

We're in Exodus 3-4 this week. Here's the scene. God has appeared to Moses from a burning bush.

Last week, we focused in on one part of the conversation. This week, we want to take a step back and listen in on the whole thing. In these two chapters, God and Moses have this great dialogue. It's the kind of honesty and conversation you wish you had with God. Where you spoke to God honestly and He responded to you directly.

In this dialogue, God is going to call Moses to mission; and 5 times and in 5 different ways, Moses is going to raise an objection to God's call. Moses is going to reject the call to mission.

I think many of us could relate with what Moses is feeling here. Have you ever felt small in the face of something you were called to do? Maybe you were given a new job, or entrusted with a new responsibility. Whatever it was, you just felt small in the face of what you were called to do. Like the only thing you can think is, "Who can do this? Who could pull this off? Who is sufficient to carry out this work?"

Well that's what Moses is feeling. Five times in these two chapters you're going to hear Moses say, "But God, but, but, but, but!"

And as we listen to Moses we're going to hear some of our own objections to the mission that God has called us to. He's going to be our mouthpiece. He'll speak the questions we would ask if we had the courage or honesty to do so. And as God responds, patiently, to each of Moses' objections, we'll hear him respond to ours as well.

And what we'll learn is, the One who called you is sufficient for the mission that He called you to. Let me say that again, my prayer for our time today is that we'll learn what Moses eventually learned: That the One who called us is sufficient for the mission that He called us to.

PRAY TOGETHER

Let me just remind you of where we are and set the stage. In Exodus 3, Moses is tending sheep. 40 years had passed since he had last seen Egypt. He's undergone a drastic mid-life career change from Prince of Egypt, son of Pharaoh to son-in-law of Jethro, shepherd in Midian. You talk about a demotion!

Now he's settled down, a shepherd with a wife and a few sons. One day, Moses is at work, doing the 9-5, and something catches his eye. He sees a bush that is burning yet it is not consumed. He goes over to see this great sight and God calls out from within the bush. "Moses. Moses." And Moses responds, "He I am."

God then introduces Himself and says:

7 "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites."

Now if you're Moses, or if you're the reader and you have been following along in the story – this is the moment you've been waiting for! The people of Israel have been trapped in slavery, in captivity, in bondage for four centuries. They've been slaves for 400 years. As you're reading the story, you've been asking the whole time, "When is God going to do something! When is He going to spring into action and rescue these people?"

And now, you get what you've been waiting for! "*I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians...*" God has seen, heard, remembered and known the affliction of His people. And now, He is coming down! God will rescue and redeem and liberate this people. If you're Moses, you're nodding your head because this is music to your ears!

But then, you get verse 10.

10 Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

If you're Moses, you go "Time out."

It's one thing for God to come down to deliver Israel. It's entirely another thing to send Moses to do it! It's one thing for Almighty God to do this work. It's another to send Moses to get it done.

You see this is the way that God has been on mission from the beginning. From the beginning, this is the prototype and pattern of how God will rescue and redeem a people. He rescues people, but he invites others to participate in the rescue. He will invite men and women to play on the team.

Remember, we've called this series, 'The Gospel according to Exodus.' And that's because we're convinced that there are shadows of Jesus and the story of the Gospel all over this book. And here we're getting a glimpse into how God will accomplish salvation.

Look, when all is said and done, God will flex His arm in Egypt and display His strong arm. He previews this for Moses in 3:20: **"I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go."**

When this is all over, it will be without a single sword, or spear, or bow, or arrow – it will be without so much as a raised pinky that God will rescue the Hebrews. He will single-handedly accomplish salvation. The people will not add to, or contribute to, or help with this work. It will be the mighty hand of God stretched out.

Will it be God who accomplishes salvation? Will it be by His power and His work alone that people are rescued, redeemed, set free? Absolutely. Yet is in the good pleasure and plan of the Lord to use Moses to do it? Absolutely.

So it is with us.

