

Lesson 3 11th February, 2018

God Calls Moses

Lesson Scope: Exodus 3 & 4

References in brackets are to Exodus 3 & 4 unless noted otherwise

Lesson Focus

Moses spent his first forty years in Egypt. He spent another forty years as a stranger in Midian. Meanwhile his brethren in Egypt continued to labor under their cruel taskmasters.

This lesson begins near the end of Moses' forty years in Midian. He had married the daughter of the priest of Midian. During this time, as a shepherd, he became familiar with the country he would later lead Israel through. It seems he was now less confident of himself and more ready to depend on God and seek His guidance.

While God was preparing Moses in Midian, He was preparing the Israelites to leave Egypt. The cruel slave labor under which they were suffering was stoking their desire to leave the fertile land of Goshen.

Leading this multitude of slaves through the wilderness was a monumental task. But God's call to Moses at this time shows us that God knew that the time was right for Israel's departure from Egypt.

When God called Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land, Moses had a definite sense of responsibility that God was laying upon him. From a human standpoint, Moses shrank from this work. God helped him to understand that He would enable him each step of the way.

As you examine this lesson try to get a clear view of God. His omniscience and omnipotence qualify Him to call and enable men to do His work. Finite men can move ahead in confidence when they are assured of His presence with them.

One point of emphasis should be that every call should be seriously considered. Too often our people lightly pass off calls of the church to serve in various ways. Every Christian is called to serve.

God calls and enables men to accomplish His purposes on earth. He is looking for people who are willing to respond to His call.

Lesson Aim: To encourage a ready response to God's voice.

Theme Verse: [Isaiah 6:8](#) Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Lesson Text

"Here Am I"

[Exodus 3:1-7](#) Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ Then the LORD said, "I have surely ⁷ seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings,

[Exodus 3:10](#) Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

"Who Am I?"

[Exodus 3:11-14](#) But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "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, you shall serve God on this mountain." 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." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

[Exodus 4:10-14](#) But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant,

but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”¹³ But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.”¹⁴ Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

"Let Me Go"

Exodus 4:18-19 Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, “Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”¹⁹ And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.”

Questions for Study

"Here Am I"

1. How had Moses been faithful prior to God's call at the burning bush? (See Hebrews 11:24-26.)
2. What qualities does God look for in those He calls to service?
3. How does God call people to service in the church today?

"Who Am I?"

4. What past experiences of Moses affected his humble view of himself?
5. How does our view of God affect the way we enter the service to which He calls us?
6. In what ways does God provide for those who labor in His service today?

"Let Me Go"

7. What evidence do we have that Moses was surrendered to God's will?
8. What are some indications that one is prepared for greater service?

Analyzing the Passage

This Scripture describes a sacred scene. In this desert place, Moses was far from other people, but very close to God. He stood on holy ground

as God spoke to him. Putting off one's shoes was a common practice in this culture. It was a confession of personal defilement and unworthiness to stand in the presence of a holy God. Moses stood at the very place to which he would later lead the children of Israel.

The burning bush that was not consumed commanded Moses' complete attention. When God has one's attention, He can speak effectively.

Moses offered several reasons why he could not accept God's call. God had an effective answer for each one. First, Moses claimed he was not qualified for the task (3:11). God promised to be with him and enable him to lead Israel (3:12). Next, Moses said he could not prove his legitimacy as a leader (3:13). God reminded him that He is the eternal, self-existent one. Moses' legitimacy and his connection with the "I AM" would be confirmed (3:14-22). Further, Moses claimed that the elders would not follow him (4:1). In answer, God gave him the ability to perform three miraculous signs. Then Moses claimed that he was not a fluent speaker. In answer, God promised that because He had made Moses' mouth, He would teach him what to say (4:11-12). Finally, Moses reasoned that somebody else could do the job better. In answer, God assigned Aaron to help Moses (4:14).

Principles and Applications

"Here Am I"

1. Serving faithfully in the present prepares one to hear God's call for added responsibility (3:1). We should take seriously our responsibility in the church, whatever that may be. God expects each one to do his best where he is. When a call comes for further service, we should not lightly pass it off, but should give it serious consideration.
2. In order to hear God's voice clearly, one must be alert and reverent (3:2-5). The alert person will see God calling through personal conviction, through circumstances, and through the church. His reverent response will enable God to lead him on in faithful service.
3. When God speaks, man must respond with godly fear (3:6). Even though we mortals feel unworthy of God's interest in us, we must respond to God's call with a reverent "Here am I" Whether one's answer to a specific call is positive or negative, he must maintain the reverential attitude towards God's call.
4. At the proper time, God calls men and women to new areas of service

(3:10). God in His omniscience knows who will best serve Him in specific ways. Man with his limited understanding does well to submit to these specific calls.

"Who Am I?"

