

Moses

Was a great man of God. Yet he had his struggles, like any of us. When God appeared directly to Moses, his weaknesses, doubts and fears surfaced. Sometimes, when the heat is turned up, we see who we really are. I can relate to this from personal experience. But God had an answer for every doubt and excuse that Moses came up with. It's the same for you and I. Unless the heat is applied, unless we step into God's calling in its fullness for our lives – then we will never know just how awesome, faithful and powerful God really is. And we will never truly live the life that God has for us, and impact the world around us as God intends.

Please pick and take from this talk what is useful.

Bible Passage

This is taken from Exodus 3 and 4.1-17.

It would be a good idea to read the whole lot to get the context of everything that happens. Even if it seems like a lot of Bible reading you can't go wrong!

Excuse 1 – Who am I?

How many times do we put ourselves down? I'm pretty hard on myself. History is littered with people who said, 'I can't do it'. Well, it probably is – we just never hear about them.. Just recently I gave someone a lift to a conference with other youth workers. The person was very fearful of what lay ahead. But I assured them that things would be fine. I even went into the conference with them and introduced them. But they stayed at the conference and enjoyed it. The thing was, that person could do it and did do it, despite their fears. What a great attitude.

Moses had something far bigger ahead of him, however. In verses 7-9, God explained to Moses how he had heard the cries of his people in Egypt. In verse 10, God spoke to Moses, *"So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."* This would mean Moses having to go to Egypt, give up his life where he was, go back to the Pharaoh and confront his past. So Moses told God, *"Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"*

Moses was worried about his authority, he was concerned about his credentials and ability to do what God had said. Like many of us, he was over-awed and a bit taken aback at what God had spoken to him. Like many of us, Moses didn't refuse, he just needed answers and help. And God had the answer to Moses' question. In verse 12, God gave Moses his assurance..

"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."

Excuse 2 – Who are you?

If you've been to football, or watched it on TV in the UK, you'll be familiar with the taunt of fans towards other team's players, singing, "Who are ya? Who are ya?" Moses wasn't taunting God, but was worried about the taunts of others. He needed to know whose authority he was going with, he wanted God to reveal more of himself. That's the same for many of us, we want God to reveal himself more to us. God obliged to Moses, and he has obliged to us through the Bible, God's written word. Want to know about God? Read your Bible, communicate in prayer with God daily..

Moses learned that didn't need to worry about his own authority, he had the authority of God behind him. God spoke many of his titles to Moses to affirm that God was with him. God also repeated himself, giving Moses a firm conviction that God really was speaking.

God said to Moses, "I am who I am . This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

God 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.'"

1. God told Moses that he would be with him. The same is true for you and I. God has promised to never leave us or forget about us. (see Joshua 1.9) Whatever we are facing, God is with us. In fact, God has gone ahead of us, knows what will happen. We know this because the Bible tells us God knows all our days.
2. God would provide evidence that he was with Moses. This sign would be fulfilled in the future, but this was for God's glory, to show that God is faithful and true to his Word. The same is true for us today. We know that we have a promise of eternity with God, that God will make all things new. This is a future hope, but it is a certainty.
3. The name 'I AM' is a title of God. God stands outside of time and has always been, will always be. This is beyond our understanding but it is a truth. God can be described using the word 'Yahweh' (YHWH is the original Hebrew, which has no vowels). One translation of this simply means, 'ALWAYS'.
4. When we want to convey our importance, or the importance of something, we may use the authority or history of others. For example, 'I'm the son of..' or 'My pastor is..' etc. God spoke clearly to Moses about who God was -and he used Jewish history as proof to the people – the God of your Fathers – Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob.. This carried tremendous weight and the people would know that Moses had the authority of God (Yahweh) behind him.

Excuse 3 – What if they don't believe me?

God had empowered Moses with God's own authority. But Moses needed to get another fear out of his system.

In Exodus 4.1 he asked God, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?'"

It is sometimes difficult to know whether God has spoken to you. But it can be even harder to pass on God's message to someone else, especially when you know that you may get a load of grief back! Moses was concerned about the people doubting his message was from God.

