

I WISH I COULD BUT I CAN'T

Exodus 3 & 4

INTRO Turn your Bibles or turn them on, to Exodus chapter 3. There is something we need to learn from this great book. Today, we are going to learn that the voice we respond to, determines the future we experience.

I am preaching today on the subject, "I WISH I COULD BUT I CAN'T". This message has a lot to say about insecurities. I want to address the feelings that insecurities create and see if maybe you can identify with them. Because, I believe it's those feelings, in many cases, that keeps us from being whole heartedly committed to the cause of God and His church.

I want the team to put a phrase on the screen. Read it with me...

I AM NEVER _____ ENOUGH.

How many of you have ever had this thought? Now, the specific thing that you think you're not enough of, can change. If you're like me, it can change from moment to moment. It can change with a phone call, or with a conversation. You need to know, I relate to this sentiment. How many of you can relate to it?

Now, I need you now to help me fill in the blank. I'll get you started... I AM NEVER QUALIFIED ENOUGH. That's mine. Almost weekly, situations arise that make me feel under qualified to be a pastor. To the point, that I sometimes think I should just go to church somewhere and be a faithful participant and maybe sing a special once in a while, but that's it.

I AM NEVER ABLE ENOUGH. I never get around to doing everything I want to do. I have so many goals for myself, and things I want to accomplish for this church, that I never seem to be able to get to all of them. And these things cause insecurities in me to arise.

Okay, jump in here with me. I need to know how messed up you guys are. What are you thinking about? I AM NEVER _____ ENOUGH. Give me some words.

We could fill in the blank all day long. And we may not even get to the real things that cause us problems. You're giving me the churchy ones right now. We could dig deeper. But we won't, let's move on.

I want us to deal directly with that sentiment, I AM NEVER__ ENOUGH. That is the essence of insecurity. I want us to look at a man in the Bible that God used in a great way, who struggled with insecurity. I'm talking about Moses. The greatest leader that ever lived. He was a deliverer. But before he could deliver others, there were some things God had to deliver him from.

We're going to look at three specific things in his life that almost eliminated him from being the man God purposed for him to be. I think you will probably relate to all of them. These are thoughts that tend to drive our behavior. And if we desire to be committed, purposeful, and usable, followers of Christ, we need to get a handle on these things.

Lets read together from God's Holy Word...

Exodus 3: 1-10 “Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” 4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” 5 “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” 6 Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. 7 The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

God is speaking through a burning bush to a man who didn't expect to hear from God. God is calling him by name. Not once but twice, “Moses! Moses!”, in scripture that's known as a double inclusive, which is sort of an exclamation point. It means I have something very important to say and you need to stop everything and pay attention. Not only does God call his name, but he carries on a complete conversation with Moses about the call He has placed on Moses' life to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Now look at **v 11** “But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

In this passage it seems we have 2 characters carrying on a conversation. Who are they? Moses and... God, correct. That's what seems to be taking place here. But I'd like to suggest there's another voice involved. Another character whose name is not mention but he's definitely involved in the conversation. It's that voice inside you that's always putting you down, always reminding you of the flaws and failures of your life. It's Satan.

Think about it. Here is God telling Moses all about who He is, I AM God, I have come down. Then Moses has an instinctive response, and you'll relate to this, he says, but WHO AM I? Who am I?

Let me give you some thoughts. These thoughts are not Moses' exact words but they are the thoughts driving his insecurities. You can hear it in his voice. You can see it in his actions. You can feel it in his hesitancy. WHO AM I? God, I'm enjoying this conversation. I can't wait to tell all my friends that you spoke to me from a burning bush, it's really cool, but who am I that I should do this great thing that you've asked of me? No, no, God, I WISH I COULD BUT I CAN'T. Because...

I) I'M SO DYSFUNCTIONAL: Now I need to give you a little history, because if I don't you may get the wrong impression that when Moses said, who am I, he was just being humble. But that's not so. Look, **Ex. 2:11-15** “One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. 12 Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, “Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?” 14 The man said, “Who made you ruler and judge over us? ...

I) I'M SO DYSFUNCTIONAL: "...Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "What I did must have become known." 15 When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian..."

Now it's many years later. Moses is married. He's working for his father-in-law. He's taking care of business on a very simple level, and God starts speaking to him about what He wants him to do, what He wants to accomplish through him. But as soon as God starts telling you what He wants to do through you, the enemy will start reminding you of what you did, of your history, in the hopes that you will believe that God can't use someone like you to accomplish His purpose!

I'm so dysfunctional. God I'm sure you're able to deliver these people but I can't. I WISH I COULD, BUT I CAN'T. Look at me, I'm a man in hiding, I'm hiding from Pharaoh. I'm hiding my face from you because I can't even stand the thought of looking at someone as Holy as you. Nope, I Wish I could, but I can't. I'm so dysfunctional! I'm so messed up! You don't want me God!

