

Intro

This talk is taken from Exodus 3 and 4. We'll be looking at the stages of doubt that Moses experienced and how God responded to each one of those doubts. Through the Bible, we see that where people chose to overcome fear, do despite fear - they achieved great things for God. We all have our own 'ites'..

2 Chronicles 20.1 - After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to make war on Jehoshaphat.

The talk assures us that it is not what we know, but who we know; it is not who we are, but who He is.

Overview

Moses was caring for his father in law's flock when God appeared to him in a burning bush. God had heard the people's cries for freedom from slavery in Egypt and was sending Moses to the Pharaoh to fight for their freedom. This was a massive task with no evidence – no wonder he's one of the great men of faith. Moses went from looking after flock of cattle to the flock of Israel. Moses was fearful and had constant doubts. On each occasion, God responded to him, just as God will respond to you and me today. Moses needed to hear God's re-assurance several times, several times he'd go to Pharaoh. Moses a picture of Jesus – God wants to set us free and use us to help others be free.

God once spoke to me through waking me up at 4am, my DVD recorder turning on and saying, 'please wait' then turning itself off.

Moses doubts his qualifications

Ex 3.11 - "I am not a great man! How can I go to the king and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Youth Bible)

Moses first doubt was of his own greatness & qualifications for the job. This is one main way the enemy attacks us in our mind and so we must be protected with the armour and the Word!!

Job ads – often say 'need Bible college' training etc. You don't need the 'right' qualifications to be used by God, you need to offer your life to God for him to use. Look through the Bible and you'll see so-called 'nobodys' (like us) God used in great ways.

But while Moses may not have had 'official' experience, he had grown up in the Egyptian Court, could speak their language and knew their ways. Every experience, interest and way that God has used you has a plan. Don't fear God not using you in the areas you enjoy and are gifted at. It may not be exactly as you'd plan, but God will use your life experiences and skills. That's why he has allowed you to go through some of them. Just like Moses. He was trained by the very people he'd bring down! – God using evil to destroy itself! God uses your past and present to prepare you for your future.

God's Response -

v12 - God said, I will surely be with you; and this shall be the sign to you that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain [Horeb, or Sinai]. (Amp)

In Acts 7.22, Stephen says, "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds"

What makes a great man or woman of God? Acting on the promises of God. This is what Moses ultimately did. God told him simply that he would be with him. The evidence would come in time. What about us?

In Exodus 15, we find a song of worship to God from Moses and Miriam. But how much better would this song have been had the people of Israel sung this song before God parted the waves on the Red Sea. **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb 11.1)**. The people would face obstacles like Red Sea. So do we. But wherever you are at, God is on hand to take you through your Red Sea.

Moses doubts his authority

V13 - Moses 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?"

This was a fair enough question in a way. Moses believed he needed more evidence God had spoken to him if he was to go to the people and expect them to listen. **One of the complaints of Teaching Assistants (TAs) is that they don't have authority. Sometimes TAs get the comment, 'you can't do anything, you're just a TA.'** A time-out sheet or detention later, students stand corrected.

God's Response -

And God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM and WHAT I AM, and I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE; and He said, You shall say this to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you! (Amplified Bible)

God assured Moses, saying 'I will be with you' – the Great Eternal Jehovah. Throughout the written Word of God, the phrase 'I AM' is unique to the God of Israel, the true God. Farmers brand their sheep to know who they belong to, get fed, watered. We've been branded with God's name and he looks after us.

You only have as much power as the name in which you are sent. **Joyce Meyer recalls an incident when someone in the company wouldn't do something for another employee. Joyce told the employee to go and say, 'Joyce says so'. The thing was done.** God has given us far more authority through the name of Jesus. **As a hip-hop artist once said, 'you can't mention the name Jesus on radio. So we know there is something powerful in the name of Jesus.'**

Story is told of a kid walking alongside a road when he ran out in front of a

car. With no time to do anything the father shouted, 'Jesus!'. The car screeched to a halt next to the boy without the boy getting injured. After the father checked on his son, he spoke to the driver who was shaking and upset. 'It's OK, my son is OK, the car stopped' said the father. 'You don't understand' replied the man, 'I didn't take my foot off the accelerator or hit the break'. There is power in the name of Jesus.

