



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Exodus 4:1-17

Exodus

"The Credentials of the Messenger"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're continuing in our study in the book of Exodus, rather than take a special lesson out for Christmas, which you may have expected. But I believe Doctor Johnson is doing that. So we'll continue with our studies in Exodus chapter 4 and look in verses 1 through 17. And as we do so I'm sure that certain Christmas themes will surface as we expound the text.

We read, beginning with verse one. "Then Moses answered and said, what if they will not believe me or listen to what I say/For they may say, the Lord has not appeared to you/And the Lord said to him, what is that in your hand? And he said, a staff/And then he said, throw it on the ground/So he threw it on the ground and it became a serpent, and Moses fled from it/But the Lord said to Moses, stretch out your hand and grasp it by the tail/So he stretched out his hand and caught it and it became a staff in his hand/And that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has appeared to you/And the Lord, furthermore said this him, now that your hand in your bosom/So he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow/Then he said, put your hand into your bosom again/So he put his hand into his bosom again. And when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh/And it shall come about that if they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign then they may believe the witness of the last

time/But it shall be that if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground/Then Moses said to the Lord, Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent either recently, nor in time past, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant, for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue/And the Lord said to him, Who has made man's mouth or what makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I the Lord?/Now then go and even I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to say/But he said, Please, Lord, now send the messenger by whomever thou wilt.

That is a difficult expression or verse to translate in the Hebrew text. It is been given different interpretations that New International Version translates this, "Please, Lord, send someone else to do it." And that may be a good expression of the idea, I think, as you see what follows the context, seems to support that, if that's not the exact translation, that does seem to be the spirit of Moses response. He's still resisting God's call.

"Then the anger of the Lord's word against Moses and he said, "Is there not your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently/And, moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you./When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart./And you are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth./And I, even I will be with your mouth and his mouth and I will teach you what you are to do./Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people, and it shall come about that he shall be as a mouth for you and you shall be as God to him./And you shall take in your hand this staff with which you shall perform the signs."

Let's bow together in a word of prayer and ask the Lord to bless this time a study together. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you that we can come together this morning as we anticipate Christmas and all that it represents; the birth of your son, the Savior whom you sent to purchase the salvation of sinners. And so we begin with the acknowledgment that that is what

we are. We are a sinful people. And in saying that and making that confession, we confess that we deserve nothing good from you. And all that we receive, we receive his grace as unmerited favor, as gift. And we pray that you'd help us to understand that better because we realize that as we understand that truth we become more indebted to you and we become more apt to serve you faithfully. And so we pray that you would instill within us a proper understanding of ourselves and a proper understanding of you that we might serve you well.

Thank you, that you sent your son to purchase the salvation of a sinful people that could not save themselves. And we pray that as we consider your character in this passage this morning and our responsibilities to receive your call and to minister as we ought, that you would impress these things upon us and instruct us, build us up in the faith. We remember those who are not here, those whose names are listed on the calendar of concern. Those who have difficulties whose names aren't mentioned, who perhaps have not even express to others the difficulties that they are experiencing. We ask that you would give comfort. We ask that you would help them to keep their eyes on Christ, the author of perfect comfort and gain comfort from him. Gain comfort from the knowledge that the God who keeps, who watches over Israel, who keeps Israel, never sleeps and we have that assurance also. That your eye is always upon us, you never take it off of us and your care is continually being extended to us.

And bless us now, we pray, as we look into the Scriptures, that we would honor you and all that we do and that we would be edified through the word that's before us. In Christ name we pray. Amen

[Message] For the past few weeks we have been studying the call of Moses. God has appeared to him and the burning bush and call him out of the obscurity of a shepherd's life to be the deliverer of Israel. But Moses has resisted. He felt unworthy, he felt unqualified for such a task. And that response is not uncommon among great men of the church. I know I told the story at least once, perhaps more than

that, of John Calvin's, *Call to the Ministry*, but I'll repeat it again because I think it does apply to this particular circumstance.

Like Moses call, Calvin's call came unexpectedly when he was passing through the city of Geneva. He was a young man, but he had already made a name for himself with the publication of the first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. And so when William Farrell learned that Calvin was in town he became very excited. William Farrell was the reformer who was at that time, leading the Reformation in the city of Geneva, but he understood that it needed a man like Calvin to carry it forward. And so he sought him out, he found him staying in an inn, and he urged him to stay in Geneva and minister there.

