

Acts 7: 17-29

(1). "The Story of the Greatest Backslider."

Introd:- (1). RELAX! Although asked to speak during this Stewardship month at Bethel..I am not a money-raiser. There will be no arm-twisting this morn. I am not here to disturb your pocketbook. I HOPE TO DISTURB YOUR HEART.

..AND MINE..and Spirit of God will take care of all rest.

Let me then begin The Story of the greatest Backslider.. and four words written about him. One of most vivid examples in all of Scripture...HIS NAME? Wait!

(2). If ever ask Jewish people name of greatest man who ever lived..what think most of them would reply?

Unless saved man..not say JESUS. Illus:- Dr. Hansing.. discovered that pain of childbirth be relieved by injection of anesthetic into certain spot on spinal column. Helping Negro lady in great pain.."Jesus, help me! Jesus, help me Dr. H., X'n man..tried calm her.."It's going to be alright sister..Jesus will help you. We're all on the same team" Just then his Jewish assistant muttered "This is the first time I've been on same team as Jesus."

Jew prob. NOT name Abram as greatest..(Maybe)..or David.. The mighty Isaiah..but MOSES. Highly honoured..Wrote 1st 5 books..Torah..containing all laws, ceremonies Israel needs. Read through in synagogues once a year week by week beginning right after Succoth..feast of Tab. in Sept. Simcah Torah..Reading for yesterday....

Mighty Lawgiver of God..great man of Jewish thought!

(3). BUT ABOUT HIM..I want read four words that on one occasion utterly condemned him as backslider..the most dreadful, devastating measure of a man ever written..and amazingly WRITTEN BY HIMSELF ABOUT HIMSELF..under direction of H.S. How you like write abso. true autobiog. at God's dictation AND THIS IS WHAT WAS WRITTEN. "AND MOSES WAS...CONTENT."

(4). Was that anticlimax? What expecting? Some dreadful glaring sin of flesh? Does this sound innocuous..even like a compliment? Doesn't God tell men to be content? "Having food..raiment..be therewith content".."Godliness with contentment is great gain." Ah, but we have not yet seen CONTEXT..circumstances under which Moses WAS content..and that makes all diff. When we do..and und what those circum. were..this text will stagger us with its fearful implications,,and may well carry convicting power of H.S. concerning our own contentments.

I. Begin read story of the four words..Exod 2:21.

(a). And ask the 5 familiar ques. Illus:- Editor..reporter Who..where..why..what doing..when? (No why at wedding)

1. WHO? "The chosen one of God...given task of delivering Israel from Egypt. HIGH calling. And he KNEW IT! Acts 7:23-25..

"When he was full 40 yrs old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian; FOR HE SUPPOSED his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not." But MOSES DID! How? Remember story of Moses in bulrushes...daughter of Pharaoh...Miriam...Got job for mother...paid to look after own baby. Origin of Fam. Allowance! MOSES, CALLED OF GOD TO SPECIFIC TASK...DELIVERING PEOPLE.....

2. WHERE? This man...such a man...3:1..."Backside of the desert" which was backside of Moses. Jeremiah once said: Jer.9:2

"Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men (Motel for tourists): that I might leave my people and go from them." He wanted to retire from ministry and run a motel on a desert highway...and I think it would be highway No.1 MOSES FOUND HIS MOTEL... away from where the action was.

3. WHY? Story plain enough...Exod.2:13-15. "And he SAT DOWN." He quit. Moses ran to save his own skin... to find SECURITY for self...and he LEFT GOD'S TASK FOR THAT. Today that is the favourite WHY of backslider..."ME FIRST"...and let world go. W.

4. WHAT DOING? Story goes on...Exod. 2:16-21, 3:1a. Story Somewhat amusing...as far as Jethro concerned. Daughters home early..."How come?" "A man helped us" "WHERE IS HE? WHY HAVE YOU LEFT HIM? MEN DON'T GROW ON BUSHES...GO GET HIM!" You see, he had 7 daughters...and here they let a man get away! Father greatly concerned..."Call him"...Sure enough...married one of his girls to this man Moses. AND MOSES, THE TRAINED, EDUCATED FUTURE RULER OF EGYPT...PRINCE OF THE COURT...THE CALLED OF GOD TO DELIVER PEOPLE FROM DREADFUL BONDAGE...tended a flock of sheep in backside of the desert. Anything wrong with being a shepherd? NO. Honest occup. David was...BUT BE WRONG FOR HIM TO STAY A SHEPHERD WHEN GOD HAD CALLED HIM TO BE A KING. UNLESS A MAN IS HIS BEST FOR GOD...HE IS IN BACKSLIDDEN CONDITION AND MOSES WAS CONTENT!...ARE WE? Young people...older people?

