

Rossville Church of Christ Doorpost Devo



October 9, 2022



Encouragement from God's Word

Exodus: Our Excuses and God's Promises

The people of God are called to a grand and spectacular mission in the world—make disciples of all nations. This is an enormous and daunting task in front of us. As we consider the scope of this call, we might easily be overwhelmed. How are we going to reach billions for Jesus? How am I going to reach even the person next door? Yet despite the apparent impossibility of the mission, the Lord Jesus Christ continues to give his followers these same marching orders until the end of the age. In light of this, how are we to have any confidence as we enter into the fray and seek to obey this great calling? How are we to stay motivated for the mission? What will propel us forward into greater boldness and courage? If I begin by looking to my own talents, resources, and ability, I will soon become very discouraged. Yet, God wants to turn our eyes from ourselves to a different source of abundant strength.

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Scripture Plan: Read

Sermon on the Mount

Mon, Tues, Wed.:

Matt. 5:21-30 Each Night

Thurs., Fri., Sat.:

Matt. 5:31-37 Each Night

Devo Plan

1. Mon.--Read and Pray Together
2. Tues.--Read, Pray, Ask Questions, and Discuss
3. Wed.--Read, Pray, and Think about how to Apply
4. Thurs.-Sat.--Repeat steps 1-3 with New Passage
5. Sunday--Pray and Reflect on What was Learned in Worship and Class

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Discussion Questions

Matthew 5:21-30

Discussion Question #1:

How does sin start in our lives? How do our thoughts and emotions affect our actions? Why does God care so much about the heart?

Discussion #2:

What does "reconcile" mean? How does God want us to respond when we have sinned against a brother or sister? How does that impact our relationship with God?

Discussion #3: How does Jesus teach us to respond to sin in our hearts and lives? Why does he use such harsh language? What does he mean?

Matthew 5:31-37

Discussion #1: Why is it so important to keep our promises? What are some common promises made in our world? Are these promises usually kept?

Discussion #2:

What does it mean to "let your yes be yes?" In what areas of life is it important to be trustworthy? How does honesty and trust affect our relationship with God and others?

Apply and Obey

To obey what Jesus says in Matt. 5:21-37, this upcoming week I will...

I will share what I learned with...

Prayer Points

- Lord, Thank You--For being trustworthy and always keeping your promises
- Lord, We Praise You--For showing us the Truth in Jesus and in the Word
- Lord, Help Us--Guard against sin in our lives. Help us cut it off at the source so we can have a pure heart like Jesus

In the book of Exodus, we read of the Lord calling Moses to a great mission and task at the burning bush. Though Moses' call was much different than our own, it was no less daunting or intimidating—he was called to approach the mightiest and most powerful ruler in the world in order to liberate God's people from slavery. Imagine being commanded by God to boldly go before Kim Jong-Un or Vladimir Putin to change their minds and confront them with their evil. It is no wonder that Moses is extremely hesitant to accept the Lord's call in Exodus 3. Moses' mind quickly turns to a long list of objections and excuses. Consider what Moses says to God and how the Lord responds in Exodus 3:10ff:

"Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 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. 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.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey." (Exodus 3:10-17)

Moses' first objection may resonate with us. He says, "who am I?" His first response as he considers the great task before him is to look to himself. As he does so, he feels woefully inadequate. There is no way he can stand up to the task. He's just a nobody. The Lord's response is incredibly profound and insightful for us. He doesn't appeal to how special or great Moses is. Rather, he responds with a promise: I will be with you. He wants to shift Moses' eyes from himself to the one who will be with him each moment. When we look at our own strength and ability, it's no wonder we feel inadequate. Yet, God has promised his presence, and He is more than enough. He is a never-ending supply of grace and power, an ocean of encouragement and help for weak, feeble humans like us. If God is with us, we cannot fail. Moses scrambles to find another excuse. This time his concern is rooted in the potential response of the people of Israel. Who do I tell them sent me? Will they really believe I heard a voice from a burning bush? What if I don't have all the answers to their questions? How will they trust this message? Moses is likely thinking that the Israelites have given up on God. They think the Lord has forgotten them in their bondage. Many likely have never even heard stories of the true and living God. In their present pain and suffering, God is like a distant memory. So Moses essentially asks, "what will I tell them about you?" In one of the most powerful passages in Scripture, God provides a resounding answer: "I Am Who I Am." I AM. Yahweh. Now that might be a funny sounding name to us, but it is so central to how God wants to present himself to his people. What does it mean when God says his name is I AM? He is the foundation of all reality and existence. He is not dependent on anyone or anything for his existence. All of us exist because of him, but he just is. He is utterly dependable, faithful, loving, and perfect to his core. He is ultimate and everything else depends on him. The most fundamental truth about everything is that God is. If Yahweh was not the Great I AM, nothing would be, nothing would exist.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9

He sees all, knows all, has power over all. And as he says in this section, he is the God of their fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the same Lord he has always been. God has not abandoned his people, he has not forgotten his promises because he is who he is. That's what can give Moses and the people absolute confidence in him as he is promising to deliver them. Moses at this point still has not run out of excuses. Look at Exodus 4:1 and 4:10:

"Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'" (4:1)

"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." (4:10)

Yet again, neither excuse is valid. The Lord responds to the first by asking Moses, "What is in your hand?" He then graciously gives Moses a sign using the staff in his hand so that he can prove to the people he is telling the truth. Moses was wondering about all the things that could go wrong, but not thinking about the things the Lord had already given him. We often need this same reminder to look at the blessings God has placed in our hand and trust him to work through us. In his final excuse, Moses points out his personal weakness. He is not eloquent, so surely, he can't be the man for the job. He doesn't have the ability to speak to the people and to Pharaoh. God's response here is striking:

"Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." (4:11-12)

God is the maker of the mouth, so he knows our abilities intimately. He will never ask us to do something that he will not provide us the strength and ability to do. He made our mouths and bodies for a purpose. To use our own weaknesses as an excuse to disobey God's call is an affront to God's design and a failure to trust his power. We ought not tell God what we can't do when he is the one who made us to do it. He fearfully and wonderfully made all of us with our unique strengths and weaknesses for a purpose. He alone decides what we can and cannot do. If he has asked us to do something, our weakness is no excuse. That weakness may be a part of his purpose to display his own strength and glory. Finally, after he has run out of excuses, the truth comes out. Moses reveals his heart. He says, "Lord, please send someone else." It's not that he really couldn't do it with God's help; the greater issue is that he didn't want to. Whether out of fear or apathy or both, Moses would rather the mission be completed by some other person. In his selfish concern with his own ability, he had forgotten that his own people were suffering immensely in slavery. We live this same way more often than not. We know that God has a mission and purpose for the world, and we may even pray about that mission, but really we just want someone else to do it. In our self-centered doubt, we neglect the suffering of those living without God, and we ignore the mighty promises of the God who is calling us. We can make all the excuses in the world to not obey Jesus' grand call to make disciples of all nations. We can say, "I don't know enough," or "they won't listen," or "that's not my talent." But God is not sending anyone else to accomplish the mission. It's up to us as his disciples. He is strong, he is with us, and he loves us more than we know. Jesus has already won the ultimate victory by triumphing over death. Because of this, we can have unmatched confidence and boldness as we answer the call of the greatest mission in the world. What a blessing that Jesus has promised to be with us as we make disciples until the end of the age! With Jesus and his Spirit empowering us, we cannot fail.

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