

Exodus 3:11-22

Introduction:

Have you ever faced a time when God was calling you to do something, but you felt completely inadequate for the task? Did you make excuses hoping to get out of what God was calling you to do? That sounds a lot like what Moses was experiencing when God was confronting him at the burning bush. The theme of this chapter is: The God who is sufficient.

This passage is God's call to Moses to lead his people out of Egypt and Moses' response to what God is asking of him. Moses is honest with God but God doesn't sweep his struggles aside. He patiently answers each of his questions. In his conversation with God, Moses gives five objections. This passage deals with the first two.

1) Vs 11-12

¹¹ But Moses said to God, ^o“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

¹² He said, ^p“But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, ^qyou shall serve God on this mountain.”

God is calling Moses to return to Egypt. Moses is hesitant. His response to God’s call is “What? Me?” Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? How can you expect me to lead the Israelites out of Egypt?

Moses was focusing on his own strength or lack of it and didn’t see how he could possibly do what God was calling him to do. He felt inadequate for the task God was giving him. He lacked credentials. He had been a shepherd for the last 40 years. Based on how he left Egypt, Moses believed that the Israelite people would not respect him and the leaders would not listen to him. How could he face the most powerful man in the world?

God acknowledges that Moses is not adequate, but **He is**.

God doesn't promise Moses that He will make him adequate. God responded with a promise: I will be with you. Motyer (MO-tier) explains it this way, "Moses' position was, 'Look, I'm not up for the job. I knew that. You shouldn't have picked me.' The Lord's reply was, 'Of course you're not up to the job. I knew that when I chose you for it. The point is not your ability, but mine!'" God will be the one doing the rescuing, not Moses. Zechariah 4: 6 confirms this: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts."

Likewise, I Corinthians 1:26-29 tells us, "For consider your calling, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."

God also promised the Apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:9.

God not only promises to be with Moses but He gives Moses proof that He will keep His promise. He will bring the Israelites out of Egypt and will lead them to this mountain, Mount Horeb, to worship God there. God is rescuing his people so they can worship Him. One commentator points this out: Only a people who worshiped God could truly claim deliverance by God.

Let's continue: Vs 13-15

¹³ Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I am who I am.”¹ And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: “I am has sent me to you.”” ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of

Israel: ‘The LORD,² the ^sGod of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is ‘my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

Moses wants to know how he can prove that he is being sent by God. He doesn’t think the Israelite leaders will believe him. So Moses asks God, what is your name?

In response God reveals His name to be I AM. This is the first time anyone asked God about His name. It will be the name that only will be known by the Israelites: Yahweh. In our English Bibles each letter is capitalized in LORD to signify his name Yahweh.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was a God of many titles but of one name. Tim Keller explains it this way: “God used the Hebrew verb “to be” to describe Himself. He has no beginning or end. God is saying “I Always Am.” He is the cause and source of all things. Everything depends on Him.” In addition, Paul Tripp

speaks about God's name, "That is the most outrageous, awesome way to identify yourself. I Am what I Am. I am now what I've always been and will ever be because frankly, I am perfect."

Tripp continues, "This is God's eternal name. He is the unchanging one. He is the Covenant-keeping LORD." Hebrews 13:8 confirms this. "He is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Likewise, Psalm 90:2 states, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

God not only reveals His name as I AM, He later fully proclaims His name to Moses in Exodus 33. Moses asks to see God's glory. Verse 18 says, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'the LORD' (Yahweh). And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

Jesus speaks of Himself as the I AM in John 15:5, "I AM the vine; you are the branches. Without me you can do nothing". We are nothing without Him. When we desire to be in control we are

saying that we rule our world. It is God the I Am who rules the world, not us. We are never in control. It is easier to recognize this when we are going through suffering and severe troubles, but we need to realize that we are never in control. We need to depend on Him in every aspect and circumstance of our lives. John Newton effectively expresses this idea, “When great trials are in view, we run simply and immediately to our all-sufficient Friend, feel our dependence, and cry in good earnest for help; but if the occasion seems small, we are too apt secretly to lean to our own wisdom and strength, as if in such slight matters we could make shift without him. Therefore in these we often fail.” He is explaining that we need to turn to God not just during great trials, but also in the minor frustrations of life. We are not to rely on our own strength, but be aware of God’s presence. Newton understood that all aspects of a person’s life, great and small, are in constant need of God’s grace.

