham's seed ... all the nations of the world would be blessed with the knowledge of Jehovah
 - At that time ... God made another promise: **Gen 15:13**
- **Egypt** was also a part of God's plan for His people ~~ and especially **Moses**
 - **Jacob** {a descendant of Abraham} had 12 sons ... one was **Joseph** ...
 - ... who was sold into slavery because of his brothers' jealousy
 - And after much adversity in Egypt ~ *including imprisonment* ~ **Joseph** became the country's Prime Minister
 - As a result ... in @ 1800 BC ... Joseph brought his family from the Promised Land to Egypt so they wouldn't starve
 - Hebrews lived in Goshen and after Joseph died a new Pharaoh came to power ~ as recorded in **Exodus 1:8 – 16**
- Put yourself in **their place** ... God promised thru Abraham ~ all the nations would be blessed ~ but now you're **suffering** ... you wonder if God's forgotten
 - In these terrible times ~ **Moses** is born
- So he wouldn't be killed they hid him for 3 mos; then they placed him in a tar-covered basket placed among the reeds of the **Nile River**
 - Pharaoh's daughter finds **Moses** in the reeds along the riverbank
 - God arranged for a Jewish lady to care of him (his own mother)

- **Moses** grew as a son to the Princess and good things happened: **Acts 7:22**
 - Interesting ... **God** had the man who'd lead the Jews out of Egypt -- trained by the people he'd later challenge { 'know thy enemy' }
 - Although it might not seem like it now ~ God has a plan for **us** too
 - ... the parents to whom we were born
 - ... our childhood experiences ~ both good and bad
 - ... the talents and Spiritual Gifts He provides
 - ... the training ~ education ~ even the **mistakes** we make
 - **Eph 2:10**
- Am **not** saying things are **pre-destined** ~ we still exercise our own **choices**
- Always been God's way: He had a plan for **A & E** ~ they made their **choice**
 - When we poorly ... we can be thankful God has back-up plans ...

TRANS

- To enjoy an intimate relationship with God ~~ we first must realize God has a **plan** for our lives ~ even if we don't understand it. And ...

SECOND, GOD HAS A PURPOSE FOR OUR FAILURES

- Maybe your different ~~ but most of us make some mistakes from time to time
 - **Satan** wants us to think: God no longer wants a relationship with us
 - Maybe we're dishonest ... we had a sinful habit - a moral failure
 - Perhaps we've been hurt ~ our heart is filled w/ bitterness
 - Or we've hurt someone else and they won't forgive
 - **Whatever the issue is** ~ we don't feel as close to God as we'd like
 - If you fall into this category ... **Moses can be your role-model**

- When **40 yrs** old **Moses** knew he was a **Jew** - was concerned for his people
 - He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew ~ in anger he killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand (*dishonest/sinful/moral failure*)
 - Next day Moses tried to break up two Hebrews fighting: **Exod 2:13/14**
- His evil act was known -- it seems the Jews rejected **Moses** leadership
 - **Moses** wanted to lead the Jewish people as a **Prince in Egypt** ...
 - God's plan was quite different
- Pharaoh heard what Moses did ... was concerned and planned on killing him
 - So **Moses** fled to Midian in the Arabian Desert
 - **Moses** shows the greatest of God's servants can fail ~ miserably
 - But God can use our failures to teach us ... if we let Him
 - When we make mistakes we're often humiliated and need to get back on track with God ~~ **Psm 119:71/2** [**C**]
- It's said: every storm cloud has a silver lining ... God can use our failures to make **us** sensitive to His instruction
 - If we let Him ~ God uses our failures to rid us of pride & arrogance
 - **Moses** learned what all those who have an intimate relationship with God must know
- **Otto von Bismark:** *Fools learn from experience ...
I wish to learn from the experience of others.*
 - We don't have to learn from personal experience ... we can learn from **Moses** ... and/or the words of Jesus in **John 15:5** ... **stress** part **c**
- Without Jesus ... we can do little of spiritual significance
 - God allows us to fail so we might learn the **ineptness** of the best of **solely** human efforts ~ education ~ talents ~ or intelligence ...
 - ... especially when it's used apart from Him

TRANS

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- To have an intimate relationship with God ~ we must understand God has a **plan** for our lives; God has a **purpose** for our failures; and ...

THIRD, GOD PROVIDES US WITH A DESERT

Here's a simple truth that I've learned through personal experience ...

- It's in the **deserts** of our life [not palaces] where we get close to God [R]
 - Even though **Moses** was among the most educated people in the world ...
 - ... he had much more to learn before God could really use him
 - Moses needed to learn that when we're **not** humble ~ we will stumble
 - **Prov 16:18** [D] (fall = embarrassing failure)
- While **Moses** was sitting at a well ~ the daughters of the **Priest** of **Midian** came to water their father's flock of sheep
 - They have a confrontation w/ some strangers: **Exod 2:16/17**
 - When Jethro (father of the daughters) found out what **Moses** did ...
 - ... he invites him for supper
 - There Moses met ... and later marries ... one of the daughters
- Their first child was name means: " alien or stranger here "
 - It seems **Moses** had resigned himself to living the rest of his life in obscurity as the most highly educated shepherd in history
 - What **Moses** learned the hard way ~ Jesus shares w/ **us** in **Mark 9:35**
- For **40 yrs** ~ same length he was "**educated**" in the Egyptian system ~ God taught **Moses** to be a servant
 - God knew in the future ... **Moses** would have to listen to complaining, murmuring and slanderous accusation against himself and against God
 - God had to teach **Moses** to deal with his temper ... or there would be many more dead bodies buried all over the desert

- **Exodus 2:23 - 25**
 - No doubt **Moses** surely heard all of this from the traveling caravans ...
 - ... but he no longer thought **he** could do anything about it
- **Moses** seemed content to raise his family in the desert ~ living as a shepherd
 - My experience ... it is the “**deserts**” of life which bring us closer to God
 - Esp the ones we stay for a long time (Paul’s thorn in the side)
 - **Moses** had 40 yrs to unlearn what he lrrned in Egypt ~ to get close to God
 - Later ... Jews wandered in the desert 40 yrs ... to get close to God
 - God’s schedule isn’t like our schedule ...
- Sometimes **we** too have to stay in the desert for a while before **we** can develop an intimate relationship with God
 - **Psm 27:14** [**E**]
 - Hebrew for wait = to hang on ... in eager exception ... and hope
- Perhaps when we find ourselves in a desert ... we should pause and ask ourselves what God is trying to get us to learn
 - Just because He’s the **best teacher** ever ...
 - ... doesn’t mean we’re **willing** to learn from Him !!

CONCLUSION

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- Our loving Heavenly **Father wants** to have the same kind of relationship with us that He had with Moses
 - God usually doesn't wave a **magic wand** to change things ...
 - ... instead He works through well established procedures
- Book of Hebrews tells us that God is the same yesterday ~ today ~ tomorrow
 - So, if we want to have the kind of intimate relationship with God that **Moses** had at the end of his life ...
- **THEN** we need to understand:
 - God has a **plan** for our lives (one we may not see nor understand yet)
 - God has a **purpose** for our failures
 - God **provides** a desert ... where we can **learn** what we need to
- If we want a closer, personal relationship with **God** ...
 - ... then we'll have to do things ~ **HIS WAY**
 - **My Way** - 1969 hit for a variety of performers including Frank Sinatra & Elvis Presley. Sinatra's version spent **75** weeks in the UK's Top 40 ~ a record which still stands.
 - **P-2 James 4:7, 8**

Hymn # **218** ~~ When He Cometh