

2022 Theme - Extraordinary God + Ordinary People = Transformed Lives

Sermon Series - Transformed Leadership (Moses)

Sermon Title - Transformed Leadership Through Teamwork

Sermon Text - Exodus 17:8-16

Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry

Full Sermon Notes:

“You give life, You are love, You bring light to the darkness

You give hope, You restore, Every heart that is broken”

Many times that hope and restoration come from God through others. God is our hope and our ultimate restoration comes through what Jesus did on the Cross, but God has chosen to use people in His restoration plan. We partner with God in taking the gospel to the world and He uses His people to minister to others and to one another! It’s a form of team work that is so Biblical. In fact the Bible has many illustrations of teamwork and today we’re going to see how our leadership abilities are transformed through teamwork! Let’s pray and ask God to teach us about this very important topic! Pray!

We will be in the Book of Exodus chapter 17 this morning. Let’s jump right into our text beginning with Exodus 17:8-11...

Exodus 17:8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

Exodus 17:9 Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”

Exodus 17:10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill.

Exodus 17:11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.

There’s so much about teamwork in these 4 verses and one of the most important things to note is this...

God is the most important person on our team!

The story of Moses goes from the deliverance and salvation from Egypt to life and survival in the wilderness. They are now facing a battle with external enemies. It is fascinating to see how this story parallels our lives and has application to our lives. Charles Spurgeon wrote this...

“Moses never said to the children of Israel while they were in Egypt, “Go, fight with Pharaoh.” Not at all; it is God’s work to bring us out of Egypt and make us his people, but when we are delivered from bondage, although it is God’s work to help us, we must be active in our cause. Now that we are alive from the dead we must wrestle with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness if we are to overcome.”

Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 459.

God had done the fighting for them in Egypt. Remember what Moses had said to them...

Exodus 14:13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again.

Exodus 14:14 The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

In the same way, our salvation is God's work and God's work alone. We only accept it or reject it! So we don't work for our salvation, but we do work out our salvation, with God's help, in our daily lives as we face the attacks from our enemies! Paul stated it this way...

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Aren't you glad God doesn't just set you free from your bondage to sin, forgive you for your sin and then leave you on your own to fight the continued temptations of sin? I was reading a commentary this week on Exodus called, "Saved for God's Glory!" It makes this powerful statement...

"When the Israelites escaped from Egypt, the first enemies they faced were not external but internal. Their struggle was the war within—the battle that is waged in every human heart. The difficulties they encountered at Marah, in the Desert of Sin, and at Massah and Meribah were not caused by their outward circumstances, primarily, but by their own disbelief and discontent. They did not trust God to provide, and as a result they were divided and discouraged."

Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 457.

They had trusted God and followed Moses out of Egypt but after all God had done for them, they were struggling to trust Him in the wilderness and it left them divided and discouraged! That's what happens when we don't keep our eyes on the Lord and trust Him to be with us, His presence with us, and when we don't trust Him to meet our needs, His provision for us, and when we don't trust Him with our emotions, His peace inside us, and when we don't trust Him to help us in our struggles, His power in us, and when we don't trust Him to give us victory over the enemy, His protection for us, and when we don't trust God's will for us, His path for us! Not trusting Him in our daily life leads to division and discouragement within the family of God and that affects all of us. You see, God wants us to work together as a team, but in order for that to happen, we have to trust God's guidance in our lives individually. Then we have to humble

ourselves and realize we need a team to do what God has called us to do with our lives. Teamwork is the ultimate way to accomplish God's will and purpose for our lives and for His Kingdom! In fact, teamwork is not just the ultimate way, it is the only way to accomplish God's will and purpose for our lives. And you might wonder how I can say that with such conviction and surety. I can say this because it's Biblical and I'm going to show you that this morning! Like I said earlier, when the Israelites first entered the wilderness they faced internal enemies! The internal enemies of dissatisfaction, discouragement, despair, disobedience, anger, resentment, grumbling and lack of faith in God. But in our story today we see that they also began to face external enemies!

