

Selected Scripture God's Calling and our Excuses

Introduction:

One of the dangers we face today is a danger that has existed since the beginning of time. It is something that reveals how fearful we are, it may slow down our own spiritual growth, or even show a lack of spiritual change. The great danger of this action we do could quite possibly be used to prove that we are not the regenerated children of God as we might claim to be. But thank the Lord this is not always the case. Praise Him for His continuing work on our lives to grow us into spiritual maturity.

Rather than confronting our own sins, we justify them. Instead of working to improve ourselves or situations, we settle for how things are. When we are asked to complete a certain task, we may tell others we have no time, we are not qualified. *Maybe you could find someone else to do this and let me handle these other mundane tasks?*

I remember years ago, I was talking to a young woman, we were trying to pursue a relationship together. I was always being told "I am so busy". At one point I found myself at work cleaning one of the machines. With a strong sincerity to pursue a relationship with this individual, I found myself in prayer asking God "Lord, help her to understand what's going on, she claims to be interested, but her actions have shown otherwise. We make time for the things that are important to us, help her to understand and make time for me". This was a big slap in my face, I found myself eating my own words. At this time I was in a position where I had so much going on, my own life was pretty busy as well. Because of this, I found myself putting the very seedlings of my own ministry project on hold until I had more free time to focus on it. If my faith was important to me as much as I claimed it to be, I needed to make time to serve God in ways I knew how.

Another experience I have had was much earlier than that. Early in my own Christian walk, as I began to study the scriptures, others saw such a passion within me. I was in school for a Digital Media degree. I enjoyed video editing, designing basic graphics with Photoshop, developing websites and working with computer programs. At one point I found that I wanted to run a business building websites as a ministry. Help others save time by building for them, and helping them save money by cutting the cost by hundreds, if not thousands of dollars.

Through out this period of time I had many people suggest to me "*Have you ever thought of getting into ministry*". Not once did that ever cross my mind. I enjoyed sharing the Word, but I knew what I wanted to do and it certainly wasn't to spend my time in the pulpit. There was plenty of other men who were more qualified for such a task.

Reading of the text Exodus 4:1-18

Moses was a man who has spent 40 years growing up in the land of Egypt. He goes from being a high princely position to a lowly shepherd. From defending Egypt to defending sheep, he goes from living as royalty to living off the land. Forty years ago Moses killed an Egyptian and a bounty was put on his head. As a result he ran away far off to Midian which is in modern day Saudi Arabia. He spent time getting to know the land, learning how to herd flocks of sheep, gotten married and has had a son.

Throughout the past forty years, God has been using this time to prepare Moses for a greater calling. He will no longer be a shepherd of a flock of sheep but now will be commissioned to be a shepherd of

the flock of Israel. He knows that if he goes back it is quite possible he will be killed. Moses is one man against an army, nobody has yet been called to join this task. In His mind, the task seems to be impossible. In chapter 3:11 we find fear as he says “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”, in 3:13 he brings up the point that Moses does not know a lot about this God Yahweh. If the Hebrews were wanting to know the name of the God they would have asked “Who is He:, but to ask “What” is focused on asking about the character of God. “*You claim to be coming to rescue us on behalf of the God Yahweh, but do you really know Him?*”. For Moses to respond with “I AM WHO I AM” would have been understood as if Moses truly did understand and know the character and essence of God.

This wasn't enough for Moses, even after the Lord explains what He will do for the people, Moses still struggles with accepting these truths.

1. **Sign of authority over demons.**

Verse 3-4 : Staff transformation

The serpent was a common symbol of the deadly power Egypt had. It may have also been alluding to the Satanic power behind the Egyptian gods.

Nehebkau – Wikipedia

Nehebkau is the “**original snake**” of Egyptian mythology, and was believed to be both an ancient and eternal god. Although he is occasionally represented as a son of Serket, Renenutet or Geb, he is sometimes believed to have simply "emerged from the earth". He was believed to have lived in the Great Temple of Heliopolis, which was also the center of worship for Re and Atum.

Nehebkau is a considerably powerful deity, which contemporary Egyptologist and author Richard Wilkinson credits to his demonic origins and snake-like qualities. After he swallows seven cobras in a myth, Nehebkau cannot be harmed by any magic, fire or water. In an early myth, he demonstrates an ability to breathe fire. Nehebkau first appears in the Pyramid Texts, and he is described as an evil, long and winding serpent who devoured human souls in the afterlife.

Leviticus 17:7 “So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to **goat demons**, after whom they whore...”

Khnum: goat-head god/guardian of the source of the Nile and creator of children.

2. **Authority over afflictions.**

Verse 6-7: Leprous hand

God has already told Moses He will rescue His people from the afflictions of Egypt, This is a sign of that promise. To take what is weak and sick and turn it into something healthy and strong. To the Pharaoh, it was also a sign that Yahweh, the God of the Israelite has divine power to cause plagues or judgments or healing at His own will and at any instance.

3. **Power over the gods**

Verse 8-9: Nile water into blood

The Nile was believed to be the source of life and goodness in the land. Life itself came from the waters by the power of the god of the Nile, Osiris. The god of fertility, agriculture, the dead and afterlife, and vegetation in Egypt.