The Scriptures tell us that God saw us in our affliction. That God saw humanity in bondage and captivity to sin. And God came down to deliver us. Literally, in Jesus, God came down to deliver slaves. And when all is said and done, it will not be through a single thing that we do that He will accomplish salvation. It will not be because of a single good deed, or a prayer, or any contribution on our part whatsoever. We will not so much as raise a pinky to make our salvation effectual. It would be wholly, and solely the work of Christ. He would stretch out His hands onto the Cross and allow it to be struck so that after it we might be let go.

Is it Jesus who accomplishes our salvation? Will it be by His power and His work alone that people are rescued, redeemed, set free? Absolutely. Yet is in the good pleasure and plan of the Lord to use us to participate? Absolutely.

Think for a second who Moses was: A man who was saved from slavery & death. A man who did nothing to save Himself. But he was literally saved from death and spared from slavery through no work of his own. And now, he who had been saved from slavery and death was now commissioned so that through him God might save others from slavery & death.

Who are we? The same. Through no work of our own, we were saved from slavery and death. And now God calls us and commissions us to participate in mission so that through us God might save others.

Friends, we have been called to mission. We have been redeemed and entrusted with the gospel. And please, please do not see this as a chore, or a duty, or an obligation. See it for what it is – a demonstration of the love of God for you. You see mission is not just God's love for others, but God's love for you.

I recently went to a conference where a man named C.J. Mahaney preached and he read this quote from Charles Spurgeon that said this well. Listen:

"I have always felt, in my own mind, that it was one of the clearest proofs that I had God's forgiveness of my many sins, when I was trusted to preach the gospel. I should think that, if a prodigal came back to his father, the old gentleman would kiss him, and receive him, and rejoice greatly over him; but the next Saturday, the market-day, the old gentleman would say, "I cannot send young William to market; that would be putting temptation in his way. Here, John, you have always been with me; go to market, and buy and sell for me, for all that I have is thine. William, you stay at home with me." He might not let him see all that he meant, but he would say to himself, "Dear boy, he is hardly fit for that great trust; I love him, but still I hardly dare trust him as much as that." But see what my Lord did with me; when I came home to him as a poor prodigal, he said, "Here is my gospel, I will entrust you with it; go and preach it."

Do you hear what Spurgeon is saying?

It's one thing for the Lord to save us. It is entirely more that He not only saves us but entrusts us with the precious gospel! I heard this and my heart was cut in a million pieces. You see, I'm a pastor in Jesus' Church. And not only has God forgive my many terrible sins, but He has entrusted me with the gospel. It would have been enough that He saved me. He should have left me at home. He should have saved me and taken me straight to heaven. But he has entrusted the gospel to me and called me to preach it. Or that He entrusted me with the people that He loves, His church. Mission is a demonstration of God's great love for us.

Yet, despite the high honor of our call, we object. And Moses did too. In 3:10, God says, **Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."**

God calls Moses to participate in the redemption that He would accomplish. I'm sending you on mission. And with that incredible invitation, the conversation begins – and with it come 5 objections.

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

Moses goes, "Go to Pharaoh? Bring the people out of Egypt. Who am I to do any of that? " The first question is about his own sense of identity, or worth, or gifting – "Who am I for this work?"

In one sense, you want to go, No Moses. You're perfect for the job. I mean, if anybody's got a shot amongst all the Hebrews, it's Moses. After all, none of the slaves were educated the way Moses was. None of them knew the politics of Egypt like Moses did. No one had ever stood before Pharaoh as Moses had. In one sense, Moses was exactly the guy to send to Pharaoh.

But then, in a larger sense, who in the world was sufficient to go up against Pharaoh! Pharaoh was the king of Egypt – the most powerful man in the most powerful nation on the planet. With just one word, with a single command, the children of the Hebrews were killed. He held unspeakable power. I mean is there really anything that could prepare someone to go up against the most powerful person in the world?

Just cause you played little league, does that prepare you to hit against Cliff Lee? Just cause you play ball on Friday nights with Charley and the guys, does that qualify you to go one on one against Jordan? What on earth that could prepare you to play the older guys in SMR's Turkey Bowl? Nothing. These are impossible things.