So God's answer to Moses was that he was being sent to do the task ahead of him, not because of who Moses was but because of who God was and is. He had the qualification of the Lord God behind him, the name in which demons tremble, people are healed, people are saved and at whose name every knee will bow. Today in a changing world, we worship 'I AM'. We don't follow 'I was' or 'I might be' but 'I AM'.

Moses doubts his standing in the eyes of the people

Exodus 4.1- And Moses answered, But behold, they will not believe me or listen to and obey my voice; for they will say, The Lord has not appeared to you. (Amplified).

Moses had his next doubt and question for God - what if the people don't believe me? Many times, the people of God (including you and me) don't listen to what God says, don't believe what the prophets say, don't believe even the Bible. This had been the case with the people of Israel, who were difficult to lead. Many times this is because we want to make sure it is God speaking to us. Other times, it's disbelief or fear, which is not from God. The generation we live in demand evidence of God. **Are we living lives that prove God? If the only evidence of God's existence were your life, would you pass?**

J John gives the story of when he was sat next to a man at a café in London when God spoke to him and told J John to ask the man if he was married.. He eventually did and this led to the man getting a J John book and plucking up the courage to marry his fiancé. We must do what God says.

God's Response –

Exodus 4.2-3: Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied. The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground."

This is almost a talk in itself and lets us know 4 things. First, God asks what he has in his hand. Second, God says do something with it. Third, this action is wholehearted. Fourth it's thrown down, the place of submission. This is the place of power. **Story - before one of his meetings, CH Spurgeon showed a few young people a room in the church with 700 people praying, calling it the 'heating plant'.** The place of power is the place of submission and prayer.

Where God calls, he provides. Nothing surprises God, nothing happens that he doesn't know about. Every concern we have has already been seen and provided for by Almighty God. It's just that we often don't see it, don't act in faith or struggle to believe. In this instance, God gives Moses a sign. His staff.

George Mueller was a famous man in Bristol, England who ran orphanages and prayed for God to provide. One day, he prayed 'for what we are about to receive' despite having no food. Immediately the door rang and the baker was there. He'd woken at 2am and baked extra bread. Mueller thanked God. Then the door went again and the milkman dropped off all his milk from his milk float as he had to repair it.

If you've seen Lord of the Rings, you may have seen The Two Towers. There is a scene where Gandalf enters the palace of Theoden, King of the Mark of Rohan. The king is under the influence (curse) of Saruman via his slave Wormtongue. Wormtongue has ordered that Gandalf be stripped of his staff before he enters the palace room as he knows about the power in the staff. This does not happen and Gandalf raises his staff and breaks the stronghold over the King, like the King is being delivered from some demon.

God gives Moses a powerful weapon in his staff. We later see Moses use this as a demonstration of God's power to open the waves of the Red Sea, among other signs. The power doesn't come from Moses but from God. The staff was a sign of God's power to a doubtful people.

What is your staff? What do you have in your hand? Myfishbites.com is a youth work resources site God called me to start in 2001. It now contains nearly 400 pages of resources, amounting to 10s of 1000s of resources. There are visitors from Australia to Zambia, up to 8000 a month. This is one 'staff' I have. Another 'staff' God has given me is being a member of 'staff' at a school. Day after day, I sit with students, help them, support them, listen to them, work with them, encourage them and love them. And I really do love them to bits! What is your staff? Will you give it to God today? God will anoint what u offer.

It must have been a bit scary for Moses - in verse 6 we find that by obeying God and putting his hand inside his coat, his hand got a skin disease! But when God told him to put his hand back in his coat and he did as God told him, the skin disease had gone!

Jesus worked in signs and wonders. We have this same power available today and must use it. A true story is told of a woman who died in Africa. Her whole Muslim family of around 40 came to her bedside. God told a local pastor that he would use him to raise people from the dead. Passing the house, the pastor stopped by. After praying a bit, he commanded the woman to come back to life. She did, saw her relatives and wondered what the fuss was. As a result, her whole family came to faith.

