

[496: "I Am Not Ready!"](#)

There is no one greater than Moses in the Old Testament, but we saw last week that Moses was just like you and me. He was willing to do God's will to a point, but then he began to produce excuses that he hoped would exempt him from going back to Egypt, a job he clearly didn't want to do. Last week we looked at Moses' first excuse, which was, "[Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt](#)" (Exodus 3:11). That was an expression of his poor self-esteem and estimate of his inability to carry out the task.

Next Moses tried a different ploy, claiming that he wasn't ready to go. I know you have never offered that excuse, but just in case you are ever tempted to do so, perhaps you should read on and see how to handle this thinking.

WHAT SHALL I TELL THEM?

What did Moses say exactly? He said, "[Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?](#)" (Exodus 3:13). Moses was trying to talk God out of His decision to send Moses, and Moses was saying in so many words, "I am not ready. I don't have all the information I need. I need to know more about God and be better equipped to handle people's objections and questions. I need more education and training."

I have encountered people who do the same thing. They have a clear mandate and burden to do something. Yet they tell me things like, "I'm praying about it," but they really aren't. Sometimes they tell me, "I don't have the education or training," or "I am not spiritual enough; I have to get this or that fixed in my life before I go and do." Have you ever offered those excuses? Are you employing them now in some aspect of your life, ministry or work?

You may truly need more training or education, and you may need to address a lack or problem in your life. Yet those issues don't disqualify you from doing something **today** to see God's will furthered in your life. Usually, you can address your issues **while** you are fulfilling your purpose instead of before even trying to fulfill it. Don't try to figure out all the implications of God's will before you start doing it; start doing it and make your changes and improvements as you go.

MIGHTY IN BATTLE

Hebrews 11:34-35 states, "[Whose weakness was turned to strength, and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.](#)" I thought it interesting that the heroes of the faith didn't wait until they had strength, rather they received strength **after** they entered the battle. You may be saying to yourself, "If God gives me strength, I'll go and do." Instead God is saying, "If you go and do, I'll give you the strength, wisdom, power or ability -- whatever it is that you need." If you are waiting to be ready to go before you are ready to go, you may never be ready to go.

Are you procrastinating, delaying the first steps you need to take where your purpose or goals are concerned? What excuses have you come up with that sound logical, which have almost become second nature to you? Are you ready this week to face the truth of why you are delaying? I hope you are, for God knew of your lack and weakness before He gave you the idea or directive. In spite of your lack, He is offering you a chance to fulfill your purpose. Are you ready to stop delaying and to take action? This week could be the week when you finally stop asking questions and offering excuses. I hope it is and that you have a great week!

Feel free to add your comments to this entry on the [site](#) where it is posted.

497: Fear Not Failing

The last several weeks we have considered the fact that Moses was less than enthusiastic when the Lord ordered him to Egypt from their encounter at the burning bush. In fact, I entitled a message one time, *Moses Produces the Best Excuses*, because that is exactly what he did. His first was that he wasn't capable; the second was that he didn't have enough information to respond to the people's questions (you can read the two entries about those excuses by clicking [here](#)). I hope you are ready to learn about excuse number three; if you are, then please read on.

FEAR FAILING

Moses' third excuse was, "[What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you?'](#)" (Exodus 4:1). Moses was asking, "What if I fail? What if I'm obedient but the people don't respond?" From my own experience as a purpose coach, I have found that fear of failure is the one of the primary stumbling block for people trying to be more purposeful and productive. You can be so afraid to do the wrong thing that you do no thing, missing opportunities that could be significant.

Are you afraid of failure? Is that what stands between you and any attempt to fulfill your purpose or achieve your goal? As you think of your answer, consider what former American president, Theodore Roosevelt, had to say about failure:

It is not the critic who counts. Not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood. Who strives valiantly. Who errs, and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming. But who does actually strive to do the deeds. Who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions. Who spends himself in a worthy cause. Who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worse, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

FEAR NOT FAILING

If what Roosevelt said is true, then we should fear *not* failing. It is better to fail trying to do something great than succeed at doing nothing, for the latter isn't really success at all. I have often been more concerned with what other people were thinking and that kept me from trying. I have also been too concerned with trying not to fail than trying to succeed.