Calvin, however, had other plans. He wanted to retire to a quiet life of reflection and scholarly pursuits. Had no interest in pastoring and teaching in a church and so he refused the offer. When feral persisted -and feral was a kind of feisty man - he persisted that Calvin stay. Calvin protested, pleading his youth, pleading his inexperience, his need for further training and pleading the fact that he was timid, he was shy, he was not suited for such a position. Finally feral threatened him with a curse of God if he preferred his studies over the Lord's work. And that threat, so terrified Calvin that he agreed to stay. In fact, some years later, he wrote that he felt as if God from on high, had stretched out his hand. And so he had to be compelled into the ministry.

Augustine is another individual who had to be compelled into service. After his conversion in Milan, he returned to his home in North Africa, where, as what we might call a laymen. He became well known for his effective defense of the faith against the popular cult of the Manichaeans. Probably something like modern day new age movement. And he defended the faith and he made a name for himself as well, but he had no desire to be a priest. Had no desire to be ordained into the ministry. He was afraid of high office, he wanted instead to seclude himself from the world. He lived, a rather worldly,

notorious life and he wanted to be away from all of that and live out his life in a monastery.

But one day he came to the town of Hippo in North Africa to visit a friend, and when the bishop learned of his visit he incited the people. Now the reason for this is the Bishop of Hippo was Greek, and he did not speak the local dialect very well and he couldn't preach and teach, and so he wanted a man who could and Augustine was a man who had been trained in rhetoric, as a man of words. And so he incites the people and they grabbed Augustine and they pushed him into the church where the bishop force him to become a priest in the city. And he accepted it with tears in his eyes.

That was the beginning, however, of a ministry that would affect the church throughout centuries to come. In fact, Calvin is a man as well, as Luther and others indebted to Augustine. But he had to be compelled into the ministry. He didn't feel fit as Calvin did not feel fit, both men had a sense of personal distrust of themselves. Well, distrust of self, humility and a lack of ambition for position are good. And necessary for an effective ministry. And please understand me, when I speak of the ministry or service to God. I don't mean that which takes place in a pulpit. We are all called to the ministry in one form or another. But I think for any of us to be effective in the call that we receive, we must have a sense of humility and a sense of lack of trust in ourselves. That's important. As FB Meyer points out, there is a hidden line over which self-distrust may not pass, lest it become unbelief.

Well, Moses comes to that line of unbelief in his resistance to God's call. He's unsure of himself, he's doubtful that the people will respond to him if he returns to Egypt and so he gives the Lord - rather, the Lord gives to him the authority, the evidence of his divine call, that God had in fact, put his hand upon him by declaring to Moses, the name that is his. Explaining to Moses, who it is that has sent him. Because as you remember Moses says when he returns, they'll want to know who sent me. "What's your name?", in other words. Now he

means more than the name. He means the meaning of that name. And so the Lord response to him by saying, "That I am Jehovah or better, Yahweh." IM as sent you to them, he was to say. The self-existent, the eternal, unchanging God who is sovereign over his creation and will keep the promises that he has made to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That promise which he gave some 400 years previous to this, in which he said he would bring them out of slavery in Egypt, and he would bring them into the promise land of Canaan.

Now that's great encouragement. The Lord, the IM is with him and has given him divine authority for his mission. You wonder what more could he want. His God is speaking to him out of the Burning Bush; this miraculous display of power. It all confirms everything that he's said. He's made wonderful promises to him. What more does he need? But still Moses had reservations. And we read in verse one, that Moses said, "What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, the Lord has not appeared to you." In other words, it's all well and good to claim to have seen the Burning Bush, just spoken to God and to have received his name and his message, but who's going to believe that without proof. And at first glance, his concern has some merit.

We've all heard of people who alleged to have special messages from God or who claim to have died, gone to heaven, visited with the spirit who then sent them back to the living with some special message. It wasn't all that long ago that Oral Roberts claim to see a 900 foot Jesus who threatened his life if his followers didn't respond with \$8 million for his ministry. Some of these claims are too ridiculous to believe. Others perhaps can't be necessarily disproved. We can't prove, at least scientifically, that they did not actually speak to a spirit, something of that nature. But on the other hand, there's no reason to believe such claims without any proof. Words without authentication are just words and so Moses seems to have a point. Except that the Lord had just told him, "They will pay heed to what you say."

Now we covered that last week. That's in chapter 3 verse 18, and so we've had a week between that statement and the response that Moses gives here. We should remember this is all one conversation, and it's, as far as we can tell, not a lengthy conversation. So he's just explained to Moses, that the people will believe what you say, that's a promise. And yet Moses says, "But what if they don't?" In other words, Lord, what if you're wrong? So Moses at this point is no longer simply doubting himself, questioning his own ability, he's now calling into question the very word of God. And in doing that he is crossing the line.