Go up against Pharaoh? Were there enough degrees you could get? Were there enough military handbooks you could read? Were there enough speech classes you could ace? What on earth could prepare someone to go up against such a formidable power like Pharaoh or Egypt? Nothing.

At the end of the day, Moses had a good reason to ask, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh? Who is sufficient for such a call?

We could ask the same question couldn't we? I mean if you think about it, is there a greater fool in the room than me? (Don't answer that) Think about it. Week after week, I spend hours preparing to preach – to speak words – little puffs of air as someone once called it. And I'm suppose to believe that these words, these puffs of air that hit the ceiling or fall to the floor, they're suppose to change lives and make a difference. We live in a world that is broken and infected with sin. There are people who are divorced or in marriages that are falling apart. There are people who are suffering from illness, or disease. People who are mourning over loved ones who have died. People who are addicted to things they long to be free of. People in desperate times of all sorts. And I am to imagine that I can help them by preaching, by saying words. If you're a visitor, it would be understandable that you might ask, "Really, that's how you're going help people? That's your contribution to the world, to speak, to preach little puffs of air. You should have found a profession where you could actually help people!" A broken world with broken people and you're going to change their lives by preaching sermons. I have to ask, who am I for such a task? Who is sufficient for such a call?

You'd think I was the most pitiful person in the room – but then you look around. You've got people like Siby and Jon and others like them who lead SoulCare Communities. They are supposed to gather people outside of Sundays and create an environment where people will be open, honest, transparent, and vulnerable. They're supposed to shepherd these people – people who hardly know one another, pastor them, pray for them, provide a climate in which community – real gospel community can happen. And then they're supposed to help point this community on mission so that we'd make an impact on our streets and neighborhoods.

I think of Jim, working with Bombay Teen Challenge and us as a church working behind him. I've heard their leaders speak their vision. Their mission is to stop sexual slavery. Think about that for a second. *Stop* sexual slavery. Not reduce. Not minimize it. Their vision is that in their lifetime, they want to see sexual slavery ended. Is that the most naïve thing you've ever heard or what? You take a nation like India with a billion people, and then Mumbai, with all the systems of evil, and powers in place, and a well organized, evil empire – and they imagine that they can work to dismantle this thing. You have to ask, "Who is sufficient for such a call?"

I could keep going. Think about many of you here. You guys, inviting people into your homes, sharing meals, loving people, hoping all of it will somehow lead to relationships and result in changed lives. Of just think about the mission of our whole church. We're what 40, 50, 60 people? And we're supposed to transform our culture and change our city. Consider the work God has called us on mission to. We're supposed to participate with Him in taking people who have hard, dead, stone, black hearts and make them beat with faith and love for Jesus. People who are dead and bring them to live. People who are blind and give them sight. People who are lost and find them. People, who are headed for hell, redirect their steps so that they're headed for heaven. You have to ask with Moses who am I, who are we for such a task? Who is sufficient for such a work? The whole thing is a lost cause....

UNLESS....

Unless God promised to be with us.

I suppose if God promised to be with us, then that would change things wouldn't it? If Almighty God promised to be with us in the work He called us to, I guess that would make things different wouldn't it? It would have to, right.

And in verse 12 that's exactly what you see. God says to Moses, I will be with you. That changes everything. Cause now Moses is not going to Pharaoh because of his education, or his expertise or his sufficiency for the work. He's going cause God is going to be with him. The One who called him had promised to be with him. That changes everything.

That changes everything for us too. Cause, if God is with us, then these puffs of air are suddenly infused with the power of God and they strike your ears and cause faith to rise in your hearts. All of the sudden, sitting around Jon's living room becomes an opportunity for gospel, community, and mission to happen. Suddenly, standing with slaves in Bombay becomes an opportunity to change lives and participate in a great exodus story all over again. If God is with us and He gets involved, then work of our church has purpose and meaning. Seven Mile Road can get caught up in God's redemptive work and see the transformation of our culture and its people.

