**Men Behind the Exodus Series**

**“Jethro”**

**Introduction**

For the next few weeks we are looking at four men of the Exodus. Today we will focus on Moses’ father-in-law Jethro. Last Sunday, Greg Julien asked me who was I preaching on next Sunday. I told him Jethro and he looked a little confused. So joking I said, “Not Jethro Bodine.” And Greg responded, “O’ I thought you were talking about Jethro Tull.” So, to make sure we are all on the same page we are talking about Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law recorded in the book of Exodus. (Ex.2.16-18; 3.1; 4.18; 18.1-27) We were introduced to Jethro a couple of weeks ago when we looked at his daughter Zipporah. As you recall Moses at the age of forty fled to the land of Midian after discovering that the Pharaoh of Egypt sought to kill him for killing an Egyptian. (Ex.2.11-15; Acts 7.22-29; Heb.11.24-25)

**The Land of Midian**



The Midianites were descendants from one of Abraham’s children born to Abraham’s second wife after the death of Sarah. (Gen.25.2) So the Midianites were children of Abraham. The Midianites were nomadic sheep farmers but the land of Midian was considered to be in southern Arabia. (Gen.25.6) Providentially, this is the same territory that Moses and the children of Israel wandered for forty years on their journey to the Promise Land.

One day after Moses fled to the land of Midian he came and sat down by a well. Seven sisters came to draw water for their flocks. Moses watched as some shepherds denied the sisters access to the water so he stepped in, driving the shepherds away, and assisted the sisters in watering their flock. The girls went home, told their father what happened, and their father said, “And where is he? Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat.” You silly girls! This guy sounds like good husband material. Go! Find him and bring him home for dinner!

After dinner the father offered for Moses stay with them and eventually he gave Zipporah’s hand in marriage to Moses. Moses and Zipporah live with Zipporah’s father for the next forty years, raising their family of two boys, and Moses working for his father-in-law as a shepherd for his flocks.

**The Priest of Midian**

We are first introduced to Zipporah’s father as the priest of Midian. (Ex.2.16) Moses’ father-in-law was the spiritual head of the Midianites. Even though the Midianites were descendants Abraham, they lived around other tribes that didn’t believe in the one true God. The surrounding neighbors flaunted the theory that their gods was bigger and better. And of course, the more gods you had the higher chance you had that your god would be superior. The priest of Midian had kept his nomadic tribe focused on the true God, the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. Maybe this was one of the reasons the relationship between Moses and his father-in-law was so strong. Moses recognized and respected his father-in-law’s spiritual leadership and his faith in the one true God. And as Moses lived in Midian this brotherhood of faith must have comforted Moses in his exile.

Even though the Old Testament Levitical priesthood had not yet been established God had called His people to be a ”kingdom of priest.” (Ex.19.5-6) And so it is today in Christ’s Church, the Lord has called us to be a royal priesthood to proclaim in this world of fake-gods the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. (IPt.2.9)

**Reuel = friend of God**

The priest of Midian’s name was Reuel, which means “friend of God.” (Ex.2.18) From Reuel’s name we see that his role as the priest of Midian was not as a “religious specialist” but as one who had an intimate relationship with God. Recently I filled out an application that asked me to list my occupation. I filled in the space like I usually do “Pastor” or “Minister.” When I received the application back the space was altered to said, “Religious Worker.” I felt a little dirty – somewhat misunderstood. I do religious work but I’m not a religious worker. Doing works of religion is not my motivation. I’m a pastor shepherding the church of God which He purchase with His own blood. (Acts12.28) My ministry flows out of my relationship with God. Reuel did not practice his righteousness in order to be seen by others. Reuel did not practice his righteousness in an attempt to gain God’s approval. Reuel served God out of a heart of gratitude. Reuel had a deep relationship with the Lord. God was his friend.

This is the type of relationship the Lord desires to have with each of us. The Lord doesn’t want our relationship to be based on servitude. The Lord desires our relationship to be based on friendship. Jesus said, “*No longer do I call you slaves . . . I have called you friends.*” (Jn.15.15) Jesus knows that our fruitfulness as believers will be far more productive if we live our lives as friends with God not religious workers.

**Jethro = abundance, abundantly enough, more than enough**

But Reuel, the priest of Midian, had another name, Jethro. (3.1) Jethro means abundance, abundantly more, or more than enough. I think the name Jethro was given to him as a result of his deep relationship with God and his ministry motivation as the priest of Midian. As Reuel lived a life of intimate relationship with God and leading the people of Midian in worship to the one true God he discovered that God was abundantly enough, more than he would ever need. Jethro had discovered that Christ was enough! I believe that Jethro, like Moses, considered Christ is be the greatest treasure in his life. (Heb.11.26) Everything he needed was found in his relationship with God through Christ.