Are you ready to face your fear of failure this week? Are you ready to replace it with a fear of not failing? When you fear failing, you won't even try and when you don't try, you won't ever do much of anything. When you fear not failing, you will make every effort to do something, concerned less about what people think and more about the consequences of lost opportunities.

Are you offering God and others the same excuse that Moses offered? Are you asking, "But what if things don't work out?" The way to avoid the answer to that is to never take action. I urge you, even beg you, to stop allowing fear to paralyze you and to take action this week. Be more concerned with the consequences of being purposeless than the consequences of trying and failing. As you do that, I know that you will have a great week!

498: Making Easter Personal

I interrupt the series on Moses to bring you an annual message I send to honor our Lord's resurrection, which we will celebrate this week. We will resume our look at Moses' excuses next week.

A PACKED HOUSE

My church has six weekend services and we are getting ready for overflow crowds next weekend. People who don't darken the door of a church throughout the year will come to church on Easter Sunday, which will make for a packed house. They sit with the regular attenders, family and friends, and pay homage to the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead. It is probably the same in your church.

We will assemble next week and say by our presence, "Yes, we believe Jesus was dead. Furthermore, we believe that He was in the tomb for three days. Yes, we believe that God raised Jesus, who was both fully God and fully man, back to life. And yes, we further attest to the fact that Jesus ascended into heaven, and that our flesh, Mary's boy, intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father." I hope you agree that those affirmations summarize truths of Easter. But is that all the truth?

It always intrigues me that many will come and attest to these truths yet all too often those truths have no meaning or application in their daily lives. Stop for a minute and ask, "So what if Jesus was raised from the dead? What difference should that make in my life?" Those are good questions; let's try to come up with some answers.

MAKING EASTER PERSONAL

If you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, then you can believe God for anything! If God raises the dead, which He does, then He can cure cancer. He can provide for your business or ministry. He can transform you into the person He intended you to be, that person you want to be. If God can take a dead body and give it life, then nothing is beyond His miracle-working power. What's more, you have the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead living in you! It is not a replica or a portion of that Spirit. You have the Spirit that raises the dead living in you. Here is what Paul had to say about the implications of this Spirit-resident:

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you (Romans 8:9-11).

I trust you plan on being at your local church fellowship next weekend. Don't go as someone merely giving assent to a historical fact, go celebrating the truth that God is alive in You Then find how you can release that resurrection power into your life, relationships, work and purpose. If you can believe that God raises the dead - and you should - then you can believe God for anything. Have a great resurrection-power-filled week! Happy Resurrection Day!

499: What DO You Have?

This week we continue our study of Moses' comments during his encounter with the burning bush that we began before Easter. Here is quick review.

UP TO THIS POINT

When God spoke to him from the bush, Moses' first comment was, "Here I am!" We saw that this indicated his readiness to do what God wanted before He knew what it was, an attitude that you would do well to imitate. Then we studied how Moses began to list all his excuses for why he was not the one to go back to Egypt, the first excuse being, "Who am I?" I related that question to our tendency to discount our ability to accomplish our purpose when we find out what it is.

We then saw that Moses' second excuse was: "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?" (Exodus 3:13). This comment was Moses coming up with the excuse that he wasn't ready and didn't know enough about God.

Two weeks ago, we looked at his third excuse: "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'?" (Exodus 4:1). This question was an indication that Moses was concerned that he could fail. I asked you to consider of what, if anything, you were afraid that was hindering your effectiveness.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

This week we look at his fourth excuse, which was an answer to a question God asked Moses: "Then the Lord said to him, 'What is that in your hand?' 'A staff,' he [Moses] replied" (Exodus 4:2). Moses was concerned he would fail because of all the things he *didn't* have. In his opinion, Moses only had a staff and that was his fourth excuse. He didn't have enough knowledge about God, he lacked the confidence, he was too old, and he wouldn't be able to respond properly to the peoples' questions. God asked him a simple question, however: "What *do* you have?"