Moses asks, who am I? God answers, I will be with you. Don't you love that? Moses asks a question about who he is and God answers by telling him who He is! Moses asks, who is sufficient work such a work? God replies, **I am sufficient for the mission that I have called you to.**

Well, you would think that the assurance that God would be with you would have been enough. Often it's not enough for us and it wasn't for Moses. So he has another objection.

II. We talked through this last week, as Moses asks God – **What is his name? What shall I say to them?**

Moses is basically asking what am I supposed to tell them? It's great that you're sending me but what am I supposed to say? Tell me we can't relate to that question. Fine God, you'll go with me. But when I get there, what am I supposed to say! When I'm sitting with my neighbor, or friend, or co-worker, what am I supposed to say?

It's interesting that in this passage, there's almost this child-like repetition happening. We won't go into it much now, but a few different times, God will literally say, "Say this..." God is giving Moses the script. You see the same thing happening in verses 7-10 and 16-17. You see God reveal Himself and tell Moses what He is going to do. Then He tells Moses that He is to tell the people who God is and what He's going to do.

Here's what I'm getting at. Moses is not required to be innovative or creative. He's just called to be faithful. Moses, what are you supposed to tell them? Tell them what I told you to tell them. What are you supposed to say? Say what I told you to say.

It's that simple. We are not called to be innovators or even creative, clever, or cute. We're just called to be faithful.

Here's the gospel. God created a good world that went bad because of sin. God loved us in our sin and sent Jesus down to save us from sin. Jesus lived a life without sin. But Jesus was killed for our sin. The punishment of our sin and the wrath of God for our sin was laid on Jesus. But then Jesus rose from the dead and defeated sin so that all of us who repent and turn from our sin have life in Jesus. And we will live forever with Him, free of sin.

This is the gospel. Tell this to the people. What are you supposed to say? Say what God told you to say.

God is telling Moses, "Moses, my message is sufficient for the mission that I have called you to." I am sufficient for the mission that I have called you to. Friends, the One who called you is sufficient for the mission that He called you to.

Moses asks, who am I? And God answers him. Moses asks who are You and what should I tell them about You? And again, God answers. But now Moses will ask a third question and raise a third objection.

III. At the beginning of chapter 4, Moses goes *But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.*

Again, tell me you can't relate to this. Fine God, you'll be with me. Fine God, you've told me what to say. But God, what if they don't believe me!

Now God has already helped alleviate this concern. At the end of chapter 3, He has already told Moses that some will believe his message (Israel) and some won't (Pharaoh). His job is to be faithful. Who believes and doesn't is up to the Lord. But, Moses asks what we would ask – if I go with Your message, what if they don't believe me.

God gives Moses 3 signs. We're not entirely sure why these particular signs. What we are sure of is that after Moses gives these signs, at the end of chapter 4, we're told the people believe!

Moses' staff turns into a snake, Moses' hand becomes leprous and then clean again, and Moses turns the water of the Nile into blood. These people had been held by a great power for 400 years. And so, you needed to convince them that the power of God was greater than the power that held them. These wonders were to show Moses and the people that God had the power, that God was sufficient to do what He has said he would do.

We don't know why God chose these 3 signs. Think back to the pictures of the Pharaoh that you remember. Remember that he wore a headdress with a serpent atop. The serpent was a symbol of Egyptian deity, Egyptian authority. So you can you imagine their shock when they saw Moses perform wonders that outdid all the magic of Egypt? Imagine, the serpent, the symbol of Egyptian authority, under the control of Moses. Moses drops his staff on the floor, and it turns into a snake. Then he picks it up again and it goes right back to being just a long piece of wood. Could it be that God was a greater power than the power that held them? If God wielded that kind of power over Egyptian authority, maybe He was strong enough to pull this whole thing off. Each of the signs point to the sufficiency of God's power for the mission that Moses was called to.

God's presence would be sufficient. God's message would be sufficient. God's power would be sufficient. Moses, when are you going to understand – the One who called you is sufficient for the mission that He has called you to.

But God, who am I? But God, what's your name? But God what if they don't believe me. You would imagine that Moses would have believed by now. You would imagine that his bags would be packed and he would take the next camel to Egypt. But he doesn't. Neither do we. Instead, he says, But God, for the 4th time.

