

TITLE: LACK OF EXCUSES

TEXT: EXODUS 3 - 4

INTRO: During Isaiah's day, when God needed a worker, Isaiah said, "Here am I, send me (**Isa 6:8**). When God called Moses from the burning bush, his response was similar, yet very different – "*Here am I*" (**Ex 3:4**). Instead of following this with "Send me," he found out what God wanted, then made excuses. This is the way so many people are today about Christianity. It sounds good, until we find out the seriousness of it. Then we make excuses.

I. LACK OF SELF-ESTEEM – EXCUSES #1 & #2 (3:11, 13):

- A. God's command (**3:1-10**) – His introduction (v. 5-6), His mission – deliver Israel (v. 7-9); His messenger – Moses (v. 10)!
- B. Moses' 1st excuse (v. 11) – "Who am I?" Humility is good, but Moses didn't believe in himself, that he could go before Pharaoh.
- C. God's reply (v. 12) – "I'll be with you!" This should've been enough! It wasn't about Moses, his abilities, or lack thereof. All things are possible with God.
- D. Moses' 2nd excuse (v. 13) – "What's your name?" This may seem like a legitimate question, but it's really an extension of his 1st excuse. He knows who this is - a voice coming from a bush that's burning but not consumed! This is none other than who He said He was – THE God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! Why does He need a name, or any other further info? This may have been a stall technique, looking for other questions or reasons not to have to go to Pharaoh. Moses knew enough!
- E. God's reply (v. 14-22) – I AM THAT I AM (I exist; eternity, no beginning/end, not derived from nature). He then repeats His introduction & mission.
- F. Who am I to talk to my neighbor, coworker, family member, etc.? There's a self-esteem excuse for each of these!

II. LACK OF FAITH (DOUBT) – EXCUSE #3 (4:1): Lack of faith in God's ability to prove himself

- A. (**4:1**) "They won't believe me or listen to me! 'God didn't appear to you!'" Probably a safe assumption, since there had been no record of God appearing to any Israelite since Jacob & Joseph. So why did Moses believe? Because God was talking to him from a burning bush! Did he think God wasn't prepared (or able) to prove Himself to the Israelites also (through Moses)?
- B. (**4:2-9**) God gives Moses three signs: rod into snake; leprous hand; water to blood.
- C. Does God give us anything? Or do we just believe and obey based on **no evidence at all**? Is that what our faith is?
- D. God gives us evidence (**Heb 11:1** – *faith is the evidence of things not seen*; **Rom 10:17** – *faith comes by...the word of God*). The Bible is evidence. It has never been proven inaccurate. But this takes effort on the part of the hearer (**Acts 17:11**). We as Christians need to be ready with an answer (**1 Pet 3:15**), showing them the evidence in the word – those things that are supported by science, medicine, history, and archaeology.
- E. Moses' excuse of doubt – doubt that anybody would believe he was from God – was ineffective. And so is ours!

III. LACK OF FAITH (FEAR) – EXCUSE #4 (4:10): Lack of faith in God's ability to work through him

- A. (**4:10**) "I'm not eloquent (a man of words)...I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue?" Moses must've had some sort of speech impediment that he thought would disqualify him from doing this job for God.
- B. Some Christians have speech impediments today as well. Does this exclude them from the Great Commission? Whatever physical disability you might have, it doesn't change anything! If you are mentally aware enough to know the plan of salvation, then you can teach it to others. You don't even have to read; just show them the scriptures!
- C. (**4:11-12**) God's response: "Who made your tongue? I'll be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say." This should've been a great comfort to Moses. **Phil 4:13** – "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*"

IV. LACK OF DESIRE – EXCUSE #5 (4:13): The need didn't outweigh the fear

- A. (**4:13**) O, Lord, send someone else! I'm afraid, I'm too weak, I'm not a good speaker, I don't want to! So different from Isaiah's response to God, "Here am I. Send me." And Isaiah's situation was really worse than Moses.'
- B. This is the real *reason*; the others are just *excuses*! We don't want to! Like Moses, this may be the foundational fault we all have (at least at times). For us, the need doesn't outweigh the self-esteem issues, doubt, fear, and lack of desire.
- C. (v. 14-17) God's response: Anger! He had successfully answered & resolved every "excuse" Moses had offered. So now He says that Aaron will be his spokesperson. Now Moses won't be alone. Aaron would be a support and encouragement for him in this mission. This is important for God's workers (not to be alone) – this is why God calls us to be an encouragement to each other.
- D. **Phil 4:19** – "*My God shall supply all your needs....*" ...so that you won't have any excuses!

CONCLUSION:

- A. The purpose of this sermon is *not* to put Moses down; it's to learn from his early mistakes. The problem in all these excuses was with self, not God. Moses was arguably the greatest leader God ever had. But he didn't start off so strong!
- B. Today God chooses us. He doesn't speak to us from a burning bush, but calls us by the gospel (**2 Thess 2:14**). And this gospel (grace / salvation) has appeared to *all* (**Titus 2:11**). So we all have the responsibility to listen, obey, & then work (**Mt 28:20**).
- C. People can (and do) make excuses, just like Moses did. The excuses may result in refusing to even study, refusing to be baptized, being baptized but refusing to grow spiritually, refusing to accept any responsibility in the church (worship, evangelizing, encouraging). Our excuses are nothing new. Most of them are just like Moses' excuses (same categories), and they are no more effective than his were!
- D. Moses went on to be a great leader. It doesn't matter what you've done up to now. It matters what you're going to do from now on. God was able to work through Moses' weaknesses, and He is able to work through ours too...if we will! Will we have a lack of faith, lack of self-esteem, lack of desire...or a lack of excuses?