



Sowing the Word



"And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Exodus 3:14

Exodus 3-4
June 24th, 2009

So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

(Nehemiah 8:8)

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Helpful Study Resource:

Explore the Book by J. Sidlow Baxter

Commentary:

The commentary used with permission throughout
this booklet is:

With the Word Bible Commentary

by Warren W. Wiersbe.

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Outline

Theme: God saves His people that they might be His and know His presence with them

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Notes for Booklet

Chapter 3 Highlights and Helps by Pastor Jim

God's Calling

In Exodus 3-4 we see God call Moses to the task that He has for him. How God calls His people to the tasks that He has for them is something that is not a "one size fits all" thing. God works with us differently, personally and you cannot box God in on how He does and will do this with you. Having said that, there are some things in these two chapters that can help us understand how God calls us. I do believe that although the means will be different with all of us, there are some fundamentals that are universal. May God give you understanding in these chapters!

God calling verses my striving.

It is helpful to go back and read Exodus 2:11-15. In chapter 2, we see Moses seeking to do God's work in his own strength, his own timing and in his own way. In Acts 7, God lets us know that Moses was seeking to do God's work in chapter 2.

"Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. (Ac 7:23-25)

As we read through and consider the rest of chapters 3-4, notice the contrast with how Moses attempts to do God's will in chapter 2.

1st Key: It begins with God, an encounter with God - "on Holy Ground"

Moses and the burning bush. It is a scene that is fascinating in so many ways. Moses meets with God, God calls him to recognize His holiness and take off his sandals. One of the key issues here is to understand that doing God's work should flow from God. In chapter 2, Moses sensed what God had for him and just sought to do it. He had no encounter with God, no call from God. Yet, as we begin chapter 3, it is this encounter and direct call from God that becomes so key. How we encounter God will be different, everyone does not see a literal burning bush as Moses did. Yet, all of us need to encounter God and have Him direct us into the things He

has for us in His way and in His timing.

2nd Key: Humility is required. “Who am I”

Moses first problem is that he looks at who he is and feels and says to God: “who am I”. In chapter 2, it seems that he was full of himself, thinking that he was something and could do God’s work. Forty years in the desert have brought a needed meekness and humility to Moses. Now, rightly, he feels inadequate to the task before him. For the person that really serves God, in the right way, at the right time and with the right heart – they will always feel inadequate. (see 2 Corinthians 3:4-6)

3rd Key: knowing God is required. “Who are You”

Moses second problem is that as He thinks about speaking to the people and calling them to follow, is that they will ask him “What is His Name”, that they will ask him about God, His person and character. Moses has the right sense that He needs to be able to present God to the people, who He is. Again, we look back at chapter 2, and Moses was ready to act without knowing this for himself or for the people. Yet, now he knows that He needs to know God and show people who God is.

YHVH – “I AM”

God shares with Moses who He is and it is one of the most vast and amazing descriptions. God say that His name is “I AM”. In Hebrew it is four consonants translated YHVH. This sacred name is known as the tetragrammaton (“four letters”). How to pronounce these four letters has been something of a debate in the church. Some feel that it should be pronounced YeHoVaH, or Jehovah. Others feel that it should be pronounced YaHVeH or Yahweh. No one knows for sure the true pronunciation of YHWH because the ancient Hebrew spelling used no actual vowels in its alphabet. The Jews consider YHWH too sacred to utter.

Although debates about how to pronounce these letters are interesting, they often miss the real point. In this name of God, it declares who God is – that He is the Great “I AM”. He is self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal, and sovereign. He is...everything!

Through the rest of the Old Testament, whenever you see the word LORD, in all capital letters, it is this designation of God that is given.

Chapter 4 Highlights and Helps by Pastor Jim

4th Key: How can this work. **“they will not believe me”**

Moses looks on what God is calling him to do and has no idea how he could do God's work. He does not know how people would believe him. Again, the contrast with chapter 2 is helpful. Somehow, forty years earlier, he felt he could do this and that people would follow him. Now he is in a place where he is looking to the Lord for guidance and direction. There is a needed place where we are not “advising God” on how to do things in our lives and in His people, but in contrast have no idea what to do. A place of deeper humility that looks at what God has for us and we simply have no idea how to do it. Such a place is actually a really good place to be with the Lord, looking to Him for direction, guidance and help. It is interesting that at this point, God often uses what is “in our hands”, that He takes and transforms some talent, skill or gift that we have. Moses rod was what he has tended sheep with for forty years. That talent, that rod that has become so common in Moses hand...is about to become something so divinely powerful. Again, we cannot box God in here, but it is true that often as He calls us into what He has for our lives, we discover that it is something He has already given us and perhaps has been building in us even in our jobs and lives. He then takes that “rod in our hands” and blesses it in new and dynamic ways.

5th key – knowing our inability **“I am not eloquent”**

As Moses looks on what God has for him, he feels completely incapable of the task. Again, this is a wonderful contrast to his attempt in chapter 2, where somehow he felt capable to the task. It is also interesting that in Acts 7, it tells us that Moses was a man mighty in words – that he was trained in speaking. Yet, he feels so unable. A sense of our own inability to do what God has for us is entirely key in serving Him. The closer we get to the Lord and His work in our lives, instead of growing in confidence in ourselves, we should and will find ourselves feeling unable. Again – this is actually a good thing!

6th Key – don't say no **“please send whomever else”**

You could title this “Here am I...send someone else.” In verse 13 of chapter 4, is actually the first place in this whole encounter that Moses goes wrong. Up to this point, all that he has said and felt are things we

discover are actually good and necessary for serving God. Yet here, what he does brings God's anger (v.14). This is a good lesson point for us, that as He calls us forward and we feel inadequate, unable, confused and more that these things are good. Yet, because of the needed feelings of weakness, what we want to make sure we don't do is tell God "no". Moses tries this and it is a picture of something we don't want to repeat in our lives. Don't tell God no!

