

(Exodus) Exodus 18:13-27

by J. Vernon McGee

The sermon teaches that the wisdom of the world is contrary to God's wisdom and that we need to seek the power of God, not more methods or different methods.

Duration: 10:56

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-5, Exodus 18:13-23, Matthew 6:33, Luke 10:1, Luke 22:66-71

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Moses and his father-in-law, Jethro. Jethro observes Moses working tirelessly to judge the people and suggests that Moses lighten his load by appointing others to help him. However, the speaker emphasizes that Moses didn't need an organization or a method to fulfill his duties; he had the power of God. The speaker warns against relying on methods or new techniques in the church, emphasizing the need for the power of God instead.

Transcript

Now, we find that the father-in-law decides to stay for a little while. Verse 13, "...it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood by Moses from the morning until the evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning until evening? And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God.

When they have a matter, they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God and His laws. And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away both thou and this people that is with thee, for this thing is too heavy for thee.

Thou art not able to form it thyself alone. Harken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee. Be thou for the people to Godward, and thou mayest bring the causes unto God.

And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers of thousands and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens, and let them judge the people at all seasons. And it shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge.

So shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. And thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so. Then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.

So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. Now, somebody is apt to say, well, what in the world is wrong with this? You seem to think that there's something wrong here.

Well, may I say to you that on the surface, everything looks fine. Moses' father-in-law obviously loved him, had great respect for him, and was enthusiastic about him. And he's come out now, and he's brought Moses' wife to him.

And so he hangs around for a few days for a visit, and then he sees how busy Moses is judging the people. So he comes up with a suggestion to lighten the load of Moses. Now, somebody is apt to say, well, what in the world is wrong with that? It doesn't seem to me to be anything radically wrong there at all.

Well, there are two kinds of wisdom in this world. Someone has said, the poet has, when ignorance is blessed, is folly to be wise. Now, actually, this passage here teaches when it's foolish to be wise.

And the thing that Moses' father-in-law was suggesting was the wisdom of the world. That was not God's wisdom, and it was not the thing God wanted done. This incident reveals how easy it is to accept the wisdom of the world, and to follow the pattern of the world, and not look to God.

I personally believe that today the reason that most of our churches are in trouble is because men have been brought into the church and put on a board, are given a place of prominence, a high position, because they are men who've been successful in business, and out in the business world they've made a go of it, but they have no spiritual discernment whatsoever. And therefore, the church has attempted to put in the methods of the world, the program of the world, and that just simply doesn't work. I am perfectly willing to say that the suggestions and the recommendations that Moses' father-in-law made were good ones.

It would take the load off of Moses. It would expedite matters. It would be orderly.

It would conserve time. And it has all of that. That makes it look like a very attractive package.

And his suggestion was a sincere one. He meant well. He was prompted by a concern for the health of Moses.

And you can't help but love him for this. He was anxious about Moses. And we also need to note this was not God's will, but God permitted it.

Here you have the permissive will of God. If God would only stop us when we're wrong, it'd sure be helpful, by the way. But he permits it.

He permits us sometimes when we go on headstrong with adopting methods that are contrary to what he wants done. Now, let's make a careful examination of this. I read all of this purposely to you today.

And I think it'll take a careful examination to discover the subtle and sinister character of this man's advice. Notice, first of all, God had given no such instructions to Moses. It actually questioned the wisdom, the

judgment, and the love of God.

In other words, God wasn't doing the best that he could about Moses. Now, if God really loved Moses and cared for him, God would have made this suggestion a long time ago. And friends, I can hear the hiss of the serpent that was back in the Garden of Eden here.

Because you remember, that was a suggestion to Eve. Oh, if you could only eat of that tree, you'd be wise. And God just hadn't permitted you to do that.

In other words, God's not doing the best that he could by you. Now, if this had been best, God would have made this arrangement before. But it wasn't best.

Now, that's something to note. There's a second thing here. God was dealing with Moses directly.

He was equipping him for the great task of delivering this people. And God did not want a third party brought in. He didn't want the introduction of a party which would dissipate or insulate the power of God coming directly to Moses.

You remember, God spoke face to face with Moses. And there is the tendency to want things and persons come between us and God. There are a great many people who do not like to do business directly with God.

They like to go through a manor, church, or a ceremony, or through something, or even a book, or go to a conference. All of these have their place. But friends, we need to go directly to God.

And God was dealing with Moses directly, and he didn't want this crowd in there. Now, there's a third thing to note here when you look at it in depth. It created an organization out of which came the Seventy later on.

And the Seventy were the Sanhedrin. And one night, oh, about 1,500 years after this, that Sanhedrin met and plotted the death of the Son of God. My friend, Moses didn't need this organization.

God gave Moses power for the task and these arduous duties. These Seventy men were not any more efficient for God than one. After all, it's the Spirit that quickeneth.

And I want to say something at this particular juncture. There are people today in the church that feel like that what we need is the right method. We need to adopt the right method.

And right now, we've got a bunch of preachers that are acting rather foolish, and I think rather silly. They're trying to identify themselves with this now generation. And they say they want to communicate.

We have a seminary in Southern California that majors in this type of thing of being able to identify and communicate. And do you know that I never hear of them really reaching down and touching human life in Southern California? They just don't do it, friends. You see, today, God doesn't have to have a method or an organization or numbers or a system or some to come between or a ritual of good works.

You see, the wisdom of God sweeps all of this aside, and there's nothing between our soul and God, and there's no broken reed to lean upon. The wisdom of God and the wisdom of man are contradictory, so much so that if one is wisdom, the other is foolishness. And God says the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, and the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of the world.

Oh, if I could only get this over today to our seminaries, even so-called good seminaries training our young men, that today they need to have the intellectual approach. They need to be clever and that type of thing. God has said it's not with enticing words of man's wisdom, and it's not in the words which man's wisdom teach it.

And the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and the wisdom that's from above is the wisdom we need today. And therefore, the thing that's important here, and it's a tremendous lesson for us today, we need the power of God, not more methods or different methods or new methods.

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