

Moses Acts in Anger

(Exodus 2:11-25)

Introduction

Imagine being adopted by a princess and growing up in a king's palace. You could have everything you wanted – beautiful clothes, delicious food, an excellent education. How would you feel, though, if you learned that you had brothers and sisters who had not been so fortunate? While you lived in luxury, they lived in poverty and were cruelly treated. Wouldn't you want to help them?

The Bible tells us about a situation very much like that...

Opening Prayer

Father, we all get angry about things at times. People do unfair and unwise things and sometimes we lash out and react in our anger. But, You don't want us to blow up. Help us to listen this morning so that we might learn how You want us to control our anger. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. (James 1:19-20 NIV)

Lesson

Last week we began studying about the life of Moses. This week he is now about 40 years old. He's been watching how the Egyptians have been mistreating the Israelites outside of the palace where he grew up.

Exodus 2:11

Many years later, when Moses had grown up, he went out to visit his own people, the Hebrews, and he saw how hard they were forced to work. During his visit, he saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews.

As Moses grew up he must have been told by his adoptive mother how she found him in the river (see verse 10). He knew he wasn't an Egyptian by birth; he knew he was a Hebrew. One day he became angry as he watched a Hebrew man get beaten by one of the cruel Egyptian slave masters.

Exodus 2:12

After looking in all directions to make sure no one was watching, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand.

Moses was so angry he killed the Egyptian! Moses' anger toward the Egyptians for the cruel way they were treating his people had become so great that he let it overcome him. Moses had reason to be angry. It was wrong for the Egyptians to harm the Hebrews, but acting in anger was not the way to solve the problem.

Have you ever been so angry that you acted without thinking? [Teacher, let the children share.] Perhaps someone hurt your younger brother or sister, and you wanted to hurt him back.

God wants you to control your temper and seek His way to solve your problem. [Teacher, review the Memory Verse.]

Acting in anger will not solve a problem; it will only make it worse. Getting revenge is not your job. God will take care of the wrongdoing Himself (Romans 12:19). God is always fair and right. He is perfect, so He is the only One who can perfectly judge someone else. He might not do it the way you think He should, or even when you think He should, but He wants you to control your temper and let Him work things out in His time and in His way.

Moses needed to let God take care of this situation in His own way and time, but instead Moses lashed out in anger, killing the Egyptian.

The next day, Moses saw two Hebrews fighting and he got mad at one for hitting the other.

Exodus 2:13

The next day, when Moses went out to visit his people again, he saw two Hebrew men fighting. "Why are you beating up your friend?" Moses said to the one who had started the fight.

But the Hebrew men were offended by Moses....

Exodus 2:14

The man replied, "Who appointed you to be our prince and judge? Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?" Then Moses was afraid, thinking, "Everyone knows what I did."

Moses thought he had made sure that no one was watching before he killed the Egyptian. But as it turned out, someone did see.

Sometimes we mistakenly think we can get away with doing wrong if no one sees or catches us. Sooner or later, however, doing wrong will catch up with us as it did with Moses. Even if we are not caught in this life, we will still have to face God and His judgment in the life to come.

When Pharaoh heard of the murder, Moses' life was in danger

Exodus 2:15

And sure enough, Pharaoh heard what had happened, and he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian. When Moses arrived in Midian, he sat down beside a well.

Moses' angry action had only made the problem worse. Now, instead of being able to help his people, Moses was in danger himself.

What does God want you to do when you are tempted to act in anger? [Teacher, let the children respond.] You can whisper a prayer for God to help you. You can stay quiet. Maybe you should calmly walk away rather than fight. You can go to your parents for help to solve the problem.

Acting in anger won't solve any problems. [Teacher, review the Memory Verse.] God will help you to control your temper and show you His way to solve your problem.

But Moses had acted in anger, and now his life was in danger.

Moses probably thought that he had ruined any opportunity to deliver his people from slavery, but God was not finished with Moses. Moses settled in the wilderness of Midian with the family of Jethro. There he married Jethro's daughter and became a shepherd.

God used this time to teach Moses humility and to give him other skills he would need to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt in God's way and in God's time.

In Egypt, the Hebrews cried out to God in their suffering.

Exodus 2:23

Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites continued to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for help, and their cry rose up to God.

While Moses was living in the wilderness with the family of Jethro, the king of Egypt died. They got a new Pharaoh who made life even harder for the children of Israel. But, God heard their prayers and was preparing a deliverer for them.

Exodus 2:24-25

God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act.

Who remembers the promise God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? (That He would make a great nation of their descendants.) God never forgets His promises!

Closing Prayer

Father, we know that acting in anger only makes a problem worse. We want to learn how to deal with our anger. Help us to think before we react. We want to please You, Lord, with all our thoughts and actions every day. Thank You for loving us and forgiving us when we blow it. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What made Moses so angry that he killed an Egyptian? (He saw an Egyptian beat a Hebrew man.)
2. Have you ever been so angry that you acted without thinking? (Let the child share.)
3. How does God want you to deal with your anger? (He wants us to control our anger and seek His way to solve our problems; let Him work things out in His time and in His way.)
4. What happened the next day when Moses saw the two Hebrew men fighting? (Moses scolded the two men, but they scolded him back saying, "What right have you to judge us? Are you going to kill us like you did that Egyptian?" Moses thought no one knew of his murdering the Egyptian.)
5. What happened when Pharaoh heard of Moses' murdering the Egyptian? (Pharaoh sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled to Midian.)
6. What should you do when you are tempted to act in anger? (Pray and ask God to help you, stay quiet, calmly walk away rather than fight, or go to your parents for help.)
7. What is our memory verse? (Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. James 1:19-20 NIV)
8. What did Moses do in Midian? (He was a shepherd, worked for the family of Jethro, married Jethro's daughter, and had a family.)
9. God wasn't finished with Moses yet. What was God doing in Moses for the 40 years that he lived out in the wilderness of Midian? (God was building into Moses meekness and other character traits.)
10. What was the promise God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? (That He would make a great nation of their descendants.)
11. How often does God come through with His promises? (Always!)
12. What's a promise that God has made to you? (That He'll never leave me nor forsake me, that He loves me with an everlasting love, that He forgives me of my sins, etc.)

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