I must admit that I struggle with self-sufficiency. I deceive myself into thinking that I can handle the challenges I face day to

day. My tendency is to turn to Him when facing overwhelming struggles. I need to recognize that any ability I have comes from God. I cannot boast in my own abilities, but need to humbly rely on God's strength each day. Jeremiah 9:23-24, "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for I delight in these things,' says the Lord."

An example of a minor issue in my life involves a lost earring. I try to remember to take my earrings off before going to bed each night, but sometimes I forget. I once lost an earring in the shower. It must have gone down the drain. It was a set of earrings that belonged to my daughter, Ruth who passed away 7 years ago. I like to wear some of her earrings in remembrance of her. It hit me hard to lose that earring but I reminded myself I still had some more of Ruth's earrings. Last week I again forgot to

take out my earrings. This was a new set of earrings that I really love. While showering I felt something on the floor that was hard. I picked it up and set it on the sink ledge to look at later. When I got out of the shower and put on my glasses, I discovered it was the back piece of my earring. I searched in the shower for the earring but it was nowhere in sight. I assumed it went down the drain. My first thought was to remove the drain cover to see if maybe it was reachable. But as I thought of that idea, I was moved to cry out to God, "Lord, please help me find my earring!" I looked down on the floor and there it was! I thanked God for hearing my prayer and for his kindness in letting me find it. God IS a God who cares even about the minor issues in life even as simple as losing an earring.

So far God has answered Moses's question about His name, I AM. So what else was God teaching Moses? God referred to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. One commentary explains; "God using the title of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob reminds us that God is the God of each individual journey and story." It also reveals that God can use

anyone. Tim Keller explains that “God can work with very unpromising material.” He points out that Abraham was a coward, Isaac favored Esau over Jacob even though God told him that the older would serve the younger, and Jacob was a deceiver among other issues. God is able to use anyone because He is the one enabling us to accomplish what He asks us to do. As Francis Schaeffer put it, “With God there are no little people.”

I Corinthians 4:7 says, “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”

A W Tozer says, “God needs no one, but when faith is present He works through anyone...He does not need us but we need Him.”

However, Moyter also gives this caution: “The secret that to know God by name is a wondrous revelation and a great privilege, but the name itself is also a warning that God remains God.

Lightness, careless irreverence, thoughtlessness or bland assumption before Him will not do.” Additionally, the third commandment, Do not take the Lord God’s name in vain, refers to his name, Yahweh. His name is to be revered.

Last year we studied the book of John. We learned that Jesus showed Himself to be God. Besides, what I mentioned before about Jesus saying I AM the true vine, He gave Himself other titles: I AM the light of the world, I AM the bread of life, I AM the resurrection and the Life, I AM the gate, I AM the good shepherd, I AM the way, the truth, and the life. All of these point to his deity: Jesus is identifying Himself as God. I AM is His name. Matthew 11:27 confirms this: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." It is through Jesus that we have access to our heavenly Father.

Moving on to Verses 16-22, these verses tell us that Moses is being sent to declare God's Word. In spite of Moses' objections, God gave Moses this message He wanted His people to hear.

Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey."' And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in

it; after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.”

God is a changeless and caring God who keeps his promises. In Genesis 15:13-16, God revealed to Abraham that his descendants would live in a foreign land for 400 years before He rescued them. In Genesis 46:1-7, God sent Jacob and his family to Egypt. He promised to make them into a great nation there. In Genesis 50:24, as Joseph is dying, he reminded his family that God will return His people to Canaan. God kept his promise in his timing. We are reminded of this in 2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient

toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

God is also a God of power and sufficiency. Moyter states, “It was mercy and kindly providence and a longing for repentance that allowed the power of Pharoah to prevail for so long against such displays of divine displeasure.”

