

FALSE START: THE DELIVERER IS DELAYED

EXODUS 2:11-15

If you have ever watched any football, it wasn't long before you saw a "false start" penalty. A false start is when an offensive player on the line of scrimmage moves prior to the ball being snapped.

The play starts with the team in a huddle where they go over the play. It is there that they make a plan. Included in this play or plan is the snap count. That tells the center when to snap the ball so that everyone else can complete his assignment for that play. They then break the huddle and move to the line of scrimmage where they get into the appropriate set for that play. The QB then begins to call the snap count and if all goes as planned the center's snap of the ball is just slightly ahead of the movement of the offensive players.

However, as with most things in life, they don't always come off as planned. Eventually someone is going to "jump off-sides." That results in a penalty that sets the team back five yards, thus delaying the play and making it harder to score.

Football is a lot like life. Very seldom do things go according to plan - especially our plan. But that is the beauty of being a Christian. We aren't supposed to run according to our plan. Our lives are supposed to run according to God's plan. We don't have to call the play, we just have to get on the line of scrimmage and move to God's snap-count. We just have to

execute our part of the play and let God call the game. We aren't the offensive coordinator or the coach. We are merely players in this ballgame of life. It is God's responsibility to have the game plan. We merely have to be willing to execute the portion of the play for which we are responsible.

Well, forty years have passed between verses 10 and 11. Moses is now a grown man. He has been educated in the all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

Acts 7:21,22

21 But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. 22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

Moses was raised as an Egyptian in the royal household. He was schooled in everything from architecture and mathematics to engineering and law. He was even schooled in war and won a great battle against the Ethiopians. This made him a famous man in Egypt.

We may ask why Moses had to go through all this, but I think the reason should be self-evident. Moses was chosen to take an extended family out of slavery into what was a strange land to them. But the job didn't just consist of relocating people. He had to build a nation. He had to give them not only laws but also infrastructure. He had to set up a military. He had to learn how to deal with an extremely large number of people. He had to be a leader. His Egyptian education was needed for all this. God's mechanism for Moses' education was his being brought up as an Egyptian. In fact, he had to learn to walk like an

Egyptian.

Moses knew what his purpose in life was. Though most saw him as an Egyptian, Moses knew he was a Hebrew.

Hebrews 11:24-26

24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

There came a time when Moses felt he had to fulfill his destiny and though others saw him as an Egyptian, he could no longer fool himself.

Exodus 2:11-15

11 Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" 14 Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!" 15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

Moses knew what he had to do but he didn't know how to do it. He had some idea of the plan. He knew God wanted to score a touchdown but he didn't what the snap-count was. Moses jumped off sides. He got ahead of God. Instead of waiting for God to call the play he put his own plan into action and got flagged for it. However, he wasn't penalized five yards, he was penalized 40 years! He wasn't ready to lead and the Hebrews weren't ready to be lead.

Acts 7:24,25

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. 25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.

Have you ever gotten ahead of God's timing? I have on several occasions. As soon as I completed my schooling for the ministry and was ordained, I can remember thinking, "Ok Lord. Here I am. Where is the church you want me to pastor?" It would be more than 10 years before I became a senior pastor. I thought I was ready. Then, when churches weren't knocking down my door I began to wonder what was wrong. I had been through school. I was obviously ready. But God didn't think so.

We often get ahead of God. It is easy to put the cart before the horse. I have seen this time and again. It manifests in many different ways.

While coaching football, you would see guys that didn't want to go through spring training or summer workouts. They just

wanted to play on Friday nights.

Men and children are often guilty of not reading the instructions when they get a new toy. They just want to play with it. But the instructions are important. To the football player, spring training and summer workouts are a necessity if you want to be successful on Friday nights. My philosophy was, "You practice hard so the games are easy."

To the child of God intent on carrying out the will of God, there is a time for instruction and many times it is much longer than we would care to think.

Moses is not ready to lead his people. He thinks he is going to liberate them by killing gone Egyptian at a time. That is too much of a task even for Charlton Heston. Moses was working on his own timeline and not God's.

David Guzik put it this way:

"Moses planned the deliverance of Israel the way any man would, and logically saw himself as the key man - because of his royal background, education, success, and sympathy for his people."

Moses had his plans, and they made sense from his perspective. Yet God's plan was radically different. 40 years later, God led Moses and his brother Aaron to Pharaoh with a special stick that turned into a snake. Moses asked Pharaoh to let Israel go back to Canaan; Pharaoh said no, so God brought plagues of blood, frogs, mosquitoes, flies, cattle disease, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness. Finally God judged stubborn Pharaoh and Egypt with a plague on the firstborn of Egypt,

Israel escaped across the Red Sea. The waters of the Red Sea came back and killed the Egyptian army, and the Israelites crossed the wilderness and arrived in Canaan. **Such an unlikely plan would never come from the mind of man.**

We can also see that Moses knew what he was doing was wrong. Before he killed the Egyptian he looked both ways. There was something inside of him that knew this wasn't right. He felt he could force God's hand. That is an impossible thing to do. God is omniscient. That means He is all knowing. Nothing takes him by surprise. What Moses did was reveal to himself that he wasn't ready to lead and his people weren't ready to follow him. You aren't a leader because you stand up and declare it. You are a leader when God calls you to be one and when you look behind and people are following. Moses couldn't lead his own people at this time because he was still seen as an Egyptian. He had to come out of the palace in order to lead his people. Jesus had to leave Heaven in order to come down here and minister to us. It takes more than a title or a badge to make someone a leader. And you can't lead those that don't want to be lead.

At any rate Moses was now a wanted man. He had to flee from his palace and his position of prominence. He had jumped off side and to some he is taken out of the game. They would see him as being sidelined, but I don't see it that way.

As a coach, you never stop coaching. You take advantage of every opportunity you have to teach. That is what God is doing here. Moses is right where God wants him.

Psalms 37:23

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.

Moses was actually too big for God to use while he was in Egypt. Moses was educated in the secular realm. Now he has to be schooled spiritually in order to carry out God's plan. He will have to be humbled and taught to be a servant.

That can be the case for most of us. We are either jumping the gun or we are standing on the brakes. Both can be detrimental to us carrying out the will of God. Walking in lock step with God is what we should all desire, and to do that we have to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

Once again we see God moving in even the smallest of things in order to position His child/ children. We see that God isn't in a hurry. He knows that it takes time to prepare us for what we are to do. In my experience, there seem to be times of increased activity and then there seem to be lulls in activity. It takes time for us to digest what God is doing in our lives. But we are to continue plodding along the football field of life. There will be long gains, penalties, losses of yardage and some hard fought plays for just a few inches here and there. But we are on God's team. And He wins in the end.

God called you, not because you are the most awesome player, but because He loves you. He has a purpose for you.

Can you remember a time on the playground as a child when teams were being chosen? No one wants to be the last to be picked. Well, guess what. You weren't the last. You were chosen before time began. God wanted you on His team! You have a purpose and He wants you in the game! God's team may look

like a bunch of rag-tag kids no one else wanted to pick, but we win the game! That's how much God loves you. He has chosen you. So let's get back into the huddle, block out all the crowd noise, listen to the play call and the snap count.