We should say, "I can't." I think that's a healthy attitude towards oneself. "I don't have the ability, I can't." But we should always add, "God can." Moses isn't doing that, Moses is saying, "God, I can't and I really don't think you can either." But God deals very graciously with Moses and accommodates his weak faith by granting him the very thing that he seems to be speaking here. At least on the surface seems to be saying, "I need some signs if I'm going to do this." and so the Lord gives him three signs. He gives him power to do supernatural works. And he begins with a question. And he says, in verse two, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff. It's just an ordinary stick. A shepherd's staff." And then God commands him to throw it down, and when he does it changes into a snake. And evidently a poisonous snake probably a cobra, because when Moses sees it he's terrified and he ran away from it. You can just see him standing some 50 feet away, eyes are wide and he's in a state of shock. He wasn't expecting to see that, but God commands him to now reach out his hand and grab it. And don't just grab it, grab it by the tail.

Now I don't know that the Lord is intending humor in all of this, but I can't help but to be a bit amused by this whole scene. Moses throws his staff down and suddenly it's a snake, he runs off and then God says, "Now I want you to pick it up. Pick it up by the tail." Now he's just received a scare of his life. And he's asked to do something

that I don't think any snake handler would do and that's pick a snake up by the tail. It's the worst place to pick one up. I don't know that there is a good place to pick a snake up. But if one has to do it, it's behind the head that one picks the snake up. But He tells him, "Pick it up by the tail." And Moses, obeys without any injury. And the snake returns to a staff.

And the Lord commands him to put his hand inside his cloak. And when he withdrew it he got another surprise. Read in verse six, "Behold, his hand was leprous and white as snow." Must've wondered, "Lord, what are you doing to me?" He his hand is now covered with leprosy, but then God commanded him to put it back inside the cloak and when he withdrew it, behold it was restored like the rest of his flesh. Those words "behold," in both of those comments, again, express the sense of surprise. Suddenly it's leprous, but then suddenly it is gone, he's healed.

Two convincing signs. They're designed to bring unbelieving Israelites to belief and Moses claims and his message in his authority. But the heart of man is naturally hard of stone. We would think, "What would it take to convince people? This is obviously miraculous, supernatural." But if we think that we don't realize how recalcitrant, how difficult and hardened man can be to the truth and the Lord certainly knows that. And so, in case the Israelites continued in disbelief God gives a third sign. We read in verse nine, "But it shall be that if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

So he's given three signs. The number three might indicate the completeness, the fullness of testimony. You read through the law of Israel see that it's in the Gospels as well. When one was to testify to the truth of something particularly in a court of law, it must be done with two or more witnesses. And so we have three witnesses to the truth of Moses, claims and his authority, so no one could protest that

not enough evidence was given to support these claims that he had made. We might ask why these particular signs were chosen. They're called signs in distinction to the wonders that God has promised to perform. The amazing evidences of power that he will bring upon the nation of Egypt. Signs indicate that something is being signified, that there's some meaning behind them, and so we might wonder "What is the meaning? Beyond the fact that there are obviously miracles of the supernatural. Do they have some specific meaning? They may and I think they do, but what that is, is not clear. However, it hardly seems coincidental that there would be a connection between the serpent of Moses staff and the serpent that Pharaoh wore, at least the stylized image, of a serpent that Pharaoh wore upon his crown.

In Egypt that snake was a symbol of Royal and divine power that the Pharaoh possessed. As you, I'm sure are aware, the Pharaoh of Egypt was considered by the Egyptians to be a God. And the serpent that he wore on his crown was the testimony to that. And the scepter that he would hold in his hand was emblematic of royalty and power. So when Moses threw down a simple shepherd's staff in contrast to that scepter that the King would've held and it turned into a serpent. And then it returned to his staff when he simply picked it up and picked it up by the tail, of all places. It would seem that it was signified that Moses had divine authority and divine power over what that serpent represented, Pharaoh himself. He had been given God's power over that King.

The sign of the leprosy being miraculously caused and cured also signified God's power, but it may also have a more specific meaning for the Israelites themselves. And the meaning would be something like a warning. A warning against unbelief. And we see this throughout the Scriptures. That when God shows his displeasure, sometimes it is expressed through the curse of leprosy. Let me give you a case in point, and there's more than one case to support this. But you remember the incident in Numbers chapter 12, when following the Exodus Miriam, and Aaron challenged the authority of

Moses. And so it's put to the test. And God judged of Miriam and his displeasure, his judgment on her was evidence by the fact that she became a leprous, as white as snow.

