

# ***True North – Knowing Who You Are***

Exodus 3:11-15

Today we begin a new series. It is a series that will focus on leadership. We are all leaders at some level. Some are more upfront leaders and some are more behind the scenes. Some are leaders at home, while others are leaders in the marketplace and some are leaders in both arenas.

Leadership is that strange quality that we can't live without and we seem to not want to live with. People who are in the leadership role seemingly are always the target, of whoever, is out there, and leaders who finish well, are so hard to find. Just ask the 23 year old (JR Hilebrand) rookie who had the Indy 500 winners flag in his sights and crashed into the wall only to slide across the finish line last week, losing the lead to Dan Weldon. Leading is difficult, but it is one of the most wonderful experiences life has to offer.

When we find that thing that God has called us to do, and we take the leadership reins and start in, life is never the same, whether that leadership is in a marriage and overseeing a family or in the marketplace or in a ministry. The demands of leadership bring out the best and sometimes the worst in us.

God uses the term “dross” to describe the nation of Israel from time to time. “Dross” are the impurities in silver that have to be purged out of the silver under extreme heat. The hotter the heat the more the “dross” is brought to the surface and can be skimmed off, until the silver has become pure. Leadership of any ministry or any area of life is like that, and in the midst of it we have to find our True North. That place in our life where we can embrace the offer of leadership that is being made to us.

The passage we are going to look at today is a familiar one to many and it deals with a man being introduced to the possibility of leadership. His name is Moses and he has been considered by God for a great thing. We will look at that in a moment.

David Gergen is a man who on all accounts would be considered a leader. He was an advisor to 4 presidents (Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton) and worked along side leaders in government, the press, business and many other fields. He is a man who has seen leadership at its finest and its worst.

He says this about leadership

“Yes, there is no substitute for ability: to lead others, you must know what you are doing, have a deep curiosity, and develop keen judgment. Competence counts. But what ultimately distinguishes the great leaders from the mediocre are the personal inner qualities – qualities that are hard to define but are essential for success, qualities that each of us must develop for ourselves.”

What are these inner qualities? What are these principles that drive people who influence others and bring positive change to our world.

I want us to look at a passage from Exodus 3:11-15. For those who do not know this story this is the story of the calling of Moses, to lead Israel out of slavery. In the last series Seasons of Life, we were introduced to the goal of this leadership job, when Joshua took the nation across the Jordan river. Here is where it all began.

Moses had been tending sheep, and he had been doing that for 40 years. Sheep in Sheep out, for 40 years. When one day, God spoke to him through a burning bush.

After the initial shock and introduction of what God was going to do. Moses is confronted with his own humanness and inabilities to get the job done. Because on the front in of leadership challenges, we only see who we are right now, but God sees us for who we will become.

In this conversation 4 principles emerge for Moses that helped him find his True North when it can to his own leadership. Let's take a look at them.

First,

## 1. The Need To Know Will Surface When You Need to Know

*<sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"*

Some of us when the word leadership is brought up, start immediately tuning out, because we never think of ourselves as leaders. I am sure on that day, Moses would have thought the same thing. He had for 40 years done Sheep in Sheep out, and then suddenly, God shows up. The fact is it may appear sudden, but God is directing Moses right back to the place he fled from. Egypt.

For 40 years he just put that away and did the sheep thing. Life was predictable. Leave me alone. But God loves us too much to leave us alone. What that 40 years had done to Moses was to cause him, in many ways, to forget who he was.

Often there is no pressure on us to really know who we are and what we are capable of, because the challenges we face can be handled without much effort. We have designed for ourselves a predictable life, and we have no need to ask the deeper more probing questions. We only ask the tough questions of identity when we are faced with challenges that are far beyond our own capabilities. We have predictable impact. God is looking for a church that dares to have unpredictable impact, and therefore needs leaders who would be willing to follow him into some unthinkable circumstances.

The first principle therefore is “The need to know who we are will surface when we finally decide to follow God into the great adventure, then we will need to know who we really are. Secondly,

## 2. Who and What You Worship is Who you Become

*<sup>12</sup> And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you<sup>[a]</sup> will worship God on this mountain.”*

This next verse describes to us how God viewed the leadership challenge. Any leadership challenge where a man or woman is actually listening to God for the direction of the next step.

What God knows is that, when we place our full trust into someone, we will develop the same character and nature as that person. God wanted to be that person for Moses. He knew that if Moses really hung himself out there and did this, then Moses would come right back to the very mountain they were on and worship him, and Moses would be fully God's.

Think about it, the mountain became the goal to get back to. Some of you have had God speaking to you. You may or may not have called it that, but there is agitation in your heart. This altar, right here is where you have to do business with God. Meet him here, Hear his voice for the next journey you are to embark on. Then when it is through, come right back here and meet with God again.

These bibles are a perfect example of that. Some of you are taking this completely serious. There are 3000 bibles here. The goals are 2,

- a. **First**, Hand out the bibles to everyone who needs one. The number became 3000, so that is what we are praying for, that 3000 bibles are going to be handed out
- b. The **second goal** is one that we may never know, but that God would use these bibles to be the fire starter Word of God that starts another person on the journey of a life time. So that they too become like him.

But it is about agreeing with God, right here and then going and giving these bibles out.. Not just in doing it. There has to be an agreement with God that is when we change into his nature, when our actions are as a result of agreeing with God

## 3. It Must Become Personal

*<sup>13</sup> Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”*

*<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.<sup>[b]</sup> This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*

Up to this point in the conversation, God was doing most of the talking, and Moses, frankly was looking for a way to get out of it. Then Moses, asks this question, *“Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’*

It sort of sounds like another accuse in the making, but it really is the moment that Moses begins to consider that this might be for him. We will know that we have begun to fully buy in by the questions we ask and the things we begin to consider.

There was a time in seminary that I remember saying to myself, I can get out of this anytime I want. I will do this for a while but if this whole pasturing thing gets weird, I will just go back into secular work. I have skills. Then an older man one day came up to me, after I had preached at a brand new church here in West Ohio, and he asked me if I would go visit his daughter at Good Samaritan Hosp. It was JoAnn Evans. I ended up becoming very close to that family and a couple weeks later I ran into Boyd at a store, he was talking to someone and he was just finishing the conversation when I came around the aisle, and he said, “Speak of the devil, here is who I was talking about, this is my pastor”

Now up to that point, I had never heard a older man say that about me. I was stunned, over the next several weeks I began to ask different questions.

Some of you are approaching this church and maybe even Christianity, as if you are “spring-loaded to the bail out position”. Real transformation awaits only those who are fully bought in

Then finally, in this conversation between Moses and God, the 4<sup>th</sup> principle that emerges is

#### 4. It Is Not About Who You Are

*<sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD,<sup>[c]</sup> the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ “This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.*

Moses heard God say, tell them I have sent you. When we remember who we really are, then we will immediately realize that this whole life has really nothing to do with us.

In fact, most of the entanglement we get into in life is because we are trying to make some situation about us. Moses was going to set these people free, and it wasn’t going to be about him at all. He was going to divinely deflect the glory and the honor of it all, to the one who it really is all about.

We are going to spend sometime on finding our True North in this series. Some of you have struggled with some area of life being about you. It is time to let it go. It is more than taking a chill pill, it is about genuinely meeting with God about your life and your calling and hearing what He has to say.

He is True North, and he is ready to guide you into the ride of your life, but first he needs you to know who you are according to him.

Let's pray.