

God's Power– Signs And Doubt, Exodus 4:1-17, 2/23/2020

SermonTalk is an optional resource for those who desire to underscore and apply key concepts from the sermon the previous week. The format and questions are just a menu from which you can choose or use as a foundation for further questions. The material written in bold are Pastor Jerimiah's key points for our focus.

Since January, UBC has been on a spiritual journey through the story of Moses to discover God's Power. Earlier this year, Pastor Jerimiah walked us through the beginning of Exodus 3 where God speaks to Moses through the burning bush. God provides miracles, the hope of the name of God (I Am), and a prophesy of God's plans with the Hebrew people. And in this message, we look at Moses's response of doubt and fear when God's request that he stand against the injustice in Egypt.

- What doubts plague Americans when it comes to standing up against injustice?
- What would you say distinguishes people who are especially bold and self-confident from those who are timid?
- Are there habits or disciplines that you would identify as confidence increasers? (Think scriptures, people, friends, music, podcasts, books, etc.)

As we read through the passage preached last week, let's pay careful attention to Moses' fear and God's response to that fear. Read Exodus 4:1-17.

Exodus 4:1 starts our discussion with the question that often haunts our hearts. *"What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say. For they may say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'"* The heart of this question isn't centered around the Hebrew nation doubting God. It is centered around the Hebrews doubting Moses.

The Hebrews had reasons not to believe Moses. He had a history that was questionable. He was a murderer. He moved away and consequently, did not have a relationship with the Hebrews. When we are deep in questioning ourselves, we must hold to belief in God and the paths He is directing

- Pastor Jerimiah reminds us that God often sends unlikely people to be changemakers. Our faith is grown in believing and witnessing God use all people. Who is someone you have seen God use and how?
- Tell about a situation God placed you where you were an unlikely leader.

God responds to Moses' question of his personal identity and self-worth by providing three different signs. Each sign includes an important message that provides a depth of the promises of God, his heart for people, and His power. These are meant to remind Moses that God's power should be Moses' strength.

- 1st Sign - Snake. This message speaks to fear of outside evils. *God says, I am – greater than your fear of evil, greater than Egypt, greater than your fears & vulnerabilities. I rule over all even the things of the natural world.*
- 2nd Sign - Leprosy. This message speaks to fear of personal limitations. *God says, I can take health away & restore it. I have power over creation, bushes, staffs & snakes. Moreover, I have power over your life. My power is greater than your fear or vulnerability.*
- 3rd Sign – Nile turning to blood. This message speaks to purpose. *God reminds him that Moses' call is to respond to the injustices that God cares about. Finally, God points out that there is nothing that you worship that can compare to the power of God.*

Moses see the power of God and yet doesn't lean into God's strength. In Exodus 4:1, Moses refused God because of self-doubt caused by his past. In Exodus 4:10, Moses refuses God because he doubts his own self-worth, claiming he doesn't have the skills. Then in Exodus 4:13, Moses asks God to send anyone but him. Moses sees the power of God all around him and still asks God to send someone else.

Is that you? Is that us? The power of self-doubt has the potential to stop the work of God through us. Perhaps we allow our past to shape our identity. Or we doubt our worth. Believing we have nothing to offer, our stance becomes, "I believe in the power of God; I just doubt my role in it."

If we wonder about the role that self-doubt plays in our relationship with God, a great litmus test is to look at the amount of inaction/ inactivity that results in regret, guilt & shame. If those are the norm, we must not let self-doubt stop us from living a full life in Christ.

Application: Self-doubt can sabotage us quickly. The result a life controlled by self-doubt could be a **Managed life**. One where we choose comfort and timidity over opportunity. We ask God to send someone else to impact adoption, human trafficking. A managed life is one of regret because we are not living in courage & confidence.

Or perhaps we live a life focused on **Survival**. We are overwhelmed with our past. We allow the things of the past to become our identity. We feel we have NOTHING to offer. This results in a complete withdraw – guilt and shame. It is about survival, burn out and fatigue. God has the power, just not for me.

- What is your inclination? A life that is full of risk and Christ, a life managed and safe, and survived life that is tired.
- How do believers lose their desire to stay in the game of life, transformation, faith?

We must press beyond a life that is merely status quo. God can use us in our weaknesses. Jesus uses fear as a message to draw near to God. Hebrews 10 reminds us that because of the work of the cross, we live in courage and confidence because of a relationship with Christ. No longer does God see our faults or limitations, instead He sees the blood of Christ. We rise as a church with confidence, understanding the power of God. We don't belong to those who shrink back, we go boldly. (Heb 10:39)

- Because of what we have learned today, what do you plan to do differently in the week ahead to live into the power of God?
- What opportunities can we pray with you about? What text message would encourage you this week?
- As we pray for the power of Christ to empower our church, where do you see us being held back? Where do you see God desiring to use our congregation?

This chapter about Moses reminds us that we can call on God to provide power to overcome our past or our inabilities. We can allow an assurance of faith and continual prayer to result in His power to be unleashed. We rise up fully in the power of God because we have been saved by Jesus Christ.