God also provided for his people when they were leaving Egypt. The Egyptian women were willing to supply silver and gold jewelry and fine clothing which would later be used in making the Tabernacle. In Exodus 35:20-25, Moses asked the people to willingly donate items to be used to build the Tabernacle. “Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. So they came, both men and women. All who were of a willing heart brought brooches and

earrings and signet rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the LORD. And every one who possessed blue or purple or scarlet yarns or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or goatskins brought them.

Everyone who could make a contribution of silver or bronze brought it as the LORD's contribution. And every one who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work brought it. And every skillful woman spun with her hands, and they all brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen." These items were brought from Egypt and the people willingly offered them to be used for God's glory.

In summary: Motyer reminds us that "God doesn't sweep the difficulties we feel aside..." "The message that comes to us from Moses as he responded to God at the burning bush, is that honesty is the best policy and that there is nothing we cannot say to God, no problem we cannot bring. Moses was almost frighteningly frank about himself, but how beautifully at each point

of his frankness opened a door to floods of divine patience, understanding, promise and provision.” We are called to faith, not to expect to be a different woman, but to expect a sufficient God. We are called to believe his promise that He is always with us and to demonstrate obedience. Over time God will make us into the women He wants us to be. It is His work and not our own.

Philippians 2:12-13 “...work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” So take your eyes off of your failures and weaknesses and look at God. Likewise, Tim Keller gives this warning: “You will never be of use by God until you come to the end of yourself. Until we feel useless, we will not be useful to God.”

This is a call to believers to live out our salvation through diligent, obedient action, not to earn it, but to demonstrate a deep reverence and awe for God, which is facilitated by God’s own empowering work within us. We don’t live out of self-reliance but

rely on God's presence in our lives. Alistar Begg shares this comfort, "You serve a God who has eyes that see you, knees that stoop to help you, and hands that reach out to embrace you. Humbly turn to Him in your weakness and be prepared for Him to meet you with His strength." Isaiah 40:27-31: "Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth .He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Just like Moses, we are also entrusted with God's Word.

2 Timothy 1: 13-14 says, “Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.” We are called to learn more about our God, what he reveals about himself, his faithfulness in keeping his promises, his steadfast love and patience. He is a God who neither slumbers nor sleeps. (Psalm 121:4)

Tony Merida in his commentary on Exodus expressed it this way, “So what do we tell people as God’s missionaries? We tell them who God is, and we tell them what God has said. This includes what He has done in the past, what He is doing in the present, and what He will do in the future.” Let’s remember, as Anthony preached on 1 Corinthians 3, “So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.” (vs 7)

Let us lean on Jesus, our intercessor before the Father. Hebrews 4:14-16 “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our

confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Finally, in the words of Paul Tripp; “You see, Exodus preaches to us the truth of God’s presence, the gospel of His unchanging trustworthiness, the gospel of His promises, the gospel of His power. All of these things point us to Christ who came so that we would inherit God’s promises, live in His presence, and be enabled by His power. In Christ, we are the Israel of God. The I AM is with us and for us forever.”

Prayer:

Father, we thank you for your great love for us. Because of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can cast our burdens, our fears, our failures, our expectations, and all our hopes and dreams upon you, our heavenly Father. No request is too great or too small for you. Thank you for your love and patience with us. May we cry out to you not just in the crises in our lives but also in the day to day issues that we face. You are God and we are not. Help us to trust in your leading and control of our lives.

In the precious name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Scripture

Vs 11-12

Zechariah 4:6

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

2 Corinthians 12:9

Vs 13-18

Hebrews 13:8

Psalms 90:2

Exodus 33:18

John 15:5

Jeremiah 9:23-24

1 Corinthians 4:7

Matthew 11:27

Vs 19-22

Genesis 15:13-16

Genesis 46:1-7

Genesis 50:24

2 Peter 3:9

Exodus 35:20-25

Summary :

Philippians 2:12-13

Isaiah 40:27-31

2 Timothy 1:13-14

Psalms 121:4

1 Corinthians 3:7

Hebrews 4:14-16