The first part of our text for today is found in Exodus 17:8 ...

Exodus 17:8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

So now on top of the internal enemies the Israelites were facing, they had very real enemies coming at them and these people were not nice people. In fact Moses would later have this to say about them...

Deuteronomy 25:17 Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 25:18 When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God.

Commentators Ryken and Hughes state this...

"Not only was the attack unprovoked—it was targeted against the weak and the helpless, the stragglers at the back of the caravan. Rather than waging an honorable war for just cause, the Amalekites made a sneak attack on defenseless women and children."

Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 458.

When you are dealing with these kinds of things in this old world, you need a team! And you will need God to lead your team if you are to overcome. Now that the Israelites were out of Egypt, teamwork would be essential to their survival and Moses knew that.

In fact, let's look at text again and see what Moses does...

Exodus 17:9 Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."

Exodus 17:10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill.

Exodus 17:11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.

So we see clearly from this text that teamwork was vital to their survival. Moses told Joshua to choose some men to go with him to fight the Amalekites. But the most important thing we find out in these three verses is that the most important person to have on your team is God! Moses said...

Exodus 17:9b "...Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."

Do you see how this text bears out how important it is to have God on our team? There were men chosen to go out and fight the Amalekites, but Moses Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill where Moses lifted his hands up to God Almighty! Lifting of the hands is many times a physical expression of worship to God, but it is also a physical expression of our need for God in that we are reaching up to God. Lifting the hands to God can also signify surrender of our will to God's will! It is a recognition of our need for Almighty God to work and fight on our behalf! You see, spiritual Battles are not won on the battlefield! They are won in our prayer time, our devotional time, our study time, our time spent with God! And then when the battle comes we are ready to fight and win, because we've spent time with God! We're prayed up, studied up, and filled up with the wisdom, the power and the presence of God Almighty! The Psalmist put it this way...

Psalm 18:27 You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.

Psalm 18:28 You, LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

Psalm 18:29 With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.

Psalm 18:30 As for God, his way is perfect: The LORD's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.

Psalm 18:31 For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?

Psalm 18:32 It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure.

Psalm 18:33 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights.

Psalm 18:34 He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

Psalm 18:35 You make your saving help my shield, and your right hand sustains me; your help has made me great.

Psalm 18:36 You provide a broad path for my feet, so that my ankles do not give way.

My friend Robbie Robertson was telling me about a guy who was about to be martyred for his faith and he asked his executors this compelling question...

"Did you know that "Christ and I are an overwhelming majority!"?

Another dear friend, Warren Eves introduced me to Jay Richards, who was a strong witness for the Lord out in Las Vegas. Jay recently went home to be with the Lord. When he got the news of his dire health issue he informed his Muslim Doctor that you can't threaten a Christian with heaven! To which the doctor said "I like that!" You see, when God is on your team your leadership is transformed, and you can face any enemy because you realize God's got you in His arms and in His sights. In fact God's Word says this...

Psalm 17:6 I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

Psalm 17:7 Show me the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes.

Psalm 17:8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings

Psalm 17:9 from the wicked who are out to destroy me, from my mortal enemies who surround me.

Paul the Apostle gives us fantastic advice about having the Lord on our team in Colossians.

Colossians 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,

Colossians 2:7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

Colossians 2:10 and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

I don't know about you, but I want the Lord on my team every single minute of every single day! I want to live with the confidence that He is literally right here beside me and living inside me by way of His Holy Spirit! I want The Lord to be my coach off the field teaching me how to live and I want The Lord to be my quarterback on the field, calling the plays! God promises to be there for us, but we must know and understand that the way God is there for us many times is by working through others. God uses others to show His love, to give His strength, to give wisdom and guidance, to give encouragement! In the spiritual battles we face in life, it is imperative that we not only have God on our team, but that we listen to Him and follow His advice and instructions! We can't be victorious in spiritual battles without Divine intervention on our behalf. Remember what happened when Moses began to lower his arms?

