

“Moses’ Great Commission”
Exodus 3:10 – 4:18a
(Preached at Trinity, August 20, 2006)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 2** we read of the birth of Moses. We read how Satan was seeking to destroy the people of God but God’s purpose will not fail. God overruled the wicked plans of Pharaoh. God had ordained Moses to be the deliverer of His people. By the turn of Providence Moses was rescued by Pharaoh’s own daughter.
2. God then began the training of Moses. His early years were spent with his own mother who taught him the ways of God. He was also being educated in all the ways and customs of the Egyptians. He most likely received an excellent Egyptian education learning mathematics, astronomy and all the sciences of his day.
3. Then at the age of 40 God sent him into the wilderness for another 40 years. He met Jethro, the priest of Midian where he probably received further religious training. Moses was also being transformed mentally. As a shepherd in the wilderness God was humbling him. We read of Moses in the Book of Numbers:
Numbers 12:3 – “(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)”
4. Moses may have thought this would be how he would live out his days; that he would die in obscurity, but God had other plans for Moses.
In addition, Israel may have thought that God had abandoned them—but God never forgets His people.
Their cries did not go unheard. God heard their groaning and remembered His covenant with Abraham and set forth His plan for their deliverance.
5. Moses was in Midian tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law. He had led the flock to the far side of the desert to Mount Horeb also known as Mount Sinai where Moses would later receive the Ten Commandments.
. It was there at Horeb that Moses came upon a burning bush that was not being consumed by the fire. God spoke to Moses from out of the midst of the bush. All of His words were significant.
 - A. He called Moses by name – God knows His people personally
 - B. He told Moses to stop, to keep his distance. – **Verse 5** - “Draw not nigh hither”
Men do not barge into the presence of God. There is a gap between God and humans, between Creator and creature. God is high above us. Notice Moses hid his face (**V.6**).
 - C. He told Moses to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. God must be approached with high reverence.
 - D. He told Moses that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God remembered His covenant
 - E. He told Moses that He was not ignorant of the afflictions of His people. God knows and cares about the trials of His people. He knows and cares about you.

Exodus 3:7 – “And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;”

- F. He told Moses that He had come down to deliver them.

Exodus 3:8 – “And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians”

- G. Then, finally, God told Moses, “Thou art the man.” He told Moses that *he* would be the deliverer.

Exodus 3:10 – “Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

- 6. Tonight I want us to look at this great commission of Moses. In many ways it mirrors God’s call of men to the Gospel ministry today.

- I. Moses was called of God.

- A. God uses human beings, even sinful human beings to carry out His purpose

- 1. Noah lived in a world of sin, yet God chose to use him

Genesis 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

- 2. Paul never ceased to marvel at God’s grace in calling him

1 Timothy 1:12-13 – “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; ¹³ Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.”

- 3. God spent 80 years preparing Moses as His deliverer

- B. Moses was called by the direct revelation of God

- 1. God appeared to him in both a visible and audible presence

- 2. Moses received a special revelation from God in which God manifested His divine essence to him.

- C. Pastors today also receive a call from God

- 1. They must first receive a call to salvation – this is essential

- a. The call to salvation is also a call to serve
Service is every Christian’s call and privilege

- b. A willingness to serve is not necessarily a call to the Gospel ministry – every Christian must have a willingness to serve. Since the word ministry in the NT is from the word **διακονία** which literally means service, every Christian in a general sense is called to ministry.

- 2. There is a particular, inward call that a man receives to *the* ministry.

- a. We refer to this as the ministry of the word or the Gospel ministry.
- b. He is called specifically to leadership, preaching, teaching, shepherding

- 3. Calvin referred to an internal call and an external call. The internal call is a compelling inward draw which manifests itself in an intense desire

Timothy 3:1 – “This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”

- a. The English word “desire” does not give us an accurate picture of what is meant here. We use the word to describe any inclination or act of the will. We desire to get out of bed. We desire to eat a hamburger. We desire to mow the lawn.

