

# Yes!

## Part 2

### Exodus 3:1-12 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup> So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up." <sup>4</sup> When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup> "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." <sup>6</sup> Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. <sup>7</sup> The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey--the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup> So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." <sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" <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 will worship God on this mountain."

*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 1:20)*

The essence of the good news is that through Jesus, God says "yes" to us. Even though as human beings we are flawed and imperfect and sinful (Romans 5:8), through the cross, God says yes to us unconditionally. In a world that is by and large indifferent to our lives, God is for us (Romans 8:34), God is on our side and God's support is not the passive support of the sports fan sitting in the stands but the support of a team mate (John 15:15) in a premiership winning football team, who is right there in trenches with us, pouring encouragement into our lives (2 Thessalonians 2:16). Yes, says Jesus, you are mine, you are part of my family (Romans 8:16-17) and if you will allow me I will pour such affirmation, such love into your life that your soul will come alive, and you will discover joy (Ephesians 2:4-5) - that's good news - yes!

It would be great if this was the only truth we needed to know, that just laying hold of God's yes kept our souls in perfect working order. However, although I know the power of God's yes in the real day to day of my life, I also know that once in a while

there are days, when it's as if I never heard of Jesus and never knew of his love at all. There are days where the "no" in my head, the no that says; you messed up, you'll mess up again, you're weak, you don't belong here, nobody really likes, just give up - there are days, or at least moments, when that "no" seems so much more louder and more powerful than God's "yes".

The reason for this is that not many people get through life without coping some damage to their soul. Soul damage comes from bad things that have happened to us, bad things that we have done and what is not always recognised, soul damage also comes from deficits, things that should have happened to us and didn't, such as being loved and accepted. The names for the lingering after-effects of this kind of soul damage are fear, guilt and rejection which manifest in our lives as such things as negative thinking, depression and anxiety. Altogether soul damage is often experienced as a powerful and persistent "no" that echoes through our heart and is continually in competition with the "yes" in our life.

One person's life who clearly illustrates this is Moses. Moses was a man with excellent abilities, all the advantages of a first class education and access to unlimited opportunities. He would be someone that you would write "most likely to succeed" in the school year book. But the truth was that soul damage and in particular, fear, guilt and rejection, came very close to derailing his life completely. Although Moses was adopted into the most powerful family of the time, the Egyptian royal family, sometimes privilege is a two edged sword. Sometimes growing up being told you can do anything because you are a prince of Egypt makes you more wilful than wise.

*One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labour. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (Exodus 2:11-12)*

Glancing this way and that? Sizing up his opportunity? This was premeditated murder and what it demonstrated is that you can have a God given calling on your life and still mess it up because you don't have sufficient character. Moses has the capacity, he has the calling to help his people but at the moment he lacks the character. He is a spoilt brat who believes he can do anything and get away with it. So he murders this guy and hides the body in a shallow grave in the sand. But the event has triggered something in Moses, his sense of calling to help his people, so the very next day he visit the Hebrew section of town with disastrous results.

*The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?" The man said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "What I did must have become known." When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well. (Exodus 2:13-15)*

Moses reaches out to his fellow Hebrews only to be strongly rejected and to discover that his murder wasn't the secret he thought it was. Then his adopted father gets wind of things and wants to kill Moses, so Moses has to run for his life, filled with fear, guilt and rejection. But it's a funny thing about a calling from God, even when you right royally mess things up, God doesn't take it away, God doesn't say no, God still says yes. He says, I called you, we'll just have to pick up the pieces and keep going, which is what the next part of the story is about.

*Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock. (Exodus 2:16-17)*

You see Moses had a God given calling on his life to champion injustice, so when he sees a group of shepherds bullying a group of woman he instinctively steps in to help. As a trained Egyptian prince he knew his way around a short sword and as the shepherds sized up the capable looking young Egyptian with the deadly looking weapon they decided discretion was the better part of valour and took off. While this act demonstrates Moses calling, it doesn't yet demonstrate that Moses is free from his demons because he will hide out in Midian for the next 40 years. But God will not, cannot leave Moses to wallow in his sense of failure, so God has a plan. The women Moses recues are the daughters of a priest of Midian, The Midian's were the descendants of one of the sons of Abraham from his second marriage (Genesis 25:1-3), a people who would know something of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Because what Moses needs most of all at this point in his life, even though he doesn't realise it, is spiritual guidance and healing. So Moses marries one of the priest's daughters and lives in the priest's house and takes on the vocation of a shepherd. You see Moses thinks that he is hiding from his past but God is actually carefully preparing him for his future.