The task was much larger than going to ask Pharaoh to go and worship the God of the Hebrews. Moses is given signs that are a message which would show the Pharaoh just how much power he or his demon-gods actually had. The first sign would be a message of power over Pharaoh, the second would be a sign of judgment over the land, and the third would serve to be a sign of power over one of the most powerful gods of Egypt, Osiris, the life giver.

This isn't enough for Moses to be convinced. He goes back to addressing his own skills and qualification by making it perfectly clear to God that he has a stuffer problem. Yet again, God reminds him who He is. He is the God who has power over ones voice, ears, and sight. Moses tries a fifth time to use an excuse. Finally the Lord becomes angry. This is not just a frustration or an irritation. The word *ap* signified a strong anger, a flaring of the nostrils. God is about to unleash his wrath on Moses for his own stubbornness. Instead, He is patient with Moses once more, and offers his brother Aaron to help. It didn't matter what excuse Moses wanted to give the Lord, He was still going to be sure the task was completed.

The issue we need to address, is not ones call into the ministry, but rather the excuses we have to not serve the Lord and His people.

Excuses risk destruction:

Within our text, we find that through all these excuses, Moses was at risk of having the wrath of God poured over him for his own rejection and lack of trust.

When it comes to serving others in various ways, the excuses we make will do nothing more than damage our own opportunity. As these excuses continue, a time will come when the opportunities to do something stop coming. The people in your own life have known you long enough to know you will never do anything. Your own reputation has been ruined.

Excuses hinder our growth

Because we are never take on these opportunities, we never are challenged to grow or learn new skills, never discovering what spiritual gifts God has given us that could be used for the building up of His kingdom and His church.

Excuses impact others

Every true Christian has been endowed with a spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit. These gifts are not personal to be used in our own faith walks to edify ourselves, they are gifts God has given us in order to contribute back into the church community. Some gifts include: Prophecy, the ability to profess the Word of God (the scriptures), teaching to explain the scriptures in a way others understand. Contribution, you may have been blessed with an abundance, the gift of contribution is the ability to sacrificially give to help meet the needs of others. Mercy, a gift of compassion and a sensitive heart for the broken and less fortunate.

Excuses prevent Blessings

Because of our excuses, the impact they make on other effects the whole Body. Rather than rejoicing in the Lord for caring for certain needs through the use of our gifts, we restrict the blessings God wants to give us and the church.

When we have a burden and pray *“God, why didn't you do this for us, why is this problem happening?”* it should be of no surprise to us to hear back *“I gave you the people and the resources, I gave YOU the gift to accomplish the task. But you had too many excuses to use it”*

- If Martin Luther never nailed his 95 Thesis to the doors at Wittenburg. What would religion be like today?
- If the Apostles never went to all the nations, just how large of a region would Christianity have spread? How many lost souls would remain?
- If David never picked up a sling and stone, just how large would the Philistine nation have become? Would any Jews be left?
- If Moses succeeded with his own excuses, who would lead the people out of Egypt, would there be anyone and how long and far through time would their cries be heard?

Most importantly, if Jesus never went to the cross for our sins, we know full well that we would remain in our sins only to be destined to eternal destruction in the pits of hell for our rebellion. But thank the Lord He had no excuse!

A quote I recently saw online read *“People reject God because it interferes with the way they want to live.”* I believe this to be true 100%. In my past experience I shared earlier, I put God on hold because I wanted to take care of my life, before I worried about His plan. I came first, God was second.

In Luke 14, Jesus tells a story about a Great Banquet. After inviting some people, one used the excuse that he bought a field and must go see it. The field will be there when he gets done, and you don't buy land without first inspecting it. Another wanted to see his five yoke of oxen which do don't buy before you test them. The other was newly married, which they would have already had the wedding ceremony, and had no excuse either. Finally, because of their rejection, the master invited the poor, crippled, blind and lame to the tables to enjoy the celebration. The master closes the parable speaking these words *“For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.”*

In the context, this parable speaks of Israel, they refused the invitation of the Lord, thus shutting themselves out of the Kingdom. Judgment came upon them in 70 AD. How true is this for us still? What sort of excuses do we try to give? These excuses ultimately show our own priorities and will be the reason we lack any spiritual blessings or see them in others. Because we love ourselves, and our own lives too much to give it up and serve the Lord.

These next words Jesus says after this parable should give us enough reason to look into our own lives and test ourselves against our excuses. Luke 14:26 *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”*

This is not a command to hate others and love Jesus, but by comparison the love we have for Jesus, and the service of the Lord should look like hatred for the things of this world. The first priority of our lives should be to the Father, then to His church, to the world, and lastly, to ourselves. In that order.

Do you love Jesus enough to lay down your excuses? Will you lay down your life and love Him with all your heart mind and soul? A man named Everett Storms of Ontario Canada took it upon himself to count the promises in the scripture, those being made from God to mankind counted approximately 7,400 promises. I don't know how many of those are promises we could use of protection and provision, but the number alone should be enough to get us to rethink how we respond to God.

Now is the time to repent, believe and serve your King. His invitation to the Great Banquet is yours, Will you answer the call?