So the second sign was a warning to the people. And to Moses as well that there were serious consequences to the disbelief of God's word. It may also be - and this has been a suggestion of some - that it indicates that the messenger of God was to be clean before he could serve, and that is certainly true as well.

The turning of the Nile, water to blood, was again a sign of God's power over Egypt. The Nile has been described as "The lifeblood of Egypt." Without it agriculture would dry up, and life would disappear. And so this third wonder showed that God could impose his will upon nature, he could've impose his will upon the nation of Egypt, which he would do. And so this third sign foreshadows the 10 plagues that would come upon the land.

So Moses is given ability to perform miracles. Which would be particularly significant to the Egyptians, and particularly significant when performed in the land of Egypt where magicians and the occult flourished. Egypt has been described as "The classic land of magic." The practice of magic was central to the Egyptian religion with its belief in many gods. The Egyptian book of the dead lists over 500 gods in Egypt. And because there were many not of them were infinite or absolute. In fact, they were believed to be dependent upon the material and the physical for their existence. So the God that Moses will bring to Egypt, the God that he will reveal, the one who has said that he is the IM, the eternal, self-existent, immutable God is totally different than the gods of Egypt. They were mutable, they weren't self-existent, they really couldn't be considered eternal. They were dependent upon the physical, upon the material for their existence. You see this in the burials of the pharaohs. They bring all their earthly goods, including such things as food, such things as beer and wine. Everything that they'd enjoyed in this life they took with

them into the afterlife because they had to have it to sustain themselves. But God's different.

The God that Moses proclaims, the true God, is one God, not many gods and self-existent, self-sufficient. But Egyptians believed in numerous guides who were dependent upon creation. And so he comes with this God that was totally different than theirs, and he's a benevolent God. A God who cares for his people. The gods of the Egyptians were not considered benevolent. They were considered, for the most part, to be hostile. And so because of that the Egyptians engaged in magic. And their belief in magic were attempts to neutralize or to appease the gods and their anger. And they did that by trying to manipulate nature. By manipulating nature they manipulate the gods.

And so Moses would enter this land of magic, not with magic, but with the power of God. At no point does he recite magic formulas like the Egyptian priest would do. Moses simply says, "Thus says the Lord." And then he proclaims and performs a miracle, a supernatural work of God. And through that, through his servant Moses God controlled both man and nature. Again, the signs testified to the name of God. We mentioned this last week how God's name is, as we said, IM, the self-existent, the eternal, immutable God and what we see throughout the book - what we see throughout the whole Bible - unfolds the meaning of that name, and illustrates it. And certainly, these works, these three signs that Moses brings back illustrates who God is. He can't be manipulated by man, like the gods of Egypt. He is the creator. He is transcendent over his creation.

Now you understand what I mean by that word "Transcendent", don't you? We used it last week. It means, he's over the creation. He's not part of the creation. He is not a created being, and he is not made, and any part of his being from the creation from that which is created. He's eternal. He's transcendent. He's over the creation. Now he's also imminent. That is, he's within the creation. He's omnipresent. He is not only the creator of it all, but he's a sustainer

of all. And he can use it all and does use everything within the creation to work out his will and his purpose, which is that of salvation and grace for his people. That's an eternal truth. The transcendence of the one God.

But it is not only an eternal truths that applies particularly and specifically to this ancient people of Israel, and this agent circumstance of theirs in Egypt, but it has particular application, I think to us, in our own day. Perhaps increasingly so with the revival of nature worship. The interest and spread of pantheism, which was really no different than what the Egyptians believe, and many of the ancient world believe that the gods were basically part of nature. Today, that's a very popular perspective and believe about God. If one has a view of God. Often times, it tends to be that God is essentially the creation and that some sense we ourselves are part of God. Was it Shirley MacLaine, proclaimed herself to be God and all of you can be God.

Well, as we hear these things, we should remember what happened in Exodus. Remember who God is and what he says about himself, because that which disproves paganism, some 3500 years ago disproves it today. There's only one God. We're not him. The creation is not God. He is transcendent over his creation. He is the IM, the self-existent eternal immutable God, who has given his creation moral order, which no one can resist with impunity. He will always have his way, he will always perform his will. The Egyptians would learn that and Moses himself would learn that before this conversation is over.