Which brings us to one of the most famous moments in the Moses saga, the burning bush. Now the big question is, why does God speak to Moses in this way? God has many conversations with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob without utilising any fiery foliage or burning banksias, so why now? The answer revolves around Moses state of mind. Moses has not fully dealt with the fear, guilt and rejection that overwhelmed him all those years ago. You see if we don't want to deal with things we try to push them away, but all we really do is push them down, and what's down there is - us. We commonly call this living in denial, and denial quickly takes over our lives. In denial our soul shuts down, locking away the things we cannot bare to remember, but also preventing us from moving forward and growing because, what you hide cannot be healed. If Moses is to become whole again in character and calling he has to face his demons. Unfortunately people who have made denial their life style find that very difficult. Sometimes something really startling has to happen to make us stop and pay attention to what's going on, maybe something like a burning bush?

*A man sat at a metro station in Washington DC and started to play the violin; it was a cold January morning. He played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that*

*thousands of people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.*

*Three minutes went by and a middle aged man noticed there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds and then hurried on to meet his schedule. A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip: a woman threw the money in the tin and without stopping continued to walk. A few minutes later, someone leaned against the wall to listen to him, but the man looked at his watch and started to walk again. Clearly he was late for work.*

*The one who paid the most attention was a 3 year old boy. His mother tugged him along, hurrying, but the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced them to move on.*

*In the 45 minutes the musician played, only 6 people stopped and stayed for a while. About 20 gave him money but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected \$32. When he finished playing and silence took over, no one noticed it. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition.*

*No one knew this, but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the finest violinists in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written by one of the greatest composers of all time with a violin worth 3.5 million dollars. Two days before his playing in the subway, Joshua Bell had sold out at a theatre in Boston and the seats averaged \$100.*

*This is a real story. Joshua Bell playing incognito in the metro station was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and priorities of people. The outlines were: in a commonplace environment at an inappropriate hour:*

*Do we perceive beauty?*

*Do we stop to appreciate it?*

*Do we recognize the talent in an unexpected context?*

*One of the possible conclusions from this experience could be:*

*If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world playing the best music ever written, how many other things are we missing? But then what if the man was on fire – would we stop and wonder what on earth was going on and then hear the music?*

Through the burning bush God grabs Moses attention, so he can hear the music, because it's time for Moses to get back into life. God's plan is fairly straightforward, he simply urges Moses to go back and fulfil his calling and in doing so God forces the hidden fear, guilt and rejection to come running up from the basement of Moses heart.

*So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:10-11)*

### **No – I'm not good enough**

*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 will worship God on this mountain." 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?" (Exodus 3:12-13)*

### **No – I'm not capable**

*Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you'?" (Exodus 4:1)*

### **No – I'm afraid**

*Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." (Exodus 4:10)*

### **No – I'm stupid**

These are the no's that rattle around in people's heads and prevent people from having life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

### **The "no's" of Moses**

No – I'm not good enough  
 No – I'm not capable  
 No – I'm afraid  
 No – I'm stupid

God combats this litany of "no's" rising up out of Moses Spirit with his own unconditional "yes" – his unconditional promises

### **The "yes" of God**

Yes – you are good enough - because I called you  
 Yes – you are capable – because I prepared you  
 Yes – you can face this – because I will be with you  
 Yes – you don't need to worry – because I will take care of you

One of the best ways for damaged souls to be healed is to allow the "yes" of God to shine in that place where our "no" lives. This is about taking to the places of our fear and our guilt and our rejection, the promises of God contained in his word. Speaking those promises again and again, speaking God's "yes" into the places in our life where "no" has taken root. Which little by little will heal and change us.

*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 1:20)*

The Apostle Peter makes the same point

*His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4)*

Now you may have got through life without too much damage to your soul, so you don't have too much of an internal "no" to deal with. Or you may be a long way down the path of healing. But if you are still battling with negative thoughts, depression or anxiety and it's hard for you, and I know how hard it can be, I've been there, I want you to take heart from Moses. Moses struggled with all kinds of negative thinking and anxiety and almost certainly depression, but in God's yes, in God's promises, he found healing and everything he needed to live out his calling. We know this because at the end of his life Moses was a different guy who had clearly been healed. We see this particularly in some wonderful advice Moses gave to his successor Joshua. This is what Moses said:

*The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." (Deuteronomy 31:8)*

God can do the same for anyone when we allow God to speak his "yes" into our "no"

Let's pray