

What's the Message – Lesson 22

Today's lesson deals with God's call to Moses, and his response.

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. We pray that the Lord will use this lesson as part of His plan of guidance for us, that we may learn to follow Him in complete trust and confidence, and obey Him. Amen.

Last time we saw how God used events to train Moses for the task that our Heavenly Father had planned. Now we look at the response of Moses when God called him into the life's work that was before him.

We begin with Exodus chapter 3, the first seven verses: Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian; and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses." And he said, "here am I." Then God said, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground . . . I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

As frightening as that sight and those words may have been to Moses, it was just the beginning. Now God starts to reveal some of what was planned. Then the Lord said, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and have come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians . . . Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."

Talk about getting hit in the head with a brickbat, just think about for a moment what Moses was hearing. He was to be God's instrument to accomplish a world-changing event, something that would be very negative to the greatest power in the world of its day. What an exciting opportunity! But also, what a frightening "mission impossible." It would probably churn your stomach, too. No wonder Moses tried to weasel his way out of God's plan. It was far too difficult for one man to do.

Well, Teacher, that sets the scene according to Exodus chapter three. Now, what does it mean for us? What is the message we should take away from here?

You are correct in your summary, up to a point. Yes, it certainly looked like an impossible task from the human viewpoint, and Moses offered a series of excuses to try to justify him not even trying. First he says in effect, "Who am I that Pharaoh should listen me?" Then he tries a different tack and says the people of Israel will want to know

who was behind Moses, telling him that he should speak for the Israelites. So he asks, “What is your name? What shall I say to them?”

Thirdly, he tries the reverse argument, and says, “They will not believe me, or listen to my voice” and will not believe that God has spoken to me. Finally, he uses the weak old excuse that “I am not eloquent . . . but am slow of speech and tongue.” He says, “Oh, my Lord, send, I pray, some other person.”

Four excuses. Four times he tried to get out of the plan that God had already established. Four times he tried to convince God that “I can’t do it.” Let’s take a look at the responses of God to these flimsy excuses.

When Moses said, “who am I?” God said, “I will be with you.” Understand this clearly. You will not be alone, doing this on your own accord. When Moses asked His name, God said, “Say this to the people of Israel, I AM . . . the God of your fathers . . . has sent me to you.” When Moses protested that they would not believe him, God gave him signs to show extraordinary power. And when he begged that he was slow of speech, God said “I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”

How pathetic that Moses should try to run away from God’s wonderful plan, and beg off from doing the very thing that he had been trained for. Lest we be too critical of Moses, however, we should ask ourselves if we have done any better in our own lives. This lesson for Moses is still relevant today.

God has equipped us in many ways to be His arms, legs, and voice in this world. Have we accepted our assigned mission, or have we tried to avoid being called to join in the work of the church on the basis of excuses that are just as flimsy? Do we trust God and His promises that He will be with us to guide and protect us? Or do we trust our own limited strength and capabilities?

Our next study will deal with the appearance of Moses before Pharaoh, and the lessons of the plagues.