Exodus 17:11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.

Ryken and Hughes put it this way...

"It is true that we do not know what Moses said while he was standing on the hillside. Nevertheless, his actions were an unmistakable sign of dependence upon God alone to win the battle. Moses was holding his staff, the instrument of divine power and the token of God's covenant promise. By holding it up to Heaven, he was appealing for God to defend his people."

Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 460.

The way I see it is like this: when Moses was interceding on the behalf of the people, they were winning. It's as if Moses was a conduit of God's power to the people and being on a hill, he was serving as an inspiration to his soldiers! Have you ever noticed the difference in your win rate in spiritual warfare between when you're walking with God and when you're not? Boy I sure have! Jesus told His disciples this...

John 15:4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Again, it's about teamwork and The Lord is the most important team member we have, but we must never underestimate the importance of this critical truth...

God has called others to be on our team!

Let's look at our text again.

Exodus 17:12 When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset.

God was the most important member of Moses' team, but God used Aaron and Hur to help hold Moses' hands up when he was too tired to humanly keep holding his arms skyward, heavenward, Godward! God routinely puts people in our lives to help us fulfill our calling in life! If we ignore or refuse to allow them to help us we will not be able to accomplish God's will for our lives! Why? Because, for one thing, that is a sign of arrogance and pride and here's what God has to say about pride...

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:19 Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.

Proverbs 16:20 Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD.

Proverbs 16:21 The wise in heart are called discerning, and gracious words promote instruction.

So many teamwork principles in those words! Pride refuses to let anyone help. Let me tell you a few things I've come to understand about leadership and teamwork:

There's no such thing as a one man team! It's prideful to think you can do it all!

It's prideful to think no one else can do things as good as you!

When you do things all on your own you get all the glory if it goes well and you get all the blame if it goes bad!

And did you notice that “gracious words promote instruction?” Communication is important within a team, but not just any communication, the writer of Proverbs says gracious words! This goes back to the pride thing. Teamwork demands that we lay down our pride and work for a common goal! God has given us others to help us and that help may come in the form of Godly advice! We need to learn to trust the input of seasoned and mature followers of Christ. When you don’t have an answer to a problem, God may bring someone else to help you find the answer! If that person has a track record of faithfulness to God and a good witness, it may be that God has brought them to be on your team. Certainly, you must be careful when picking those you will follow and take advice from, but God will lead you to the right people if you ask Him to do so. This concept has certainly been true of our church! Wayne Cordeiro, pastor of a church in Hawaii said this...

“In order to accomplish what God has intended for us as individuals and as a whole, we must do church as a team. A 99 percent involvement is still 1 percent shy! We need all of us functioning in our gifts, with respect and love for each other. That’s what the local church body is all about. No one is unimportant. Everyone is part of sharing the gospel, not just the pastor. We do church as a team!”

Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church As a Team* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 57.

In fact, God’s Word teaches teamwork in no uncertain terms. Listen to Paul’s words to the church at Ephesus...

Ephesians 4:11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,

Ephesians 4:12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

Ephesians 4:13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

Ephesians 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Ephesians 4:16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Without teamwork, the church ceases to be the church and simply becomes an organization! Folks, we are the body of Christ! Your own body knows the importance of teamwork. Your heart, your lungs, your brain, your liver, your kidneys and every other part of your body works as a

team, and I think we all know what happens when any of those parts stops doing their part on the team. It's not good! It's the same way in the church! Once again Paul speaks to this issue...

1 Corinthians 12:15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

1 Corinthians 12:16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

1 Corinthians 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

1 Corinthians 12:18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

1 Corinthians 12:19 If they were all one part, where would the body be?

1 Corinthians 12:20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

1 Corinthians 12:21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

Gaines S. Dobbins wrote a classic book on church administration in 1923 in which he stated:

"True religion is life, not form, ceremony, creed, organization, building and equipment. Life requires organism for visible manifestation and material existence. The more highly developed the life the more complex the organization through which it functions. The constant struggle of that which possesses life is to adjust itself advantageously to favorable environment, and to overcome unfavorable forces and circumstances. To this end the organs that constitute the organism seek to relate themselves to each other for common ends and advantages."