I think the reason we're so easily deceived by Satan is because when he speaks, he often speaks to us in the first person, instead of the second person, as if it's our own thoughts. Have you ever noticed that? I'M, I'M, I'M! The way you hear it and experience it is not YOU are so dysfunctional. If you heard it like that you could argue with it. But the devil is smart so he internalizes the sentiment, so that it comes from within yourself. I'M SO DYSFUNCTIONAL! Moses said, Who am I? If you just knew everything I have done. I'm just not fit for this assignment, not me Lord. That's what the devil says. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, if you'll listen close, you can hear the voice of God. He's saying, I know what you did. I know who you really are. But I have chosen you anyhow.

Oh, the grace of God. How can God know us so well and love us so much? Notice 2nd...

II) I'M SO DEFICIENT: Deficient "Lacking something that is needed; not having enough of something." I'm never Skilled Enough, I'm never Talented Enough, I'm never decisive enough. Lacking. Now turn with me to Ex. 4:10. Before we read let me catch you up because we just skipped a lot of verses. There's this really long conversation going on between God and Moses. Moses ask the question, when the Israelites ask me who sent me, what am I to say? And God said tell them I AM. What was that God, I think you may have broken up there, I got the first part, but what was the last thing you said? I AM. Yeah, got that God, YOU ARE...what? I AM THAT I AM. That's my name. You tell them that I AM has sent you. But then God added, if they're as slow as you are, and they just don't get it, you can tell them that the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has sent you. Okay God that's cool but what if they don't believe me? That's a pretty hard headed bunch you have there. Then God said, what's that you hold in your hand? And Moses said, it's a shepherd's staff. And God told him to throw it down, and when he did it became a snake. Then God told him to take it by the tail, and when Moses did, it became a rod again. Then God commanded Moses to put his hand in his bosom, and when he pulled it out it was leprous. He quickly put it back and when he removed it this time it was back to normal. Then God said they should believe after those two signs but just in case they don't, dip a bucket into the Nile river and pour it upon the ground, and when you do the water from the river will turn into blood, then they'll believe. NOW READ WITH ME... It's possible to see God do great things and still be insecure and uncertain.

I) I'M SO DYSFUNCTIONAL:

II) I'M SO DEFICIENT: Ex 4:10 *"Moses said to the Lord, "Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."*

So Moses is talking again, God I've seen the things you're capable of, The rod thing, and the hand, pretty cool, BUT what you seem to have let slide is the fact that I can't speak very well. As a matter of fact, I am terribly deficient in that area. And nothing has changed since we started this conversation...soooooo there must be someone more fit for this task than me.

vv 11-12 *"The Lord said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? 12 Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."*

I'll give you words, I'll write the script, I'll touch your mouth, I'll help you out, I'll be with you, I'll never leave you nor forsake you. It's not up to you, it's me, I'll make it possible, just go.

Think about this. When you doubt the product, you insult the manufacturer. Did you know that INSECURITY IS AN INSULT TO GOD? Who made you? When you imply that you're deficient, it says something about what you think about God's ability. When Moses said to God I can't speak, God replied, who made your mouth Moses? And when Moses said to God a second time in v 13, "pardon me Lord, I'm just not able, send someone else." v 14 says it made God angry!

Now nothing has worked for Moses. Every argument has failed. He can't very well continue to use his past because God knows his future. He can't keep speaking of his deficiencies because God is all sufficient. So Moses goes to his last place...

III) I'M SO DOUBTFUL: v 13 *"But Moses said, "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else."* No excuses this time, just send someone else.

We're watching a man wrestle with fundamental insecurities when charged with the largest task that one can imagine. We're watching him come to the end of himself, accessing himself, arguing with his God, and coming up short.

vv 14-17 *"Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. 15 You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. 16 He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. 17 But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it."*

I see so many doubts in Moses that resonates in me. Do you know what's interesting? No where in this passage do we ever get the impression that Moses ever doubted God. Isn't that interesting? Think through all the scriptures we've just read. Not one time, in any thing that Moses said, does he doubt what God is able to do. BUT HE DOUBTED HIMSELF.

I) I'M SO DYSFUNCTIONAL:

II) I'M SO DEFICIENT:

III) I'M SO DOUBTFUL: CONTINUED A lot of preachers think that the problem with people who don't live up to their full potential in Christ, is that they just don't really believe in God's power and ability enough. And so we hear many sermons to that end, trust God more, believe God more, He is able, He can do anything. But I have been discovering lately that, for most of us, it's not God we doubt, it's ourselves. Or maybe we doubt God can do it through us. "I don't doubt you can do it God, I just doubt I'm fit to be part of what you're doing." God knows our reservations. He knows our concerns, He knows our weaknesses and inabilities, and yet He calls us anyway.

CONCLUSION: Remember when God told Moses his name? I AM. When theologians speak of this they speak of the isness of God, the present tenseness of God. He's not just the God of the past, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He's also the God of 2021. **WHAT YOU DOUBT GOD DELIVERS!** When you're deficient, He's sufficient! There is nothing that He can't accomplish through you, if you'll let Him. Will you let God work in your life? Or will you listen to what He wants from you, then say, "I WISH I COULD, BUT I CAN'T" The voice you listen to today, will determine what you experience tomorrow.