

**THE DANGER OF EXCUSES  
EXODUS 4:10-17**

**NEED:** TO RENDER TO THE LORD PROMPT OBEDIENCE.

**PROPOSITION:** WHEN EVER WE OFFER EXCUSES FOR OUR LACK OF OBEDIENCE, WE PUT OURSELVES IN SPIRITUAL DANGER.

**OBJECTIVE:** TO LEAD GOD'S PEOPLE TO BE OBEDIENT TO HIS CALLING.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Have you ever tried to explain to God why you couldn't do what He had asked? This would put you in company with one of the great saints of the past. Moses, the Prince of Egypt, offered to God one excuse after another when he was issued the call to lead Israel out of Egypt. These excuses put Moses in serious spiritual danger.

The first excuse he offered at the burning bush was his own sense of unworthiness. "But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (vs. 11). Many of us have responded to some call from God with this excuse. We could always pick out someone else who would be more qualified to carry out this responsibility that we were. His forty years in the wilderness had taken away from Moses all the brash self-confidence that marked his first venture into deliverance. His excuse was one that had an outward form of humility.

His second excuse related to his unpreparedness. He said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me,

what is his name? Then what shall I tell them?" (vs.13). In this case Moses is excusing himself because he feels unprepared. His knowledge of God is not adequate to respond to the questions that the Israelites may have when he gets to Egypt. Have you ever used this kind of excuse?

His third excuse that he presented to the Lord was simple, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, "The Lord did not appear to you. ", This time he still is ringing the inadequacy note. He is not afraid to go to Egypt as much as he is afraid of failure ifhe goes to Egypt. It is a serious excuse on the part of Moses in his response to God.

His next excuse was simply to say to the Lord, "Oh, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past or since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue. (vs. 10) This time he is pointing to what he perceives to be a disqualifying handicap whether or not Moses was limited in his ability to speak is not clear. But at least in his eyes he had a disqualifying handicap. He thought this validated his resistance to God's call to be the one who would bring Israel out of Egypt. What is the disqualifying handicap that you are most likely to cite when God wants you to do something? Do you plead your lack of time? Do you point to your lack of experience? Do you point to your inability to stand in front of a group. Do you remind the Lord that you are short on cash? What ever it may be it is an excuse.

When ever Moses presented an excuse to the Lord had a response. He patiently responded to each excuse that Moses offered. In the first case He reminded Moses that He would be with Him. In the second case, he gave Moses some insight into His name. In the third case he gave him some signs that he could use to convince the people. In the fourth case God reminded him that he was the one who made the tongue and the mouth and the ears and he would have no trouble enabling Moses to speak the message. Actually, the excuses that he offered were only an indication of a deeper problem. This brings us to a close look at the danger of offering excuses to God when God has given you an assignment.

## **I. THE EXCUSES CAN CAMOUFLAGE UNBELIEF AND RESISTANCE TO THE WILL OF GOD.**

This was definitely true in the case of Moses. When you got into the very heart of Moses, you found the truth - he did not want to go to Egypt. He was presenting excuses as a camouflage with a deeper reluctance to do what God wanted him to do. This came out in his outburst to God after the conversation about his inability to speak. In this case he said to the Lord, "Oh Lord, please send someone else to do it." (vs. 13). He just did not want to do it and was offering excuses to cover over his unbelief and his resistance to the will of God.

This is often true when we offer excuses. The excuses do not deal with the real problem but rather they camouflage the real problem. I read about a church that the "No Excuse Sunday."

This church was proposing to take away every excuse that people offer for not

attending church on Sunday. They plan a special "No Excuse Sunday." They made the following statements to the congregation:

1. Cots will be placed in the vestibule for those who say, "Sunday is my only day for sleeping in."
2. Eye drops will be available for those whose eyes are tired from watching TV too late on Saturday night.
3. We will have steel helmets for those who think the roof will cave in if they show up for church services.
4. Blankets will be furnished for those who complain that the church is too cold. Fans will be on hand for those who say the church is too hot.
5. We will have hearing aids for parishioners who say, "The Pastor doesn't talk loud enough." There will be cotton for those who say, "The Pastor talks too loud."
6. Score cards will be available for those who wish to count the hypocrites.
7. We guarantee that some relatives will be present for those who like to go visiting on Sunday.
8. There will be TV dinners available for those who claim they can't go to church and cook dinner too.
9. One section of the church will have some trees and grass for those who see God in nature, especially on the golf course.
10. The sanctuary will be decorated with Christmas poinsettias and Easter Lilies to create a familiar environment for those who have never seen them.

church without them. **SEE YOU IN CHURCH ON SUNDAY**

Obviously this little piece that the church put together was pointing to the insincerity of our excuses. If you don't want to go to church, any excuse will do. If you don't want to teach a Sunday School Class any excuse will do. If you don't want to tithe any excuse will do. If you don't want to go to the mission field, any excuse will do. The truth is we use excuses to camouflage our inner rebellion against the will of God and our continuing state of unbelief. This is precisely what Moses was doing.

## **II. EXCUSES CAN PROVOKE THE ANGER OF GOD.**

The response of the Lord to the offering of excuses on the part of Moses is instructive. At first God responded with patience and was long suffering. But when he had ran out of excuses and just blurted it out before the Lord, "Oh, Lord, please send someone else to do it," God's reaction was immediate. Moses himself reports in this book of Exodus, "Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses and He said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite?"

In contrast to this it is well to remember that statement in the book of Hebrews - "without faith it is impossible to please God." When we move in believing obedience to an instruction from the Lord, he is pleased. When we persist in postponing our obedience by the offering of excuses the Lord becomes weary and can even be angered by it. He was in the case of Moses!

### **III. EXCUSES CAN CAUSE US TO MISS GOD'S BEST.**

God prevailed in his basic intention for Moses, but Moses came up short because of excuses. When the story is concluded, Moses is on his way to Egypt but he is on his way to Egypt in a compromise position. He has beside him his brother, Aaron, who will be a spokesman for him when he confronts the Pharaoh in Egypt and when he addresses the elders of Israel. God never had Aaron in His first plan for Moses. In His first plan Moses would embody all of that role of leadership in himself and would be uniquely used of God to lead the people out of Egypt.

It is somewhat frightening to remember later the role that Aaron would play in compromising the people of God on more than one occasion. Aaron compromises became heartbreaks for Moses in his seeking to deliver his people but Aaron would have never been in the position to create the series of problems that he created for Moses and the people of God if Moses had not offered to God excuses and delayed his obedience. Your excuses that you are offering to God for your disobedience put you in danger of receiving something less than God's best for you.

Is this not a frightening thought? Is it not alarming to think that by my reluctance to do the will of God I am putting in jeopardy God's best for my life?

This is a good meditation to prepare us to sit at the Lord's Table together. As sit at the table it is an eloquent reminder to us of the ready and willing obedience that our Savior rendered to His heavenly Father on our behalf. He offered no excuses! He never hesitated! He was obedient to the Father at every point.

If we have been presenting to God excuses it is a good time to ask His forgiveness. It is also a good time to renew our commitment to obey him in all things. I invite you to begin to live with me a "no excuse" life.