

Basics... Why Our Church Exists!

Part 5 - Serving... No More Fear!

Exodus 3-4 - October 11, 2009

Isn't it amazing the excuses kids can come up with when they want to miss school? The following list is actual excuses kids wrote to their schools when being readmitted after having been gone:

- My son is under the doctor's care and should not take PE today. Please execute him.
- Dear school: Please excuse John being absent Jan 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and also 33.
- Please excuse Mary for being absent; she was sick and I had her shot.

We laugh, but I find we give God excuses, too, especially when it comes to serving Him. We have all kinds of doubts and fears. Do you ever...

- Do you ever wonder whether God could use you?
- Do you have a desire to serve God but are afraid of people's responses?
- Do you ever worry about measuring up?
- Do you want to lead, but wonder if anyone will follow?

Moses had all these same feelings and fears. These fears initially held him captive. In fact he gave God 5 excuses as to why he couldn't serve Him. Ironically today, we give God the same excuses/fears as Moses did.

This morning we come to the final reason for the church. We exist to Reach, Connect, Grow, Worship, and... Serve! When you serve others in Jesus' name, you're ministering. God didn't design ministry for just a few people. We believe that every member of our church is a minister. **We are committed to serving through ministry and acts of compassion.**

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Ephesians 4:11,12 "He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to this work and build up the church, the body of Christ."

Proposition: What are the fears and excuses that keep us from serving God?

Background:

1. v. 2 – Burning Bush Scene... Moses was taking care of the sheep for his father-in-law Jethro.

² 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.

2. v. 7 – God sees the Israelite suffering

⁷ 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.

3. v. 8-9 – He's going to do something about it

⁸ 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. ⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.

4. v. 10 – Therefore – Moses you are elected! He tells Moses that he is going to lead the Israelites out of Egypt

¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

Moses' response reflects his fear...Sure, God, where's the straight jacket! God picks the most unlikely people to be leaders. (Ex. 12 Apostles – fishermen, etc.)

AN ANALYSIS

I. Excuse #1

A. **His Feeling: I am inadequate... I am not worthy**

¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

1. Who am I? I don't come from the right neighborhood.
2. **Def of inadequacy** – An inordinate focus on one's weaknesses; worrywart!

B. **His Excuse: No ability**

1. Moses doubts his leadership capabilities. How quickly he forgets that he was raised in Egypt and grew up in Pharaoh's court. I don't have the skills necessary
2. Do you ever feel inadequate for what He has called you to do? As a leader, let them see your cracks... then you'll have an impact. (Admit your needs)

C. **God's Answer: Companionship (v. 12)**

¹²And 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."

1. Certainly (not sometimes or maybe) I'll be with you.
2. God calms our fears by providing his companionship. He will never leave us!
3. **Illus.**: Fear paralyzes us (1st time by myself with no babysitter!). Creepy crawlers, call Grandma. When parents were there, there was no fear.
4. All new ministry assignments are scary...
 - Teaching in KidVenture
 - Discipling a new believer
 - Planning a women's event
5. This poem describes how God feels about us. ***Five Leaves and Two Fishes***

God uses what you have... to fill a need which you never could have filled.

God uses where you are... to take you where you never could have gone.

God uses what you can do... to accomplish what you never could have done.

God uses who you are... to let you become who you never could have been.

-Philip Clarke Brewer

II. Excuse #2

A. His Feeling: I am insecure

¹³Moses 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?"

1. Finally dawns on him, "What will I say?" "What is His name?" "Who is this God?" They'll say, "Who are you? We don't know you!"
2. He has a crisis of confidence

B. His Excuse: I don't have the right message... I don't know enough!

C. God's Answer: He instills confidence

1. Reminder of who God is (v. 15-16)

¹⁵God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob – has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. ¹⁶"Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt.'

- God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Historical significance... Miracles
 - App: Discover who God is in His Word – We need to be reminded of his power today
 - Ex – My scholarship to Biola
2. Reminder of what he can do (v. 17-22)

- **Take** them to a new land (v. 17)

¹⁷And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites – a land flowing with milk and honey.’

