

Moving In the Right Direction

Exodus Chapter 4

Exiled for 40 years from Egypt, Moses has become content to hide in Midian. But God has other plans. After being called, qualified and confirmed by God, in chapter 3 now the hard part comes. ...Actually moving out.

Exd 4:1 **1) Three Excuses** vs 1-17

Then Moses said, "What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"

- *Moses is at a place where he fears man. Reality and truth is that the Lord has appeared to him.*
- *EXCUSE #1 - He worries about the peoples' reaction.*

- *God demonstrates His powerful presence through two confirming signs.*

Exd 4:2 The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff."

Exd 4:3 Then He said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.

- *So Scary is this snake that Moses runs from it.*

Exd 4:4 But the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand and grasp {it} by its tail"--so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand--

Exd 4:5 "that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

1st sign

- *The serpent is a symbol of Satanic presence & a symbol of Egypt*
 - *Genesis 3 "I will put enmity between his seed (the serpent's) and your seed."*
 - *Ex 4:5 Serpent = NACHASH in general a snake; Ex 7:9 Serpent = TANNIYN a dragon symbol of Egypt*
- *Remember Moses ran from the snake and ran from Egypt*
- *Yet God makes him face his fears and tells him to pick up that snake and by it's tail, which will leave you in a vulnerable position. His head can still strike.*
- *Moses needs to pick it up before it is turned back into a stick. Yet God controls the snake and is in Moses' control*
- *This will be a sign to others that God has appeared to Moses, when Egypt will be in Moses control.*

Exd 4:6 The LORD furthermore said to him, "Now put your hand into your bosom." So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow.

2nd sign

Exd 4:7 Then He said, "Put your hand into your bosom again." So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like {the rest of} his flesh.

- *The Lord turned Moses' hand leprous then turned it back again.*
- *Leprosy has always been a sign of uncleanness. Leprosy can lay dormant in a person for years. When it starts to reveal itself it starts small but can over take the entire body. It first attacks the nervous system then causes blindness and skin diseases, rotting the entire body.*
- *Easton's Bible Dictionary "Leprosy was "the outward and visible sign of the innermost spiritual corruption; a meet emblem in its small beginnings, its gradual spread, its internal disfigurement, its dissolution little by little of the whole body, of that which corrupts, degrades, and defiles man's inner nature, and renders him unmeet to enter the presence of a pure and holy God"*
- *Numbers 12 Miriam & Aaron spoke against Moses and God's judgment was that they became leprous.*
- *This sign shows God's ability to clean that which is unclean. To heal that which is a death sentence.*

Exd 4:8 "If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign.

Exd 4:9 "But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take

some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

- *God's purpose in all this is not for people to marvel. It is to simply believe.*
- *What are signs and wonders for:*
 - *For the confirmation of the message Mark 16:20; Act 14:3; Rom 15:19; Hbr 2:4*
 - *For the edification of the assembly 1Cr 12:7; 14:12,13*
- *Here we see up to three miracles listed for Moses to perform for Israel to believe. For Pharaoh there will be 10 plagues and Moses is here encountering some and he is struggling to believe. Miracles might aid in belief but is never a requirement for belief.*

Exd 4:10 Then Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

- *Moses is at a place where he limits the possibility. He takes God out of the equation.*
- *EXCUSE #2 - He worries about his deficiencies.*

Exd 4:11 The LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes {him} mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

Exd 4:12 "Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say."

- *Job Complains that God does not hear him (job 13:3, 24; 19:7; 23:3-5; 30:20)*
- *Job Complains that he wouldn't do what God has done to him (30:21-26)*
- *God responds to Job in Job chapters 38-41 with a 57 question survey? The point is made.*
- *God is God and can do anything He desires.*
- *God uses the vessels he chooses. He knows their strengths and weaknesses. If God chooses you, he knows what you can do and cannot do. Do not throw your weakness at God to tell Him you can't. He already knows. He's calling you anyway.*

Exd 4:13 But he said, "Please, Lord, now send {the message} by whomever You will."

