

## Message Notes

You cannot do it alone

## Scripture Passages

(taken from the New International Version)

My father-in-law

### The Gospel According to Moses:

You cannot do it alone

Exodus 18:1-27

### Moses - husband, father, and son-in-law

Exodus 18:1-4

### The reunion of Jethro and Moses

Exodus 18:5-7

### Moses recounts everything the LORD had done

Exodus 18:8

### Jethro's response to the LORD's salvation

Exodus 18:9-12

### Moses - judge of the people

Exodus 18:13-16

### Jethro's response to Moses' situation

Exodus 18:17-23

### Moses establishes a justice system while Jethro departs

Exodus 18:24-27

### The Gospel according to Moses

### Questions to consider and discuss

- Are we consistently recounting everything, including hardships, that the LORD has done, specifically to those we might deem "outsiders"?
- As God gives opportunity, will we show ourselves capable and trustworthy in upholding justice?

Exodus 18:1-27

1 Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. 2 After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her 3 and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have become a foreigner in a foreign land"; 4 and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh." 5 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the wilderness, where he was camped near the mountain of God. 6 Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons." 7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. 8 Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them. 9 Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. 10 He said, "Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. 11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." 12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God. 13 The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. 14 When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?" 15 Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. 16 Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions." 17 Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. 18 You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. 19 Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. 20 Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. 21 But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 22 Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. 23 If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." 24 Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. 25 He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 26 They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. 27 Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.









Drew and Isaac  
Sorry you have to  
go to school today!  
and without those toys!  
Grandpa's relaxed  
No more nut for me!

The page is framed by a wide, intricate border of floral and foliate motifs. The design features scrolling vines in shades of blue, green, and brown, interspersed with stylized flowers and leaves in red, orange, and gold. The background of the border is a light, textured beige.

The Gospel  
According to  
**Moses**  
a study of exodus

Today's Message:  
You cannot do it alone  
Exodus 18:1-27

# Moses – husband, father, and son-in-law

## Exodus 18:1-4

<sup>1</sup> Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her <sup>3</sup> and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, “I have become a foreigner in a foreign land”; <sup>4</sup> and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, “My father’s God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.”

# The reunion of Moses and Jethro

## Exodus 18:5-7

<sup>5</sup> Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the wilderness, where he was camped near the mountain of God. <sup>6</sup> Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons." <sup>7</sup> So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. <sup>8</sup> Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them.

# Moses recounts everything the LORD had done

## Exodus 18:8

<sup>5</sup> Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the wilderness, where he was camped near the mountain of God. <sup>6</sup> Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons." <sup>7</sup> So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. <sup>8</sup> Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them.

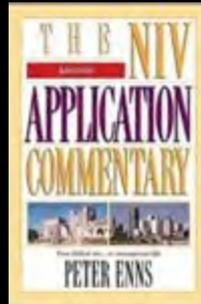
# Jethro's response to the LORD's salvation

## Exodus 18:9-12

<sup>9</sup> Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>10</sup> He said, "Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>11</sup> Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." <sup>12</sup> Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.

Jethro has had a shift in thinking based on what God has done for Israel, ironically a realization that Israel itself is often slow to learn...Although neither the Egyptians nor the Amalekites get it, Jethro, the Midianite, has learned the lesson of the Exodus: “The Lord is greater than all other gods.” This is, I suggest, the central theological point of this chapter, and it gives us a good hint of why this story should be included in Israel’s saga at all. Midian is the one nation that gives a proper response to God’s deliverance of his own people.

Enns, P. The NIV Application Commentary (2000). (p. 369).  
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



# Jethro's response to the LORD's salvation

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Don't miss the significance of what is going on here. He (Jethro) is *not* an Israelite...He is an outsider...But (when) he hears the stories of Israel's deliverance he confesses that God is the one true God...Israel is here performing the role that the Lord ordained for her, she is being a light to the nations. So in the previous chapter we saw the outsider reject and attack the people of God, but lest we believe that all outsiders are waiting to attack and reject us, now we see that Jethro, the priest of Midian, was ready to repent when he was told the story of God's Provision.

~ Jen Wilkin, Podcast: *Exodus I, week 10: To Sinai*



# Moses – judge of the people

## Exodus 18:13-16

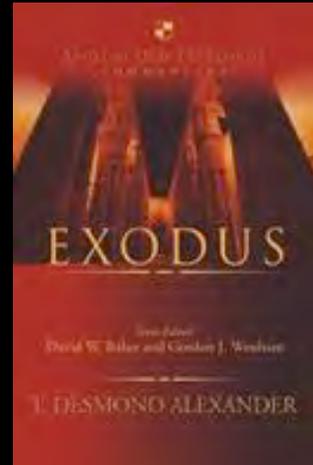
<sup>13</sup> The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening.

<sup>14</sup> When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?”

<sup>15</sup> Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. <sup>16</sup> Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.”

It is evident that although the Israelites have been redeemed from slavery, they have not been so transformed that their lives are now perfect. As their prior grumbling indicates, the potential for disputes with others is plainly present. While issues of tension within the community need to be addressed, implicit in this chapter is the idea that divine redemption has as its goal the creation of a just society.

~ Alexander, T. Desmond, *Exodus*. Intervarsity Press, p. 354.



# Jethro's response to Moses' situation

## Exodus 18:17-23

<sup>17</sup> Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good.

<sup>18</sup> You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. <sup>19</sup> Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. <sup>20</sup> Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave."

# Jethro's response to Moses' situation

## Exodus 18:17-23

<sup>21</sup> “But select capable men from all the people – men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

<sup>22</sup> Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. <sup>23</sup> If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.”

# Moses establishes a justice system while Jethro departs

## Exodus 18:24-27

<sup>24</sup> Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said.

<sup>25</sup> He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

<sup>26</sup> They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

<sup>27</sup> Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.

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The Gospel  
According to  
**St. Moses**  
a study of exodus

## Question to consider and discuss:

Are we consistently recounting everything the LORD has done,  
including hardships,  
specifically to those we deem “outsiders”?

# How do I do this??

When sharing a story, attribute one aspect of that story to God being at work.

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Share a hardship. Don't gloss over it.

Share how you hope God will help you.

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When sharing a story, attribute one aspect of that story to God being at work.

Share a hardship. Don't gloss over it.

Share how you hope God will help you.

Don't be afraid to share these things in the company of someone you deem an "outsider."

## **Question to consider and discuss:**

As God gives opportunity, will we show ourselves capable and trustworthy in upholding justice?

# How do I do this??

Ensure all parties to a dispute are treated in an equitable fashion (by listening, by asking questions of those in or overseeing the dispute, by exposing inequalities of treatment)

# How do I do this??

Ensure all parties to a dispute are treated in an equitable fashion (by listening, by asking questions of those in or overseeing the dispute, by exposing inequalities of treatment)

As God gives opportunity, appoint individuals based on character (e.g. not swayed by financial gain, impartial, honest) and not based on longevity, title, pressure, etc.

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