And so with these three signs Moses was given supernatural power, which demonstrated clearly and convincingly that God was with him. And that God had given him divine authority to perform his work. And so with this Moses grips his staff in his hand and he says, "I'm ready. Let's go back to Egypt, let's do it." And, oh, what we read in verse 10, is then Moses said to the Lord, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently, nor in time past, nor since thou

hast spoken to thy servant.” In other words “Over the past few minutes, I haven’t become eloquent. I’m just not eloquent.” “I’m slow of speech and slow of tongue.” Another argument.

Literally, he said, “I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.” Now, whether he was indicating by that that he had a speech impediment, that it was some physical disability, or that he has simply lost the skill of oratory over the past 40 years of desert life, of this life of seclusion, wouldn’t have much call to be a great speaker when he’s shepherding sheep. Perhaps he’d lost his gift. Or just, he’s pleading here inexperience. He just doesn’t know how to speak. That’s the point ultimately. “I am not a public speaker. I am not your man.” As though God can’t use someone in his weakness. In his inexperience.

God had just made it very clear that he’s in complete control over the whole created order man and nature alike. Moses speech impediment was no impediment to God and his got explained in verse 11, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I the Lord?” In other words, as creator, he’s sovereign over his creation. It’s the way it is because God has ordained it and created that way and he can overcome any difficulty because he is the creator. Since he made Moses’s mouth, he can make it eloquent. And that’s the assurance that he is giving to him. That’s his point. And yet this is a rather startling way for God to make his point. “Who makes a man deaf or blind? Is it not I the Lord?” Literally, the text reads, “Who has set a mouth in man, and set these other conditions in men?”

The word create is not used here, but that’s certainly the sense of it and we can find the very word create in other texts that are somewhat problematical like this. I refer you to Isaiah 45:7. Now this doesn’t preclude secondary causes. Nor does it relieve people of responsibility. Women, for example, are responsible for wise prenatal care and preparing for the birth of their children. But what this does affirm is that everything that happens fits within the decretive will of

God. As it is in essence, or it at least affirms the statement that Paul makes in Ephesians 1:11, that “God works things after the counsel of his will.” Everything fits within his plan. And while we may not understand the reasons for it. We can know that whatever occurs is ordained by God, whose all wise, who is all good and allows nothing to touch his people.

Never the less, I suspect that there are many who would like to rub out this verse from the Bible. How can God create deaf children? And that seems to be what he’s saying. In fact, that's the statement that He makes. Doesn’t seem to fit out concept of a benevolent God, a God who is love. But of course, we can't remove this verse from the Bible or we can't remove other versus that are similar to it. So perhaps the problem, is not with the Bible, it’s not with the Lord. Perhaps the problem is with our concept of things.

John Gerstner tells of an experience that he had some years ago as a pastor. In which a young couple that had been very active in the church had a child born disfigured. They were, as you can imagine, devastated by that. And so he went to visit them and give consolation. And when he arrived, they poured out on him all of their anger. And they asked, “How could God do this to us?” It didn’t seem fair. And so he says he was glad that at least they poured out their anger on him, God’s servant, rather than God himself. But he then sat them down after they’d express themselves and he talked to them. And he asked them what they thought they deserved.

Now these were people who had affirmed a belief in the grace of the gospel, in unmerited favor. They were people who had sung many times the hymn in which Toplady wrote. Nothing in my hand I bring. Simply to thy cross I cling. As Gerstner writes, “Did they really believed that they were people who deserve better treatment?” And the point that he makes in this particular chapter of his book is that when we start to think that we deserve happiness, that we deserve good things from God, then we’ve forgotten who we really are, what we really are. We’re sinners. We’re under the judgment of God. We

deserve nothing. We deserve nothing that's good. The fact that we obtain anything, we receive any good thing is simply the work of the grace of God.

And so he emphasized this point, and after some pastoral council, he writes that the couple confessed that they really didn't deserve anything. Nothing good from God, at least, and they became penitent and they asked the Lord's forgiveness. It's not for us to tell God how to govern his universe. He has his reasons for all that he does and they are good reasons. And there are numerous reasons. Who are we, finite creatures to explain what God ought to be doing?

As hard as it may be, we are to accept by faith when he gives to us. Accept our place in life as coming from a good and a wise God, and wait for the day when he will supply to us all of the answers for what has occurred. As hard as circumstance may be we're to receive those circumstances in faith and when we do that, they turn out to be blessings. And God uses them greatly in our life.