When God assigned you purpose, He knew your gifts, strengths, and weaknesses. If not having some of those things didn't matter to God, why should they be of concern to you? People regularly tell me reasons why they can't fulfill their purpose or dreams. They tell me they lack the education, they're too young or too old, they don't have the money or they aren't gifted enough. Have you ever said any of those things? If you have, you must realize that God isn't asking you for a shopping list of things you don't have; He's more concerned that you allow Him to use you and what you do have.

WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

Moses went to Egypt with only that staff in obedience to God's command. He fulfilled his purpose with what he had in his hand. You will fulfill your purpose the same way. Moses was honest with God; he told Him that he only had a staff, which hardly seemed adequate to accomplish the task. God went on to show him that it was enough (you may want to read Exodus 4:3-9 on your own). Will you do the same this week? Will you allow God to prove to you that you do have what it takes to do His will, as long as you submit what you have to Him?

You must move beyond the realm of excuses to the Kingdom of obedience. You must learn to face your fears and obey God. In the process, you must also learn to surrender what you do have to God's empowering touch so that you will be equipped to fulfill your purpose. Why not make this the week that you do those things, so that you won't delay any longer in knowing the joy of being used by God? If I can help, let me know. Otherwise, have a great week!

500: Excuse Number Five

It is always special to write a Monday Memo but this one is extra special because it is issue number 500! I started the Memo in March, 2001 and here we are, ten years later, at number 500. All I can say is thank You, Lord, for helping me and thank you, my friend, for reading.

WE'RE ALMOST DONE

We are almost finished with our study of Moses' comments during his encounter with the burning bush. When God spoke to him from the bush, Moses' first comment was, "Here I am!" We saw that this indicated his readiness to do what God wanted before He knew what it was, an attitude that you would do well to imitate. Then we studied how Moses made his first excuse when he asked, "Who am I?" I related that question to our tendency to discount our ability to accomplish our purpose when we find out what it is.

We later saw that Moses' second excuse was: "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?" (Exodus 3:13). We saw that this comment was an example of Moses coming up with the excuse that he wasn't ready and didn't know enough about God. His third excuse was: "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you?'" (Exodus 4:1). This question was an indication that Moses was concerned that he would fail and I asked you to consider what, if anything, you were afraid of.

Last week, we looked at Moses' fourth excuse: "Then the Lord said to him, 'What is that in your hand?' 'A staff,' he [Moses] replied" (Exodus 4:2). God was teaching Moses to use what he had and not to fret over what he didn't have. And that brings us to Moses' fifth excuse, which was: "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'" (Exodus 4:10).

THE NEED IS YOUR CALL

With this fifth excuse, Moses had moved from honest questioning to procrastination. He is now working hard to come up with some excuse, any excuse, so that he wouldn't have to go to Egypt. If you look hard enough, you will always find a reason that could exempt you from fulfilling your purpose. Some of these reasons I hear on a regular basis are: "I'm too young; I'm too old; I don't have the education; I don't like to speak in front of people; I don't have the money; My spouse/pastor/leader/supervisor doesn't feel good about me doing that; I'm not sure it's God's will; I'm waiting on the Lord's timing." I've heard these reasons many times and God has heard them even more often, even from me.

I especially want to address the last excuse: "I'm waiting on the Lord's timing." I heard a leader say one time, "The need that you see is your call; you must move now to meet that need." He meant that seeing a need that exists is often the only "call" you are going to receive. When I teach about purpose, I ask what you see that you assume everyone else sees. In most cases, everyone does not see what you see. Seeing it then requires that you then do something about it, without over-spiritualizing the process.

God who has given you the ability to see the need will also equip you to address that need. The Lord responded to Moses: "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'" (Exodus 4:11-12 emphasis address).

God is saying the same thing to you this week. He is telling you to "go" and do. As you go, He will help you speak or do whatever it is that He wants you to do. Stop procrastinating and finding excuses to justify your delay. The good news is that it isn't too late. The God of your purpose is extending another opportunity to do His will. Don't disappoint Him or make Him find someone else. You can do it. What's more, you must do it, if you are to be a person of purpose. The good news is that you don't have to do it alone; He will help you. As you go and do, I know that you will have a great week!

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