



The stories of the great heroes and heroines of the Bible inspire and instruct us in our own lives. Each one has a “who knows?” moment when God’s story seems to break into regular, everyday life—a critical moment offering a sense of calling or purpose. It’s as true for us as it was in ancient days. Who knows? Maybe God has plans to use you for His glory. Who knows? Maybe God put you where you are, with the influence you have, for a reason. Who knows? Maybe the things you suffer today will make sense in time. When God shows up, a sense of mysterious discovery enters our lives. Who knows what God has planned?

Sometimes you do what you want to do. Sometimes you do what you don't want to do. Sometimes after you do what you wanted to do, you regret it; but when you do what you didn't want to do, you look back and see how important it was and you are glad you did it. If you regret doing what you wanted to do, it seems to me that you really, on some level, didn't want to do it. But if you are happy with doing what you didn't want to do then, really, you wanted to do it. See, you really wanted to do the thing you didn't want to do, but you didn't really want to do the thing you did want to do, that's why you regret wanting to do the thing you did want to do but are happy doing the thing you didn't want to do even though you didn't want to do it. Get it? It's all very clear. Some of you are questioning why you wanted to come to church today. That's okay. Later on you'll be happy you did, so then you will see that you really wanted to do what you didn't want to do. Moses didn't want to go where the Lord wanted him to go. Moses didn't want to do what the Lord wanted him to do. But then he did. And he was glad.

Life is lived on two levels. Some call these two levels the Providence of God and the Confusion of Mankind. As we live out the story of our lives day by day it all just seems confused and muddled. *How does that fit? I never wanted that to be part of my story. This part seems like it should have been in someone else's story, not mine.* Somehow God keeps it all together. But on God's level, there is no confusion. God is in confident peace. I've heard it described—maybe you've heard this analogy—it's like a hand woven Persian rug. Look at it from underneath and all you see is colored yarn jumbled all around. It's a mess! But when you look from above, it's beautiful. We look at our lives from the point of view of human confusion. It looks like a mess. Sometimes it is. Wrong turns. Unexpected tragedies. Mistakes we don't know if we can ever recover. On another level is God looking down on a life He loves, shaping a story, forming beauty.

In the last few weeks we have said, "God is in my story." God gets involved. God cares about our confusion. In Jesus, God enters our human confusion (although He never gets lost in it. That's the thing about Jesus, Jesus is God entering our con-

fusion and pulling the threads). God is in my story. But more powerful is to catch a glimpse of the "up above;" when we can catch an idea of God's view from above, when we believe, we have faith that God has a view we don't have and sees a life we don't yet see, and knows a pattern and a beauty and a resolution of things that we won't see in our lifetimes, but maybe will only experience when we rise to the highest heaven in Christ. God is in my story; but even more so, "My story is in God." So said Esther going before the king to risk her life and save her people: "...who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14)? So said Gideon following God's commands against the odds. When God writes a story, God gets the glory. So said Jonah. Even the pagan king of Nineveh said "Who knows? God might turn and forgive and save."

Now Moses. The greatest figure in the Old Testament, who walked and talked with God. Moses whose face shone with the glory of God, who led the people out of slavery, through the parted waters of the Red Sea, ascended the mountain to bring down the Ten Commandments, shepherded his people through the wilderness and carried them up to the Promised Land. Moses. His name is synonymous with the Torah, the Old Testament. "Have you not read Moses, the prophets and apostles?" He's so great that the letter of Hebrews chapter three makes an argument that Jesus was better than Moses—it had to argue the point. That's how great a man is Moses. If he had it his way, he would not have done any of it. "God, please send somebody else." All Moses could see was the mess. You might think your whole life is confusion and mess, but God can write a story. By faith believe God is writing a story, and with your life in God's hands you have no idea how that story is going to end, you have no idea what God is going to do through you, to bless others, to His glory.

I noticed the other day that Moses is on the cover of a *Life Magazine* special edition. Not a bad picture. I think Aaron took that picture on his phone. Not an iPhone; it was a Sinai-Phone. Moses, by the way, was the first person to download the Bible on a tablet—two tablets actually. That picture gives you an idea. Who looks like that? Nobody. He looks like Zeus. But that's how we

think of Moses. Almost god-like. There are a lot of passages we could read to dip into the story of Moses. I wanted to begin with seeing how Moses was just a guy. He was just a man like you and me. It isn't so much what Moses did, but what God did through Moses that matters.

Without going through his whole story, his scary birth, the river, the adoption, the flight from Egypt, we here find Moses in front of the burning bush. God appeared to Moses to send him to rescue the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, but Moses had a list of questions. Moses asked, "Who am I? Who am I to rescue and save a nation?" Then he asked "Who are You? I don't know You, God." Then Moses asked "Who are they? Will the Hebrews believe I've come for them?" God answered all these questions. And God did something else too. Just before our passage, God gave Moses some signs. Some weird things. Here's a stick. Throw it on the ground it becomes a snake. Put your hand in your coat, pull it out, it's all white with skin disease (not a pleasant moment). Put it in and take it out again, it's cured. Pour out some water from the Nile and it will turn to blood. God is telling Moses, "Hey, I'm involved. I'm not involved on the same level as you. I'm involved on My level. When I get involved, I get involved as God."