5. WHEN? Last ques...and ans. ought to shock...disturb all of us Here is reason for Moses' contentment being backslidden state. Exod.2:23-25...3:7. AND BACK IN DESERT...MOSES WAS CONTENT! Isn't it now unmistakeably plain? What is this stewards business all about? Heard any groaning today...of lost men...right here in Calgary...out across world...UNSAVED on way to hell...discouraged X'ns? Are we called of God to do our part in their deliverance? AND DO WE SIT CONTENTED to be less than our best for God?...to do less than our utmost for God...lost men

II. High time we tried und, how God broke contentment.

(a). Its written here..and has very modern flavour.
HOW CAN OUR SLEEPY, CONTENTED X'NITY..DROWSY DEACONS..
CHEERFUL CHARLIE CHURCHES..BEDRIDDEN BELIEVERS be stirred
for God? How can laymen and playmen^o be roused to live
& give so as to be mighty influence for God in dark world?

(b). I HAVE AN ANSWER...IT TAKES A MIRACLE! Maybe you
don't like that. But I can tell you..long exper..it DOES
Try stirring people..even in B. School..by teaching,
exhorting, disciplining, encouraging, arguing, exemplifyin
..and see some RESPOND (Thank God for them)..but some
still dead and dull. ONLY A MIRACLE OF GOD CAN DO IT.

See what God did to Moses..to shake contentment all to
pieces...Exod. 3:1-6..Strange story! Moses nev. seen that
before...Fire burned on.."I always had to gather sticks
to keep going. Who lit that fire? Somebody passed on
camel..tossed another Camel into bush?" What this mean?
Like fire that fell at Pentecost to empower waiting discip
..so that burning bush denoted presence and power of Spirit
of God. OUR CONTENTMENTS WILL BREAK AS WE CRY TO GOD
TODAY FOR A NEW, MIGHTY, SWEEPING INFILLING OF H.G.!
All of us..Pastors, Elders, teachers, officers, members
NEED the MIRACLE TOUCH OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD..and with it
the DISTURBING and burden it brings.

(c). Day of miracles past? Believe in miracles? Men try
explain away supernatural. Illus - Preacher on TV panel
4 atheists.. "Red Sea miracle? " "Yes".. "Only 4" of water"
"Hallelujah, Praise the Lord" "What hallelujahing about?"
"Miracle..God drowned Pharaoh and all host in 4" of
water..Miracle! Hallelujah!"

Will you..will I..dare to ask God for a miracle..one that
will so shake us..disturb us..blast away our selfish
contentments..fill with zeal..fire of God..until we only
live to fulfill OUR calling..to DO HIS WORK ON EARTH?

(d). I must add one more item to this story. Read it
again..3:4-6..God found Moses. Called. Today He finds us.
WHERE? Found as one lost..redeemed. But searches for
us now..looking for witnesses..^{amen}STEWARDS OF HIS GOODS.
Think of Abram..God called ONCE.. "Abram".. "Here am I"..
Eyes lifted to heaven.. "Take thy son".. Story..Until felt
back for gleaming, razor edged knife.. "Abram, Abram"..
urgency..to attract attention. Double call of God always
in emergency..Now MOSES, MOSES.. "Here am I".. Where? in
backside of desert. How answer? "Moses hid his face".
"HERE..HERE am I" instead of serving you with all heart"
THE BACKSLIDER.

Conclus:-1. If God called my name right now..how would I answer Him? Able lift loving, obedient eyes to heaven..OR HIDE MY FACE.."Here am I" THE BACKSLIDER..living for ME. Who is here today..with matchless name "Christian" printed on very inmost being..who dare fail do utmost for God as we face issues of our stewardship? WHO HERE DARE BE CONTENT WITH LESS THAN OUR LOVING BEST WHEN A LOST WORLD LIES ALL AROUND US?

2. I think of one of Paul's great confessions..Rom. 1:1 begin~~ing~~ his signature like this: "Paul, a SERVANT of Jesus Christ"..Used word "Doulos".. "A slave". Not THE slave. There were..and are others..thank God. A slave in Paul's day didn't have rights of a dog. No SPCA for dogs..No SPCS for slaves..Utterly the PROPERTY of his Master..for life or death..And Paul trod path of life as THE SLAVE OF JESUS CHRIST..and found his only CONTENTMENT in doing the Master's will alone.

3. Am I less than that? Less than what I can be and do for God? AM I CONTENT WITH IT? "Come, Spirit of God..Call our names, one by one..Hutchinson..Laing..Krause ^{Nelson}..down these aisles...May we not have to hide face..but be able say gladly "Lord, Here am I..your slave..only content to be best for God".. "Fill me with thy Spirit afresh..Make me wholly Thine..body, soul, spirit, mind, and money..Let me tread life as Thy slave..Let me not sink to be a clod. Make me Thy fuel, FLAME OF GOD."

Didsbury - Evangelical Church - Mar. 21/80

Clareholm - Jan 13/80

Red Deer Lk - Living Springs B Camp - CMA - Daysland, Camrose - Aug 19/79

Green Timbers Lk - Covenant Ch - Durney (Albert Josephson) Feb 20/77

Coronation W. Free - Oct 22/76

Jeansville Lk B Camp - July 5/74

Bechtel Bk - Calgary - Feb 17/74