- *The NIV reads "But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it." "*
- *Moses is at a place where he just doesn't want to go. Moses trusts the power of God to send someone else.*
- *EXCUSE #3 - He is without excuse and finds out the bottom line of His. He has been arguing with the burning bush. Moses finally stops beating around the bush.*
- *Look forward and see what Moses is trying to pass up. Signs and Wonders in Egypt, Parting of the Red Sea, Water from the Rock, God Passing by as he is in the cleft of the rock, Receiving the 10 Commandments written by the finger of God, Speaking with God in the Tent of Meeting, Having God personally bury him, The Meeting w/ Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration.*
- *What are your arguing to miss.*
- *1 Cor 1:21-31 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [are called]: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, [yea], and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. "*

Exd 4:14 Then the anger of the LORD burned against Moses, and He said, "Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

Exd 4:15 "You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your

mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do.

Exd 4:16 "Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him.

Exd 4:17 "You shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs."

- *God does not let Moses off the hook here.*
- *God's commitment to use man in the affairs of man is remarkable. By involving Aaron, it gives Moses some breathing room, accomplishes what God wants done but it is not without consequences.*
- *Aaron's frail leadership allows Israel to sin before the Lord with a golden calf idol.*

Exd 4:18 **2) A Little More Instructions on the Way** vs 18-23

Then Moses departed and returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please, let me go, that I may return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see if they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

- *Moses is 80 years old and he asks permission to return to Egypt. His commitment to respect authority is greater than his sense of independence.*

Exd 4:19 Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead."

- *New information, after Moses is committed to go.*
- *With this new information he decides to take his wife and children along.*

Exd 4:20 So Moses took his wife and his sons and mounted them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand.

- *This rod is now becoming important. He lists it with his wife and children.*
- *Do you carry the rod with you? (the Bible; the Word of God) Is it important to you?*

Exd 4:21 The LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.

Exd 4:22 "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD, "Israel is My son, My firstborn.

Exd 4:23 "So I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"

- *New information that God will harden Pharaoh's heart and will Pharaoh will refuse to let the people go.*
- *New information that Moses will threaten Pharaoh with the death of his first born.*
- *Hardening heart - We will be looking at this in the next chapters. But the reality is that God hardens only that which Pharaoh was wanting to harden. Approx 20 times this hardening is mentioned and sometimes it is God, Some times it is Pharaoh. But God only hardens after Pharaoh hardens.*

Exd 4:24 **3) Zipporah & Aaron** vs 24-31

Does God get Serious?

Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death.

How does God deal with Leadership?

- *We do not know where this logging place is.*
- *The Lord sought to put Moses to death (Some believe that the him my be Moses' first born)*
- *Either way the point is Moses didn't circumcise his son and this was going to be punished by death*

Is Moses dispensible?

Exd 4:25 Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me."

Exd 4:26 So He let him alone. At that time she said, "{ You are } a bridegroom of blood"--because of the circumcision.

Is this a family argument?

- *God demonstrates the importance of identification. The Covenant made with Abraham in Genesis 17 was to be between God and EVERY man for an everlasting covenant or they will be cut off.*

What's important about a sign?

- For Moses to be the deliverer and leader the example he must live before the people. God deals severely with leaders' areas of compromise.
- Zipporah was repulsed by the covenant yet saw the penalty and fulfilled the covenant because she could see God's intent.
- Zipporah seems angry with Moses. Possibly that she sees the seriousness of the call on Moses life for the first time. Or that she is upset that Moses' failure in obedience nearly cost them.
- Circumcision is the cutting away of the flesh. Moses was not as committed to this as he should have been. It is interesting on two points.
 - God will still use Moses though he has failed in this area (not a small area. This was the sign of God's covenant that Moses took lightly or refused)
 - God will use the wife of the Man of God to complete that which is lacking in the man.

Exd 4:27 Now the LORD said to Aaron, "Go to meet Moses in the wilderness." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him.

- God promised Moses that He would bring Aaron to him. (Gen 4:14) God kept His Word.

Exd 4:28 Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him {to do.}

Exd 4:29 Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel;

Exd 4:30 and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people.

Exd 4:31 So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped.

- God promised Moses that the people would believe when he would go to them, speak to them and show them the signs. (Exodus 3:13-18; 4:1-9) The believed. God kept His Word.
- The Israelites worshiped the Lord. For they knew that He was concerned and had seen their affliction
- Job 7:17 "What is man that You magnify him, And that You are concerned about him, "
- Ez 34:12-15 "As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. "I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. "I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. "I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares the Lord GOD. "
- 1 Peter 5:7 "casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. "
- Is 40:11 "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry [them] in his bosom, [and] shall gently lead those that are with young. ".

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