This really was faith in action and as we read Exodus, we see God building up the faith of Moses. Moses was a man who acted in faith and on what God said, despite his doubts. In this, God shows us the life of faith. God is a God of restoration. He restores us, he sent Jesus, and one day he'll restore his people to him and restore our world and the heavens.

Moses doubts his speaking skills

Moses 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. "

Despite acting in faith, despite God having spoken to Moses several times, Moses found something else to worry about. God often allows issues to rise to the surface in us so that he can confront them with his Word. Confess your worries and problems. God wants to heal you with his Word. Moses had to verbalise his fears, God responded with answers. Then despite how he was feeling, Moses stepped out to be used by God and then God really showed up.

Moses had reason to fear. God was giving him a massive thing to do. Moses saw God was very serious. God calls us to expect and attempt great things at times. Just as well God didn't reveal it all at once – same with us!! The word 'eloquent' basically means 'good with words'. Moses doubted his way with words in the past and even since God had been speaking to him. He told God that he had slow speech and tongue, that he was nervous.

Brian Houston tells the story of a guy called Danny speaking at Hillsong London. He was all set to ask people to respond to Jesus at a church service and had practiced hard... 'Danny doesn't know who you are, but God does and Jesus loves you.' It came to the big night and he said, 'God doesn't know who you are, but Jesus does and Danny loves you' !!

God's Response –

The 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? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

God responded by saying he has given Moses a mouth to speak God's words, ears to hear God and eyes to see God. **God said to Moses – look up and not down!!** God has all of creation in his hands & God says the same to us today.

Moses and his weakness were made perfect in God's strength. God has made us to depend on him. In 2 Corinthians 12.9, Paul said: '*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*')

Often times we have to go and rely on God. God told Moses, 'I will **help** you speak and **teach** you what to say.' God would help Moses and teach & grow Moses in his speaking skills. This was an act of trust and is a lesson for us.

Just recently, one of the students I work with wanted to take part in an egg race. Things didn't go brilliantly and he was despondent. But we managed to get him an egg racer, make it, re-mould it and redesign it and he rolled it down the ramp and finished third, getting a prize! He did well because he **received help from me**. We will only succeed when we receive God's help. God will help and grow you / teach you in the areas he has called you to. What we must do is have a teachable spirit, be prepared to listen and to learn.

Moses pleads with God

But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it." (v13, NIV)

When I was a young kid I sometimes used to plead with my mom when I didn't want to do things, 'please mommy..' my desperate little voice pleaded.

Moses realised that God was totally serious and this was beginning to seriously stress out Moses. Moses had acted too soon previously when he killed an Egyptian. This was the real thing. Now he was waiting to know that this call was definitely from God. God revealed it was through their talks. But the excuses had run out, now it was just 'aagh!' How many of us often just want to run & hide??! We can't and have no need to as the battle belongs to the Lord.

God's Response – Exterminite!!

Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. But take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it."

God is patient with us but he is not afraid to confront us and take us on. Sometimes, it's the push that we need. It was mos def the case for Moses! God disciplines the ones he loves.

I love the fact that Aaron was already on his way. Listen, long before you even know there's a problem – God has the answer on its way!!

Despite his doubts, Moses acted on the promises made by God. We read in verse 18 that Moses went back to Jethro, his Father-in-law and told him that he was leaving for Egypt. Let's put into action what God tells us.

CONCLUSION

You have the fragrance of Christ, so people can 'sense' something is different; you have the 'light' of Christ, so people can see the difference; you have the message of Christ, so people can hear the difference; you have the love of Christ so people can receive the difference; and you have the 'mind' of Christ so people know there is something different about you.

Despite a deep sense of inadequacy, Moses became the liberator, the lawgiver and the leader of the Israelites.

God understands completely what he has called you and sees beyond your present to your future; beyond your excuses to your achievements and beyond your unbelief to his deliverance.