5. God enables ordinary men to accomplish His work (3:11-12). God never calls men to do something that is beyond their ability. When we feel unable to perform what we are called to do, we must remember Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

We have some examples of this truth in our own church history. When the conservative Mennonite regroupings took place in the 1950s and 1960s, there was an urgent need for publishing consistent church literature and for operating Christian schools. Some said it could not be done. But God enabled those who were committed to His work. The work was successful and has been a great blessing to the church.

6. Those commissioned by God can move ahead in confidence (3:13-14). We can be sure that God will make a way for His people to serve Him. The great I AM is without limitation, and His servants can be confident that He will supply all they need (Philippians 4:19).

7. God knows our human limitations (4:10-11). When we feel that our limitations will hinder us in our work for God, we need to remember that God's grace is sufficient and that His strength is made perfect in human weakness. When we are weak in ourselves, then we are strong in the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

8. God is displeased with those who shirk their personal responsibilities (4:14). Sometimes individuals become concerned about what others should be doing. God in His perfect plans for the church knows who will best fill various responsibilities. May we not hinder His workings by refusing to fit into His purposes?

"Let Me Go"

9. Men of God need to evaluate God's call in light of the Word and test it with other faithful brethren (4:18). Moses carefully conferred with Jethro, understanding that his response to God's call would affect his father-in-law. In speaking respectfully with Jethro, Moses continued a good relationship that had developed over the years.

When one considers a call of God to serve in another place or in a different capacity, it is important to confer with our brethren so we can

move together as brethren. The counsel of our brethren is invaluable to help us discern God's direction.

Important Teachings

1. Serving faithfully in the present prepares one to hear God's call for added responsibility (3:1).
2. In order to hear God's voice clearly, one must be alert and reverent (3:2-5).
3. When God speaks, man must respond with godly fear (3:6).
4. At the proper time, God calls men and women to new areas of service (3:10).
5. God enables ordinary men to accomplish His work (3:11-12).
6. Those commissioned by God can move ahead in confidence (3:13-14).
7. God knows our human limitations (4:10-11).
8. God is displeased with those who shirk their personal responsibilities (4:14).
9. Men of God need to evaluate God's call in light of the Word and test it with other faithful brethren (4:18).

Answers to Questions

1. How had Moses been faithful prior to God's call at the burning bush? (See Hebrews 1.24-26.)
He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Hebrews 11:24). He chose to suffer affliction with God's people rather than enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season (Hebrews 11:25). He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews 11:26).
2. What qualities does God look for in those He calls to service?
God needs those who are attentive to and ready to hear His call (3:3-4). God's servants need to have a godly fear (3:6). God can use those who go at God's call, even though they may at first have some reservations concerning their own abilities. God uses those who rely upon His strength and enablement.
3. How does God call people to service in the church today?
He calls individually when He impresses one with a need for a Gospel testimony, for encouragement, or for challenging one another in the brotherhood. He also calls through those who are responsible for vari-

ous aspects of the work of the church. This would include foreign mission work and congregational outreach. The Lord also calls in special ways such as in ordination.

4. What past experiences of Moses affected his humble view of himself?

When Moses had received training in Egypt and then went to visit his brethren, he endeavored by his own strength and in a forcible way to deliver Israel from their bondage. He realized that he had failed to communicate effectively with his brethren about his desire to deliver them. Remembering these failures helped him to see his own insufficiency for the work to which God was calling him.

5. How does our view of God affect the way we enter the service to which He calls us?

When we understand that the God who calls us to His service is fully able to supply all our need, we can go forward with confidence. If we have apprehensions about our weaknesses and limitations, we can look to the God who has all power and richly supplies all our needs.

6. In what ways does God provide for those who labor in His service today?

He gives wisdom to meet the issues which face us. He gives physical, emotional, and spiritual strength when we are weak. He provides a spiritual brotherhood to encourage us to faithfulness. We have many promises in the Word that we can claim.

7. What evidence do we have that Moses was surrendered to God's will?

Moses had spoken to God of his misgivings about the call, and God had reassured him of His presence to be with him and supply his need. Then Moses was ready to ask Jethro for permission to go back to his brethren in Egypt.

8. What are some indications that one is prepared for greater service?

A feeling of personal insufficiency indicates a necessary reliance upon God's grace. A readiness to receive counsel from the brotherhood indicates a humble and teachable spirit.

Summarizing the Lesson

Ready to suffer grief or pain, ready to stand the test;

Ready to stay at home and send others, if He sees best.

Ready to go, ready to bear, ready to watch and pray;
Ready to stand aside and give, till He shall clear the way.
Ready to go, ready to stay, ready my place to fill;
Ready for service lowly or great, ready to do His will.

—*Ascribed to A. C. Palmer*

Research Guide

1. Read pages 346-352 in *Doctrines of the Bible*, "The Call to the Ministry." (Many truths here apply to other areas of service as well.)
2. Read the commentary of Moses' life in Hebrews 11:24-27.