IV. *But Moses said to the Lord, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue."*

Moses can't get his eyes off the insufficiency he sees in himself for one second; in order that he might see the grandness and greatness and sufficiency of the God who was calling him.

I can't speak to Pharaoh God. I'm no speaker.

I love that Moses says – I've never been good at speaking – not even since you started talking to me. Moses is saying God, it's not like now that you started talking I've changed. I'm still me. I still get tongue-tied every time I try and speak. Nothing's magically changed. God' I can't speak eloquently.

I love how God answers. God doesn't go, Oh Moses, No. You're a great guy. You have so many things going for you. You've got the heart of a deliverer – remember you defended the Hebrew; you saved the girls at Midian. And Moses, you're so smart – you've been trained in all the education of Egypt. And Moses, you're this and you're so good at that.

No. Not at all. God says: **Then the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak."**

Moses, who said any of this was about you! About what you could or could not do. You can't speak – who do you think made mouths in the first place? Moses this is not about your inabilities. It is about my ability. You're inadequate; I am adequate. You're powerless; I am powerful. You are weak; I am strong. You can't; I can. You're unable; I am able. You're insufficient; I am sufficient!

You can't speak words; Moses, with just words I created the whole universe – Now go! And I will help you speak and teach you what to say.

Guys it's no different for us today. God has called us today, but so many of us are paralyzed in responding to the call of God because we're so focused on our weaknesses instead of God's strength. And to us, God's response will be no different. His response is not – let me tell you all about how great you are. His response to Moses and His response to us is – Who is the Sovereign Lord? I am. And I am sufficient for the work I have called you to. I will be with you as you live on mission. I will be with you, Now GO.

V. Finally, Moses can't take it anymore. He's tried everything he could think of to wiggle off the hook – he's got nothing left. And so, he says what he's been thinking all along (vs. 13) **Oh, my Lord, please send someone else."**

Can you hear him, I can = O God, fine the burning bush is awesome, your name is awesome, your power is awesome, you're awesome – but please, find someone else God!

Have you been there – there's a new person in our church and you think to yourself, somebody should greet them so they feel welcome, somebody should invite them over for dinner – maybe I should do it – you know what Joe and Lisa are a lot better at that; I hope they go over and say hello. I've done it a dozen times. Or you think somebody should really share the gospel with the people in our city, somebody – just not me.

Moses goes – somebody should really do something about the situation in Egypt – somebody but not me. O Lord, please send someone else to do it! And at that point, God who had patiently answered all of Moses' objections burns with anger. After everything God had done, everything He had said – Moses still doesn't trust Him. He's still asking the question we began with – Who is sufficient for this work? After all this, he still hasn't seen the answer that we see so clearly.

Yet, the passage is so encouraging. Cause even in His anger, God doesn't give up on Moses. I don't know about you but I am so grateful that the Bible has included this story. I'm so grateful that the Bible is filled with stories of guys like Gideon, and Jeremiah, and Moses – all who object to God's call – but all who God doesn't give up on and works through. For each, God patiently stuck with them and worked through them – not cause they were sufficient or because they were so important or indispensable, but because He was sufficient.

And so, once again, God answers Moses. Fine, take your brother Aaron with you – but Moses I'll be with you and I'll help you speak and teach you what to say. I am sufficient to carry out the work that I have called you to. And with that, at last, Moses was ready.

Brothers and sisters, five times God calls. Five times Moses objects. And five times God answers by pointing to Himself. In every way, God was sufficient for the task He had called Moses to.

1000s of years later Jesus stood on a mountain and met with His chosen ones. Like God called Moses, Jesus called his disciples to Himself. As God revealed Himself to Moses, so Jesus revealed Himself saying: *All authority in*

heaven and on earth has been given to me. As God commissioned Moses, so Jesus commission us and called us to go – to participate in the great mission of seeing men and women saved that they might serve Him. And even as God promised Moses to be with Him, Jesus promised, **“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

Friends, God called Moses. God calls us. And the One who called you is sufficient for the mission that He has called you to.

Let’s pray.