- **Trouble** Pharaoh – until he lets them go (v. 20)

²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

- **Turn** the Egyptians hearts towards them so that they might prosper! (v. 21)

²¹“And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed.

3. **App:** God knows the answers... Are you confident in His power or your own? Do you need God?

III. Excuse #3

A. **His Feeling: Intimidation**

¹Moses answered, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you?’”

1. What if they say I’m crazy... God hasn’t spoken to you. Won’t believe or listen to me! Doubt begins to creep in!

B. **His Excuse: No Authority... “I am afraid of their reaction”**

1. How would He prove His authority? Legitimate fear?

2. **App:** Sometimes you must prove yourself

C. **God’s Answer: Courage – I’ll give you authority. I will demonstrate my power!**

1. v. 4 – staff/serpent. What’s in your hand?

⁴Then the LORD said to him, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.” So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand.

2. v. 6-7 – Hand in shirt – leprosy

⁶Then the LORD said, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous, like snow. ⁷“Now put it back into your cloak,” he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.

3. v. 9 – Water into blood

⁹But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground.”

D. **App:** God can handle any objections... your changed life is God’s greatest miracle to the unbeliever! What does God have to do to get you to trust Him?

IV. Excuse # 4

A. **His Feeling: I am incapable**

¹⁰Moses 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.”

B. **His Excuse: No eloquence...I am not a great speaker**

1. I stutter a lot... haven’t taken speech yet. I’m not a great speaker. I am not on the debate team! I haven’t ever won a ribbon in the past, and you haven’t changed things in the last few minutes.

2. **Illus.** Kid with a speech impediment... phone call

3. Public speaking a the number 1 fear of adults

C. **God’s Answer: Competence... “I made your mouth”**

¹¹The LORD said to him, “Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹²Now then go; and I even I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to say.”

1. Who made your mouth? Self-image was the key. God doesn’t make mistakes in design

2. **Illus.:** Brazil kids couldn’t come up with something unique.

V. Excuse #5

A. His Feeling: Inferior

¹⁵You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do.

1. Send anyone else but me! Trying to escape. Didn't have any excuse. He had gotten very desperate!
2. He is out of excuses!

B. His Excuse: No excuse... "I want someone else to do it!"

C. God's Answer: Consternation "I know your brother can do it!"

1. It is the only time that God gets mad at Moses. He puts up with the previous 4 excuses. God is patient with us to a point.
2. He even provides Aaron as his spokesman.

VI. An Application

A. Realize that you are unique and valuable.

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" Psalm 139:14

B. Remember God's promises.

1. "It's impossible."

"All things are possible with me." Luke 18:27

2. "I'm not able."

"I am able." II Corinthians 9:8

3. "I can't manage."

"I will supply all your needs." Philippians 4:19

4. "I can't go on."

"You can do all things through me." Philippians 4:13

C. Reaffirm your willingness to be used by God.

"...And I said here I am, send me!" Isaiah 6:8

Table Talk... Take some time at lunch with your family or in your life group this week to talk about the sermon and how you will apply God’s Word to your life this week. *“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers...” James 1:22*

✓ **Look at it:**

1. What excuses did Moses give to God as to why he couldn’t serve Him?
 - 3:11 _____
 - 3:13 _____
 - 4:1 _____
 - 4:10 _____
 - 4:13 _____
2. What is Moses feeling in each of his “discussions” with God?
3. What are the 3 signs God gave to Moses? Why are they significant? (Exodus 4:1-9)
4. Why did God get mad at Moses? (Exodus 4:14)

✓ **Live it:**

1. What keeps some people from serving God?
2. Share a time when you felt inadequate or that no one understood what you were feeling.
3. Which feelings of Moses do you identify with and why?
4. What is an area of ministry do you need to serve in? What keeps you from doing it?
5. What gifts do you have that could be used by the church?
6. If you knew you couldn’t fail, what ministry would you serve in? Why?