The former pastor of Life Church in Bradford said that a few years back God called him to really make a change in his church (a process he refers to as 'crossing over' to a church that has really moved forward). This involved some hard decisions and many people resigned and left the church. But he knew he had to communicate God's heart to move the church forward. Sometimes, we just have to be obedient to God and remember that the reward (in this life or the next) will always outweigh the cost.

Many young people in the 21st century West want evidence. They can spot a fake a mile off and are promised many things. What they want to know is 'is this real?' Sometimes people demand evidence, just as a prosecutor does in a court of law. Moses wanted evidence. So God empowered Moses with 3 supernatural miracles.

1. God commanded Moses to throw his rod onto the floor, which Moses did. It turned into a snake. On God's command, Moses picked up the snake and it turned back into a rod. Impressive, and let's not under-estimate the faith of Moses to obey God when he commanded him to pick up a snake!

2. God had Moses put his hand inside his cloak. When he pulled his hand out, he had leprosy (a bad skin disease). On God's command he put his hand back in his cloak and when he withdrew it, his hand was healed.

3. Finally, God said that if the 2 miracles didn't work, Moses was to take some water from the Nile, pour it on the ground, where it would turn to blood.

So Moses was empowered by a set of miracles – evidence that God was speaking through him. God has also empowered you and I (if we bothered to use this). In John 14.12, Jesus promised his disciples that they would do even greater things than they saw Jesus do. In Ephesians 1.19-20 we know that we have the same power of God in us that God used to raise Jesus from the dead. The Bible also lets us know that the evidence to the world that we are God's family will be in the way that we love each other with an agape (selfless, Godly) love.

Excuse 4 – I can't speak

I remember working with a student who has a real gift at connecting with young people. She is just very skilled. But she didn't believe she was at all. She used to say, 'I'm rubbish up front.' It wasn't true of course. In fact she then went to work for Youth For Christ giving presentations, doing lessons, assemblies and training young people. Sometimes people just need re-assurance and opportunity to know that they can do something.

Moses was getting a bit desperate. He saw that God had clearly chosen him to go speak with the Pharaoh, and God wasn't about to back down. So Moses said to God, "but I'm rubbish at speaking, I won't know what to say, I'll stutter and mess up.." As ever, God had the answer, and he does for you and me today, in every area where we are weak. It's when we can't do something and God steps in, that people really see that it is God.

God was firm with Moses. He said, "look, I am God and I made people, I made you. I made the mouth and the mind. So don't worry, as I will give you the words to speak, and I will teach you." God says the same to you and I today. God is with you, God created you, God knows you, God is inside of you by his Holy Spirit. So we know that we can do all things God calls us to do through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4.13).

Where we reach the end, God steps in. Be encouraged because with God, all things are possible. Do you believe and receive that promise? Yes!

Excuse 5 – Send someone else

I'm afraid, I'm one of those people who has said, 'I don't want to do this, send someone else.' to God. And sometimes God does send someone else because of our reluctance, doubt, or refusal. Not something any of us should be proud of. We see examples of this in the Bible both positively and negatively. Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh. Yet we see Isaiah in chapter 6 of Isaiah saying, 'Send me.'

What kind of attitude do you have in life? A "send someone else" attitude or a "send me" attitude. Do you have a "can't do" or a "can do" attitude. The most successful people in life say, "I can" or "I will" or even "I'm not sure but I'll give it a go." Make sure you're that kind of person. The only way with God is forward, onward, upward. The only way you'll get there is by agreeing with God and his Word that you can, you will.

God became angry with Moses in Exodus 4.14 but even then, God's compassion, grace, kindness kicked in. He'd already heard and allowed Moses to express 5 doubts. But even in his anger, he said to Moses, "I'll send your brother, Aaron with you." God is compassionate, slow to anger.

Psalm 86:15 – "But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithful."

Finally

God is calling you today to serve him. He has an answer for all your questions, fears and doubts. You may not always get the answers, or not in the way / time that you expect. But God is with you and God is for you. Where God calls he always provides.

What has God called you to do? What do you want to do for God? Where has he gifted you? Where do your interests lie? Like Moses, do you need to confront things in your life (Moses had to go back to Egypt, to the family he'd run away from, from the place where he'd killed someone).

Seek God today while he may be found. What does this mean? Don't wait til tomorrow – obey God and ask Him to help you and change you today.