

Organized for God's Mission (Exodus 18:1-27)

Exodus 18:1-27: Organized for God's Mission

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Introduction

- Chess club - Every dad's dream - that their son make the chess team. Learning how to play chess - a complicated game - different pieces, different things, different strategies, but checkmate is the goal.
- You've likely been a part of several churches over the course of your life. Each church is different. Different people, different contexts, different emphasis, different methods, different strategies, etc.
- While every church is unique, every church has the same mission: to make disciples of all nations - to share the Gospel and help people grow in a relationship with Jesus.
- Success in the mission depends on all of us participating in the mission. Are you participating? How important is the local church to you? How important is the mission of God to you? Easy to get distracted from the mission that God has for us.
- [Exodus 18](#) an interesting passage that seems like a simple lesson in delegation, and it seems like an odd place to have an inserted story where Moses' father-in-law is giving him leadership lessons. But, there is much going on in this passage to help us to understand how to live out the mission of God together.
- [Exodus 18](#) a turning point in the book. It's the epilogue for 1-17 and the prologue for 19-40.
- God has a mission for the Israelites: to be a holy nation that is a blessing to the world as they point the nations to the true God.
- How can we live out the mission of God effectively at Northwood?

Always be ready to testify to God's amazing grace.

- Journey through the wilderness, Moses leads the people to where he started - the mountain of God (vs. 5), Horeb, where God appeared to him at the burning bush.
- A family reunion - Moses reunited with Jethro, his wife, and children. Names of two sons in some ways tell Moses' story. (vs. 3-4) Did Moses send Zipporah back after the circumcision of his son? ([Exodus 4:26](#)) Sent her home for her and the boys home for their own protection? We don't know...

- vs. 7-8 - Moses shows honor and respect to her father-in-law. Focus is not on Moses' reunion with his wife and children but with his father-in-law. Why? Jethro is a priest of Midian - he ministered for a pagan god. He had not been a believer in Yahweh. Further, the Midianites would eventually be enemies of Israel. In [Numbers 22-25](#), they allied with the Moabites to oppose Israel. In [Judges 6-8](#), during the time of Gideon, they oppressed Israel.
- But, God at work in the life of Jethro, the Midianite priest. Moses takes him into his tent and explains to him what God had done (vs. 7-8). Essentially, shares the Gospel (good news of deliverance) with Jethro. Doesn't leave anything out of the story. Tells Jethro of the hardships, the plagues, and the undeniable power of God who delivered them from Egypt.
- vs. 9-11: Jethro rejoiced! Jethro confesses Yahweh as the true God who is greater than all the gods! Perhaps this is conversion experience. Perhaps Jethro had already known about Yahweh, but Moses' testimony confirmed for Jethro that Yahweh was the true God. Jethro is a believer! Significant - Israel's deliverance was a testimony of the greatness of God, and God desired to use their deliverance to draw the nations to Himself. Now, a priest of another nation a believer in the true God!
- vs. 12- Jethro makes a burnt offering and eats a meal with Moses and the elders of Israel in God's presence. Jethro is a part of the people of God. Burnt offering = atonement for sins. Meal = a sign of fellowship. A meal to which the nations are invited - someday we will feast together at the marriage supper of the Lamb with believers from all nations.
- What I love about this story is that upon their reunion, Moses wastes no time in sharing the good news of God's deliverance. It's a reminder to us to always be ready to testify to God's amazing grace.
- **Never underestimate the power of a Gospel conversation.** [Romans 10:14](#) - Someone cannot be saved without hearing the Gospel, and proclamation of the Gospel has much power to save. You do know that God has called you to be faithful to share the Gospel. Period. That's the mission. You have a story of redemption to tell. Your story is powerful. Constantly remind yourself of your own story. You don't know how God might use your Gospel conversations. A Midianite priest converted? How many Midianites converted because of Jethro? Certainly not all, but I'm sure some. That one person you share with may lead many to Christ. That child that comes to faith in Christ through our faithful witness, that teenager, that friend, etc. What might God do? Don't give up. (Gospel conversations like the one Moses has is how the good news spreads to the nations. This is the NORMAL, God-ordained way.)
- **Be specific in your Gospel conversations.** Your testimony is NOT the Gospel, but your testimony is the RESULT of the Gospel. Sharing the Gospel is not inviting someone to church or telling someone that God loves them or that you are praying for them. Tell people that, but actually share the Gospel. You need to get really good at sharing the Gospel. The Gospel = that Jesus died for our sins and rose again three

days later. When sharing the Gospel, you must talk about sins, why it was necessary for Jesus to die, that He died, and that He rose again.