- b. There are two words used here – both depict an intense urging
 $\delta\sigma\epsilon\gamma\omega\alpha\iota$ – “to stretch one's self out in order to touch or to grasp something”
1 Timothy 6:10 – “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”
 $\epsilon\pi\iota\theta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ – “to long for, to lust after, covet
James 1:14 – “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”
- 4. There will also be an external call – a confirmation and affirmation by the church.
 Spurgeon – “The will of the Lord concerning pastors is made known through the prayerful judgment of his church. It is needful as a proof of your vocation that your preaching should be acceptable to the people of God.”
 R.L. Dabney – “Christ, the Head of the church, has himself ordained the mode in which he wills his gospel shall be preached to mankind. He has instituted in the world a visible church, and appointed it to be the pillar and ground of the truth. He has given it, at least in outline, its form, laws and officers. He has taught this church that her public organic functions are all to be performed through these officers. When he was pleased to ordain that by the foolishness of preaching those who believe are saved, he provided expressly how the preachers were to be selected and appointed. The qualifications of the man he bestows by the gifts of his providence and grace. The brotherhood recognizes the possession of these qualifications by certain criteria, which he has caused to be laid down in His Word.” (Discussions, Vol. 2, page 78)
- 5. We don't have audible calls today but we do have God's inward draw upon the individual, the affirmation of his qualifications in the Scripture, and the testimony and confirmation of the church in setting him apart for the ministry.

- II. Moses was overwhelmed by his own weaknesses and inadequacies
- A. God doesn't need mighty men
 - 1. Paul stated this truth concerning the salvation of men
1 Corinthians 1:26 – “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.”
 - 2. Forty years previous Moses rose up with great human power and set forth as the deliverer. The results were disastrous and doomed to failure. He fled into the wilderness where God would humble him.
 - 3. And humble God did – God brought Moses to become one of the most humble men who ever lived.
Numbers 12:3 – “(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which *were* upon the face of the earth.)”

- B. Moses was overwhelmed at God's call
 - 1. He had no confidence that any would listen to him – he was just a lowly shepherd
Exodus 4:1 – “And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.”
 - 2. He had no confidence in his ability to stand before the people and speak
Exodus 4:10 – “And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.”
 a. Some interpret this that Moses was too shy to speak to Pharaoh
 b. Some point to a possible speech impediment
 - 3. Moses' initial response was, “Please send someone else.”
 Moses felt wholly inadequate for the task
Exodus 4:13 – “And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of *him whom* thou wilt send.”
- C. Every true pastor is humbled by this call
 - 1. I felt and continue to feel wholly inadequate for the job
 - 2. This isn't a vocation that one takes upon himself
 Pride is one evidence that one is not called
1 Timothy 3:6 – “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

III. God comforts us in our weakness

- A. God reminded Moses that his power was not his own
 - 1. All that Moses was was the result of God's hand upon him
Exodus 4:11-12 – “And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.”
 - 2. When God calls us to serve Him He also equips us to serve Him
 Who made your mouth or your mind or everything else?
 - 3. Who rules this universe? Who rules the minds of men? Who has declared the end from the beginning?
 - 4. Every possible excuse we can conjure up is crushed under the mighty hand of God
Exodus 4:12 – “Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.”
- B. God promises His almighty presence
Exodus 3:12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee
 - 1. God shows Himself mighty even when we are weak
2 Corinthians 12:10 – “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”
 - 2. We need to trust God's ability to give us the ability to accomplish what He commands us to do

IV. God demands that we obey Him

- A. Every one of Moses' excuses were made void
 - 1. God condescends to our weakness
 - 2. He is patient with our weakness but in the end He commands us to obey
Exodus 4:12 – “Now therefore go”
 - 3. Moses' primary problem was not a problem with his ability to speak or anything else – it was a problem with obedience
Moses just didn't want to go.
- B. God demands a willingness to serve Him
 - 1. God will overcome every weakness but is angered by our disobedience
Exodus 4:14 – “And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses,”
 - 2. Is your lack of service because of your inability or because of your unwillingness?
Some of you have never given away a tract
There may be some who seldom if ever share Christ
Is it because you really don't want to go?
- C. Don't despise the small things
 - 1. Moses had just spent 40 years as a lowly shepherd – he faithfully served his father-in-law
 - 2. Don't despise the smallness of the task – God is honored by your willingness to serve Him
 - a. Mr. Davis used to spray weed killer along the fence row
 - b. Mr. Daniel would come and water the flowers
 - 3. As we honor Him in small things He blesses us with greater things
Luke 16:10 – “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”
Matthew 25:21 – “His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”
- D. In the end, we must obey
Exodus 4:18 – “And Moses went”

Conclusion:

1. Are you serving Him with all your might—with all that you are?
2. If He calls you to something great are you prepared to obey?
Moses' ultimate problem was a failure to trust God. God promised His presence. He promised that He *would* deliver His people.
Exodus 3:12 – “And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.”
Notice: WHEN thou has brought forth this people . . . ye SHALL serve God upon this mountain.
3. God proved His presence and power to Moses in turning his staff into a serpent and making his hand leprous.
4. God has proved Himself mighty to us over and over again. Our duty is to trust God and serve Him.