As a church we sing the song “Christ is Enough.” The lyrics go:

Through every trial – My soul will sing
No turning back – I've been set free

Christ is enough for me – Christ is enough for me
Everything I need is in You – Everything I need

Christ my all in all – The joy of my salvation
And this hope will never fail – Heaven is our home

Through every storm – My soul will sing
Jesus is here – To God be the glory

Christ is enough for me – Christ is enough for me
Everything I need is in You – Everything I need

Jesus Christ promised to give us life abundantly and Jethro was living an abundant life in Christ. (Jn.10.10) Jethro had experienced through God’s power working in him that God would do abundantly beyond what he could ask or think. (Eph.2.20) Jethro discovered that his *God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.* (Phil.4.19) And God desires to work in our lives to bring us to the point that we can say over and over again, Christ is my abundance. Christ is abundantly enough. Christ is enough for me! Christ is my abundance! Christ is abundantly enough! Christ is enough for me!

As I mentioned Moses and Zipporah would live with Jethro for the next forty years until the day God would call Moses to deliver God’s people out of bondage of Egypt. Moses with his wife and two sons would pack up to travel back to Egypt. But sometime before the Exodus from Egypt Moses would sent Zipporah and their two sons back to Midian to stay with Jethro. Some said Moses did this for their safety and others say it was to avoid Moses being distracted. Nevertheless, it wasn’t until after God’s great deliverance of His people from Egypt that Moses and his family would be reunited.

***5-6****While Israel was camped in the desert near Mount Sinai, Jethro sent Moses this message: “I am coming to visit you, and I am bringing your wife and two sons.”* ***7****When they arrived, Moses went out and bowed down in front of Jethro, then kissed him. After they had greeted each other, they went into the tent,****8****where Moses told him everything the Lord had done to protect Israel against the Egyptians and their king. He also told him how the Lord had helped them in all of their troubles.* ***9****Jethro was so pleased to hear this good news about what the Lord had done,****10****that he shouted, “Praise the Lord! He rescued you and the Israelites from the Egyptians and their king.****11****Now I know that the Lord is the greatest God, because he has rescued Israel from their arrogant enemies.”****12****Jethro offered sacrifices to God. Then Aaron and Israel’s leaders came to eat with Jethro there at the place of worship.* (Ex.18.5-12 CEV)

**Rescued**

I believe this passage of Scripture shows the richness of Jethro’s relationship with the Lord. One can understand how emotional the reunion between Moses and his family must have been. No one but God knew what was going to happen in Egypt so to be reunited was a tremendous blessing. After a lot of hugging and kissing, Moses welcomes them into his tent. Moses tells how the Lord protected them and helped them at each moment of need. This reflection upon God’s grace caused Jethro to burst out in praise to the Lord shouting, *“Praise the Lord! He rescued you and the Israelites from the Egyptians and their king. Now I know that the Lord is the greatest God, because he has rescued Israel from their arrogant enemies.”*

The reason for Jethro’s outburst of praise was because God had distinguished Himself from all the so-called gods of this world. It wasn’t that God was in competition with these other so-called gods but through the miracles of the Exodus God had destroyed every speculation and lofty thing that had been raised up against the knowledge of the one true God. (2Cor.10.5) And what set the one true God apart from these fake-gods? The one true God rescues His people! The idols of this world want, want, want and take, take, take. But the one true God gives, gives, and gives. The one true God provides protection, helps us with every need, and provides a way of escape from bondage. The fake-gods of this world function out of manipulation and control but the one true God rescues from bondage and brings freedom. And today the Lord is here to rescue you out of your bondage of sin, depression, discouragement, and grief!

The Exodus was a foreshadowing of the great deliverance through Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that it was according to the will of our God and Father that He sent His Son to give Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age. (Gal.1.4) Our God *rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.* (Col.1.13-14) What God did through Moses was to rescue His people from physical slavery. What God does through Christ is to rescue us from spiritual slavery. The Exodus prepares the way for all of God’s promises to find their “yes” and “amen” in Christ.

The reason Jethro shouted out praises to the Lord was because he knew the one true God always rescues His people! As the Psalmist declared, *He brought me forth also into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.* (Ps.18.19)

The only thing left to do was for this priest of Midian, this friend of God, to offer a covenant meal to celebrate God’s abundant mercy and to declare that the Lord is more than enough to meet all of our *needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.* (Phil.4.19) So, *Jethro offered sacrifices to God. Then Aaron and Israel’s leaders came to eat with Jethro there at the place of worship.*

These sacrifices offered by Jethro pointed to the ultimate sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ. *For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,**how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* (Heb.9.13-14) Jethro offering sacrifices enjoyed by Aaron and Israel’s leaders was an act of worship pointing to the better sacrifice offered by Christ.

Listen to the Good News:

*Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma and not with the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, Christ entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.* (Eph.5.2; Heb.9.12)

Brothers and Sisters the only one thing left for us to do as God’s royal priesthood, as friends of God through Christ, is to partake of this covenant meal that symbolizes the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice that secured our eternal redemption. Let us gather around this table and celebrate God’s abundant mercy, and to declare that the Lord is more than enough to meet all of our *needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.* (Phil.4.19)

**Transition to the Table**