So now we come to our passage. "Moses said to the Lord, 'Pardon your servant, 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'" (Exodus 4:10). Excuse me. You've got the wrong guy. I can't talk good. As Steve Martin said many years ago, "Some people have a way with words, and other people...um...not have way." In this final objection, Moses is thinking on his terms, in human terms. God, You want me to set my people free from Pharaoh in Egypt. What tools do I have? What means do I have? What power do I have as a man, as a person? He thinks, maybe if I was a great orator I could use my powers of persuasion I guess. I have no army. I have no leverage. You'd have to be some kind of sweet talker to sell a Pharaoh on releasing his entire slave force! That's not me. To which God answers (verse 11): "Who gave human beings their mouths?" When I get involved, I get involved as God. Don't forget. "Is it not I, the Lord?" Verse 12: "Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Exodus 4:11-12). When I get involved, I get

involved as God. That's Moses' final objection. Now we get the actual truth. There's a lot I love about this verse: "But Moses said, 'Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else'" (Exodus 4:13). I mean, I've got nothing more to say. I don't have any more arguments. God, just, please, send someone else. I don't wanna. Please?

Maybe you have never submitted your life to the Lord and sought Jesus as a guide and master of your life, but if you have, I know you have been right here at some time. Jesus, please, send someone else. I just don't want to do it. We live our lives suspended between two levels, human confusion and divine providence. But we are not tied only to one. We are not only tied to this level. God made us different. We don't walk around on all fours scratching the soil for nuggets of satisfaction and provision. We walk upright with our eyes up on the horizon, suspended between earth and heaven every minute of our lives. But here's what we need; here's what we need to do what God calls us to do when we don't want to do it. We need faith that, up above the confusion we see, there is another level where God makes sense of it all. We need faith, confidence in what is unseen, that there is another level to things and even though saying yes to this thing in front of me might be hard, there's another level. There's another story. Moses could only see a burning bush, not consumed. He could only see his life as an exiled prince, adopted then shunned. A shepherd servant to a foreign man in a foreign land. He couldn't see God's level: that if he did as God said, God would write a story through him that would last for eternity. Can we trust the beauty of the up above when all around us is mess?

We just don't know what God intends to do with our mustard seed of faith. We don't know, we can't see all the ramifications, all the consequences. God loves making great things come out of small things. Small seeds become great trees. The Sunday school teacher who made a point every year of asking every student one-on-one, "Do you know Jesus in your heart?" The elder who made a point to drive back early from vacation to hear the faith stories of his confirmation students. The teacher, the neighbor, the friend. Small things. Or, like the story I heard this week from Brandon Slay, 2000 Sydney Gold Medal Olympian who was here training at age twenty-two when a pastor said to him on the

grounds of the Olympic Training Center, “Man, you’re a great wrestler. What’s your purpose in life?” The question planted a seed that grew into faith in Christ. Can you trust the beauty of the up above when all you see is mess? Could you tell Peter when Jesus said He was going to make him a fisher of men, He meant it? Could you tell Paul while he sat in chains that the Roman Coliseum where Christians were martyred would one day have crosses on its doors? Could you tell Moses? “Moses, you have no idea. You have no idea what God intends to do. Just do it!”

Who knows what God intends to do when you put your faith in Him? If we could only see the up above from where we sit in the mess, it would be no problem! Well, you can. In a way. You can see it when you look to Jesus. What do you do when your story is a mess? How do you carry on when a child is born with a disability? When a loved one is carried away by Alzheimer’s? When the sure thing contract falls through? How do you carry on when your marriage is a battle ground; no one is right, everyone is wrong. Suspended between human confusion and the providence of God. Is there beauty up above? Who can see? You look to Jesus. The only one who has ascended is the One who has descended, the Son of God, come from heaven. Jesus. Suspended between heaven and earth, that’s exactly where He was. That’s where He died. Look to Jesus. He knows what is above. He knows what is below. How do you carry on? You must believe in the beauty of the up above from the confusion of the down below—only Jesus can help you here.

I close with this. I love this. At the end of this great epiphany, the burning bush moment, it ends with verse 17, God says: “But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it” (Exodus 4:17). Did he forget it? It’s like all this happened, all this was clarified, it was all resolved—no, you are going! You are doing it! You are the one to save Israel. Off you go! Then Moses was about to leave the staff behind. The staff he was going to lean on, face Pharaoh with, part the Red Sea with, walk with for the last forty years of his life. No. Don’t leave that behind. Take up your staff. Take up your cross. Lean on it. Lean on Jesus Christ—the only one who stands on earth and sees heaven.

STUDY GUIDE

WHO KNOWS? • EXODUS 4:10-17

UP: Connect With God Through Spending Time in God’s Word

Read aloud the passage for the week: Exodus 4:10-17. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note words or phrases that seem meaningful. Read it one more time together. Pray for your study of God’s Word.

- What stood out to you in our passage? What questions do you have after reading the passage?
- What were a few of Moses’ excuses (look at 3:11, 4:1, 4:10)? Which of these seem most likely to come out of your mouth when God calls? Why?
- What does God promise Moses in verse 12? How does Moses respond to God’s promise in verse 13? How would you explain Moses’ reluctance to accept the call of God?
- Why do you think God persisted in calling Moses to the great task in spite of Moses’ reluctance?
- Eventually, Moses said yes to God. Describe how God worked through Moses for the sake of future generations.

Going Deeper: What word, phrase or thought from today’s passage or from your time together is God lifting up as significant for you? How does it speak to a current situation in your life? How is God inviting you to respond?

OUT: Connect With the World Around Us by Joining God in God’s Mission

Is there an area in your life where God has been calling you to say “yes” but you have been saying “no” or hesitating in some way? Why have you been hesitating? Break into small groups and share with one another.

Say “yes”! Who knows what the Lord might do!

IN: Connect With the Family of God

Pray specifically for members of the group who are sensing God’s call. Stand ready to be an encourager and implementer.