

Sermon 2-21-18 God's Will and My Inadequacy

Dear Dependent on the Lord:

Have you ever been asked to do something that you felt was beyond your ability?

- Did you feel a bit inadequate for the task you were asked to do?
- How did you respond when asked to do something that you thought was above your ability to do?
- Did you come up with excuses?
- Did you suggest someone else to do the job?
- Or did you accept the assignment and do the best you were able to?

Moses was a man who felt he was inadequate for an assignment that God called him to do.

Moses was working as a shepherd while living with his father-in-law after leaving Egypt and the palace of Pharaoh where he was raised by Pharaoh's daughter.

Once when Moses was out tending his sheep the Lord appears to him.

- Moses is captivated by a very unusual sight.
- A burning bush that was not being consumed by the fire
- God was in the bush speaking – a miracle.

Acts 7:33-34

In Exodus 3:10 God says to Moses "I am sending you on a mission."

How does Moses respond?

Objection 1 – Who Am I?

His 1st response was a question: “Who am I?”

- Moses expresses his inadequacy
- He had been absent from Egypt for 40 years
- He was a mere shepherd in Midian

But God responds to Moses by saying: “I will be with you.” Exodus 3:12

But Moses replies with his 2nd objection to the Lord: “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

Objection 2 – What is Your Name?

The Lord identifies Himself with the words: “I AM who I AM”

- I am self existent
- I am eternal
- If God is for you no one or nothing can be against you, right?

Moses has no excuses to not accept the Lord’s call but Moses comes up with another objection as to why he is not the right man for the Lord.

Objection 3 – Israel won’t believe me.

Exodus 4:1 “ Moses answered: What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say: The Lord did not appear to you?”

So the Lord once again answers Moses by giving him 3 signs to show to the Israelites that the Lord has appeared to him:

- Moses staff turned into a snake and back again into a staff

- Moses hand became leprous after he put it in his coat and then was restored to health
- Finally, the Lord told Moses if the Israelites still don't believe that I have appeared to you then take some water from the Nile River and pour it on the ground and it will become blood.

Was Moses ready to accept the Lord's assignment? Not yet. He had a 4th objection or excuse. Moses tells the Lord: "I am slow of speech and tongue."

Objection 4 – I can't talk

- I can't speak
- I am "heavy in mouth and heavy in tongue"
- I am unable to articulate my thoughts in fluent, flowing speech.
- God you have overlooked my speech disability.

The Lord responds to Moses: "Who gave man his mouth?...Is it not I, the Lord? Now go: I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

Exodus 4:11f

Moses responds with his 5th excuse: "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."

Objection 5 – Send someone else

God again tells Moses "I will be with help you speak and will send Aaron to help you, too."

Do we ever respond like Moses?

- Lord send someone else.
- Lord I don't have the ability

- Lord I am too busy
- Lord I don't think I am the person You need
- Lord I am just not adequate.

Notice how the Lord doesn't give up on Moses.

- He reassures Moses time after time I will be with you
- He equips Moses and gives him help from his brother Aaron.
- He provides everything Moses would need to do the job.

On the other hand we see later in Moses life as he was leading Israel near the end of their 40 year journey in the wilderness where he trusted in his own leadership and failed to trust in the Lord.

In Numbers 20 we have the incident known as the Rock of Testing.

- Moses feels confident and in charge
- Moses own self-sufficiency gets in the way of God's will even more than his previous inadequacy did
- Moses fails to treat the Lord as holy and puts his own action on center stage.

Do we ever tell God that we can do this or that on our own?

One of the biggest needs the Israelites had as they wandered in the wilderness was the availability of drinking water. It was near the end of their 40 year journey in the wilderness. In Numbers 20:2 it says there was no water for the people and they began to turn on Moses and Aaron. The people began to complain to Moses: "Why did you bring us out into this wilderness?"

My son once went on a 3 day hike in the back country of Teddy Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota and their water supply ran out because of

a detour in their journey and they barely made it back to the ranger station before becoming dehydrated.

With the people complaining Moses seeks the Lord's counsel. God says to Moses "Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water."

When Moses approached the rock rather than simply speak he took his staff and hit the rock twice before the water gushed out of the rock to water the Israelites.

The Lord then responded to Moses: "Because you did not trust in Me enough to honor Me as holy in the sight of the Israelites you will not bring this community into the land I give them." Nu 20:12

Numbers 27:14 Moses was not allowed to enter the Promise Land because of this incident at the Rock of Testing.

Moses failed to take God at His Word.

Do we ever put our own actions on center stage? Do we ever set our own agenda? Do we ever tell God we can do this or that on our own?

But the Lord does not give up on Moses as He doesn't give up on us.

The Lord humbles Moses and brings him back into relationship with Him.

- Moses will not go to the Promise Land, but God will still use him.
- And the Promise Land (heaven) will be Moses in the resurrection.

In Numbers 21 Israel again rebelled against the Lord. They complained that the route they were taking was too far out of the way. It was too far for them to travel. They became impatient and frustrated with the Lord. They despised the manna that the Lord had blessed them with. Nu 21:5

So the Lord sent judgment upon them with snakes that bit with a fiery inflammation.

The people relented and confessed their sins and sought rescue. The Lord told Moses to put up a bronze snake on a pole and whoever would look up to the bronze snake would be saved and healed.

John 3:14-15

“Lifted Up”

“Lifted Up” reminds us of the cross.

See our Savior on the cross “lifted up” for us.

Moses shows dependence on the promises of the Lord as he raises the bronze snake on the pole in the wilderness. Looking at the promise of God, a sign of God’s wrath hanging on a tree --- that brings salvation.

When God asks us to step out in faith, what do we do with our feelings of inadequacy?

- We don’t overcome inadequacy through avoidance
- We don’t overcome inadequacy with our own confidence
- We overcome inadequacy with dependence on Jesus

Looking to Jesus in faith brings salvation.

- Looking to the cross puts to death our avoidance and our confidence
- Our inadequacies are covered over by the fully-sufficient death of Jesus on the cross.

If God is for us who can be against us? No one.