Are we doing that as a church? Are we doing that as brothers and sisters in Christ? Are we building one another up? Are we relating ourselves to each other for common ends and advantages? What common ends and advantages? How about our common goal to achieve our mission as a church...

Transforming worship, people and the world with the life changing message of Jesus Christ!

When we don't function as a team, Satan has a field day and begins to destroy our mission effectiveness! Someone might say, "So what, why does it matter?" It matters because there are people who need to see Jesus in us and if we aren't working together in harmony as a team, as the body of Christ, then people can't see Jesus in us and if they can't see Jesus then they miss out on all that a personal relationship with Jesus could mean to them. Satan fights the church so hard because an effective group of believers working in concert together to share Jesus and to show Jesus to the world will change lives, save lives, and make a difference in the world and eternity! Transformed leadership happens when we realize that God has called us to do church and life as a team! Hans finzel put it this way...

"Leadership is a selfless journey that involves devoting yourself to a group of people to accomplish great things for the Lord that you could never do alone."

Finzel, Hans. Empowered Leaders: The Ten Principles of Christian Leadership, Swindoll Leadership Library, ed. Charles R. Swindoll. Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998. 205

Gene Wilkes wrote this in his book on the servant leadership of Jesus...

“Leadership is not a solo venture. It is a team sport.”

C. Gene Wilkes, Jesus on Leadership: Becoming A Servant Leader (Nashville: LifeWay, 1996), 7.

Leonard Sweet said this...

“Jesus invested everything he had in a team. The Bible knows nothing of a solo ministry, only team ministry.”

So what happens when we do life and church as a team? Well, let’s look back at our text and see what happened to the Israelites in their battle with the Amalekite army who had attacked them...

Exodus 17:13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

Exodus 17:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven.”

Exodus 17:15 Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner.

Exodus 17:16 He said, “Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the LORD, the LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.”

Other hands may be lifted up against you, but if your hands are lifted to the Lord they will not prevail against you! Other hands may be lifted up against you and against the Lord, but if you lift your hands up to God in prayer and worship and surrender to God, you won’t have to surrender to the enemy! If you reach out your hands to those God puts in your life to help you in your time of need, you will have ultimate victory! Oh the enemy may win some battles from time to time, but ultimately the war is won because you have a team made up of God Almighty and those He has purposely put in your life to help you along the way! And talk about a worship experience! When God gets you through a battle you can do like Moses, he built an altar and called it “The LORD is my Banner! You don’t have to build a physical altar made of stones, but you can build testimony altars. Write down in a journal what God has done for you and how He helped you win the battle. Then when you face future battles you can look back on His faithfulness and find confidence! Write down how God has used others in your life and placed them on your team so you could overcome the difficulties and the foes who have come against you! Moses wrote things on a scroll as something to be remembered! Moses and the children of Israel had worshiped on the banks of the sea after their miraculous deliverance from their bondage to Egypt. Now they had won a victory in their wilderness journey to the promised land so they worshiped again! I like the way our theologians I’ve quoted today put it...

“This time they were not praising God for the great victory of their salvation. It was only a small victory along the pilgrim road, but it was still worthy of worship. We too should praise God not only for our salvation in Christ, but for every victory in our perpetual struggle against sin and temptation.”

Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 465.

And remember, we find victory in teamwork! God is the most important person on our team! He's our first and foremost our Savior, but He's also our life coach, and He's our quarterback, calling the plays! But never forget, He's put you on a team with brothers and sisters in Christ and if you try to go it alone, Satan will have a field day with you! Don't let that happen. I will close with a few words from Paul on teamwork...

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices
Colossians 3:10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Colossians 3:11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Colossians 3:16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Let's Pray!