- Who do you need to share the Gospel with? Will you share the Gospel? We are all tasked with that responsibility.

Always be willing to live out God's mission with the people of God.

- Jethro accompanies Moses to work and doesn't like what he sees (vs. 13-14). Moses personally ministering to over 600,000 people. A long line from morning until evening of people wanting Moses to judge their disputes.
- vs. 15-16 - People see Moses as the only person who can help them to know what God wants for them. Imagine how burdensome to day in and day out minister to one person after the next with no help.
- vs. 17-18 "What you are doing is not good..." Jethro a brand-new convert, but wise enough to see that what Moses was doing was not good. Jethro knew that Moses would wear himself out.
- vs. 19-20 - Jethro, a new believer who came from a pagan background, gives Moses a plan that Moses will follow.
- Moses should continue to be a mediator and be responsible for teaching the people the statutes and laws, but he needed others to join him in the work. It was too great a task for him alone.
- vs. 21 - Jethro specific on who was to join him in the work - mature, God-fearing, trustworthy men who weren't in it for their own profit. Placed over different numbers of people so that everyone had care.
- vs. 22- The major cases came to Moses, the rest were resolved among the smaller groups. Everyone beared the burden and shared the load.
- People equipped for ministry and Moses able to stay focused on what God called him to do. Another reminder that Moses was insufficient. He was mightily used by God but was not sufficient to do the work of God alone. He needed help.
- Why this story? To remind us that God's mission would not be accomplished through a single person but through His collective people, through a holy nation set apart for His purposes. Ultimately, God's mission accomplished through the church as we point people to the One who is completed the work of God on our behalf by dying in our place and rising again. These verses remind us:
- **Have the right expectations for your church.** NOT come to receive but come to learn how to bless. NOT one person or a few people doing the work of ministry for you to benefit from, but all of us serving together to accomplish the mission of making

disciples. NOT what can I can, but what can I give. Have the right expectation of your pastors - we are player-coaches. Coaching you and in the game with you.

- **Take membership seriously.** Why do we have church membership? Your way of identifying with this local body and saying that you are committed to living out the mission of God with this community. Taking membership seriously means you actually actually make a commitment, you serve with us, and you don't leave when you get mad. Instead, you do your best to resolve conflict, love, forgive, and continue to serve God in unity with His people unless it is clear that God is leading you elsewhere.
- **Step up and serve.** We need you engaged in ministry - especially guest services, children's ministry, student ministry, discipleship groups (ladies). All of these ministries are impacting people with the Gospel. With the Family of Churches growing, we're sending people out. Who will step up and lead in places where someone has gone out from our church? Be faithful in those ministries - e.g., children's ministry - keep your commitment. Be a person of your word.
- **Know your limitations.** Easy for us all to get burned out in ministry/church life. God is not calling you to do everything, nor has God gifted you to do everything. God is simply asking you to be faithful to live out the mission of God with the body of Christ. You can't share the Gospel with everyone, but you can share with someone this week. You can't serve in every ministry of the church, but you can serve in the ministries that God has called you to. You can't go on every mission trip, but you can go on one. You can also say, "no," instead of saying "yes" to everything, but you must say "yes" to those things you know God has called you to. We're not called to fulfill the mission alone, we're called to unite with a local church, live out our calling, and serve the Lord together.
- The mission is worth it - children and students in our church need the hope of the Gospel invested in them. People that you work with and love, need the Gospel invested in them.
- The mission is worth it because Jesus is worthy of worship of all people. He is worth making known because He came to deliver us from sin and death. Have you placed your faith in the ONE who came, lived for you, died for you, and rose again for you?

, 2025. Discussion Questions for Sunday, April 13, 2025.

Starting the Conversation (5-10 minutes)

1. Who have you share the Gospel with this past month? What testimony can you share with your group about a Gospel conversation you've recently had?

Application (10-15 minutes)

1. What lessons can we learn from Jethro's response to God's work in Israel? How should we respond when we hear about God's power in others' lives?
2. What is the Gospel? How can you be more faithful to share the Gospel this week?
3. What unrealistic expectations do you sometimes have of your church? What should you expect from your church?
4. What does it look like to be a faithful member to a local church? How can you encourage others within our church to be faithful to the ministry that God has called them to in our church?