It is an interesting thought to consider...did this disobedience cost Moses God's best for his life? God brings Aaron into the equation and it seems that God had already directed Aaron to come to Moses. Yet, now Aaron will be the mouth piece, or so it seems. As this a missing of God's best for Moses? Maybe, at least it is enough to give us pause and realize again... don't tell God no!

7th Key – have your family in order “the Lord met him and sought to kill him”

As we read through this chapter, we are almost shocked to find that in v.24 God says he was about to kill Moses. What is this? What is happening? Would God have done it? Understand this, God could have raised up another man, Moses is not the key to the puzzle in Exodus, God is. The issue here is that Moses was disobedient in his own family. He has not circumcised his own sons. It seems it was a disagreement between he and his wife and he let down his spiritual leadership in the home and let her keep the boys from being circumcised. As we turn to the NT and read the pastoral letters of Timothy and Titus we discover that the central issue of leadership in the church is personal character. God is not looking or needing skilled men, rich men, connected men or any such things. The leaders He is raising up are first and foremost men of personal character. Thus, this issue in Moses life was so serious that if Moses did not get it right, God would have killed him and found another servant. The fearful issue here is that we ought to approach this with humility and understand that as we seek to serve God, as we are called forward to serve Him – that we focus on our personal character and be right in our own personal lives.

As you consider these 7 keys of Moses' calling, may God use them to help you understand the purpose He has for your lives. God has a calling for every single Christian. Each and every believer has a spiritual gift and a part to play in the body of Christ. May He be showing You what He has for You, in His timing, in His way and by His power!

With the Word Bible Commentary

Exodus 3

You never know what a day may bring, so keep your eyes and ears open to the leading of the Lord. Childlike curiosity completely changed Moses' life. God calls busy people to serve Him, and He reveals Himself to them.

God is faithful. He called Abraham, cared for Isaac, guided and protected Jacob, and He would be with Moses. He is the God of the individual as well as the nation, and He does not change from generation to generation.

God is concerned and compassionate. He saw the affliction of His people, and He heard their cries. Then why didn't He act sooner? Because He was following a perfect timetable (Gen. 15:13–16). You must learn to wait on the Lord. (See Ps. 37.)

God is long-suffering. The Lord answered all of Moses' objections and gave one assurance after another to encourage him. Moses said, "I am not!" and God replied, "I AM!" Faith lays hold of what God is and obeys what God says. Faith sees the opportunities while unbelief sees the obstacles. Are you arguing with God about something He wants you to do?

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). *With the word Bible commentary* (Ex 3:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

With the Word Bible Commentary

Exodus 4

Forty years before, Moses was sure he could solve his people's problems; but now that God had called him, he was sure he would fail. He could give no reasons for disobeying God, but he certainly had plenty of excuses. "An excuse is the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie," observed Billy Sunday. But God gave Moses everything he needed for success. All he had to do was trust the great I AM.

Credentials. If we give God what we have, He can use it for His glory: a rod, a sling (1 Sam. 17:40), a net (Luke 5:1–11), or a little lunch (John 6:9). He can even use the hand if *nothing* is in it!

Companion. God already had Aaron prepared and on his way to meet Moses. While Aaron at times created some problems for Moses, he was still a valued helper in the work. He was the speaker, and Moses was the doer. But in time, Moses himself became a great orator.

Commission. God spoke to Moses and gave him the instructions and encouragement he needed (vv. 19–23). Before he arrived in Egypt, Moses knew that his work would be difficult and that Pharaoh would oppose him.

Chastening. Moses was chastened by God and almost died because he had failed to make his child a son of the covenant (Gen. 17:10). How could Moses lead Israel if his own family was not dedicated to God? (See 1 Tim. 3:5.)

Conviction. Moses was sure nobody would believe him; however, when the elders saw the signs and heard the message, they believed and bowed to worship God.

When you face a tough job and you are afraid that you will fail, remember Moses. God keeps His promises, no matter how you feel or how people respond

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). *With the word Bible commentary* (Ex 4:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

"I am not Eloquent."

Exodus 4:10

Written by: F B Meyer

Taken From: Our Daily Homily

This is what we all say. We think more of the words than of the message; more of our eloquence or slowness of speech than of the King's seal and signature. Moses had learned many wholesome lessons through his long sojourn in Midian; but he had to learn this last one, that God does not want excellency of speech or of language in his messengers, but the unction and power which come on those who speak after direct audience with the Eternal. Aaron, who came to meet Moses, could speak well; but he was a weak man, whose alliance with Moses caused his nobler younger brother much anxiety and pain. However, God determined to send Aaron with him, to be his colleague and spokesman. Better a thousand times had it been for Moses to trust God for speech, than be thus deposed of his premiership.

Be sure to get thy message from the King. — Wait before Him in the inner shrine, till He says the word which thou shalt speak. This will give thee the real eloquence of the heart.

Look up for the right words. — The Apostle said that the Corinthians were enriched in all utterance; and he said that he spoke the Divine mysteries in words which the Holy Spirit taught. Ask for these, and you will not be disappointed.

Rely on the Divine co-operation. — There is another force at work, more subtle and penetrating than the most eloquent words of man — the power of the Holy Ghost. Seek for his Divine demonstration and co-witness. And it shall come to pass, that mysterious influences shall move over the hearts of those that listen to thy words, which shall attest the mighty fellowship and co-operation of One whom the natural man cannot detect.