Well these words were to come from Moses. God was reassuring him that he knew his difficulties, knew them better than Moses did. He knew his handicaps, his disadvantages. He created him with them. He gave Moses his mouth. He called him in that condition with this heavy mouth and heavy tongue. It was no impediment to him. If he could give life to a dead stick like he had with Moses's staff, he could certainly give speech than Moses stammering tongue. Or skill to his lack of experience. So this was to be an encouragement to Moses. And as you think about it, it is a great encouragement. It's a great encouragement to us. You don't have to be a person with physical beauty. You don't have to be a person that has a clever mind to be used of God. You only have to have faith and God's truth. He blesses his word. And he's called Moses to carry his word back to Egypt and to his people.

As for Moses defects, God had created him as he was. God knew his needs and he was more than sufficient to supply what he needed. And so with this gentle reprimand he gives Moses again, his

commission. We read in verse 12, "Now, then go and even I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to say."

Well by now Moses has run out of arguments. He's exhausted all of his appeals. And so in verse 13, he finally says, "Lord send someone else." No reason is given, which indicates that all of his objections were simply excuses for avoiding the will of God. He just didn't want to go. Because in spite of the size and the wonders and in spite of the promises that God had made. He still lacked confidence and what he could do through the power of God. Which is to say, he lacked faith in God. And so he didn't want to leave the desert. He evidently become accustomed to the solitude. Accustomed to that quiet life of reflection. He preferred that to the challenge of serving God, and trusting him in that service.

Now all through this discourse, this conversation that God has had with Moses God's been very patient. Meeting all of his excuses with answers and reassurances. The patients has its limits. And with this final objection we read that God's anger burned against Moses. It burned against his unbelief. God can be angry. But still, God deals with him kindly. He deals with Moses and a very gentle way and provides an assistant for Moses and his brother Aaron. And the Lord says, "I know that he speaks fluently. You may be concerned about how well you speak so I'm going to give you a helper who speaks well. I know how well he can speak." As the Lord explains in verses 15 and 16, Erin would be Moses mouthpiece. God would speak to Moses and Moses would instruct Aaron what to say. As a Lord says in verse 16, "You shall be as God to him." Meaning, as a prophet is God's mouthpiece, so Aaron would be Moses mouthpiece. He would be in submission to Moses, who would be Aaron's source of revelation. But ultimately, of course, it comes from God. God to Moses, Moses to Aaron and Aaron to the court of Egypt and the people of Israel.

The Lord then concludes the discourse by reminding Moses to take his staff by which he would perform the wonders, the signs to the

people. It was a further reassurance that God would grant the mission success. A further reassurance that God, in spite of Moses's weaknesses was sufficient. But now, because Moses had resisted God, he'll lose some of the honor that would have been his had he been God's sole representative. He will now share that would Aaron. Who in some ways would prove more of a hindrance than a help.

It's similar to what took place in the book of Judges, with Barak, who lacked the faith to go out in battle against the Canaanites by his self. He was afraid to lead the army of Israel unless he had the prophetess Debra with him. And so he insisted that she be with him and the Lord gave to him Debra, but also through the prophetess said to him, that honor that would've been his through victory would now be given to a woman. And so Moses would lose something here. And yet, he'll still go. For all of his resistance, God still has his way. And there's a lesson in that for us.

And the lesson is, first of all, it's foolish to resist God's will. We can't, **fort** the purpose of God. He's going to have his way. And it's wrong to doubt his word. God is sufficient and he meets all of his promises and he sufficient for all of our needs. And he can use anyone whom he calls into his service.

You may not think you have anything to offer God, but then consider Moses. All he had was a simple shepherd's staff and yet the Lord took that stick and use that miraculously. He supplies our needs. And we may think we can bring very little to God. But what we bring to him he can use any miraculous way because he's sufficient and so we're simply to obey his call. We're simply to believe him, trust him, step out in faith.

May be a call as demanding on us as leaving our home and going to a foreign land to proclaim the Scriptures or to render medical service to people elsewhere. May simply be that God wants you to serve him where you are, in your office, in your home, in your neighborhood. Whatever your call is you're to respond and the Lord will supply the needs. We may have handicaps, and we all do. None

of us are sufficient. But none of those handicaps or impediments are impediments to God's power within us.

The apostle Paul's a case in point. He reminds the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians that people said of him that his appearance was unimpressive. His speech contemptible. He himself said that he was unskilled in speech. So evidently, Paul was not an attractive person. Not the kind of speaker that drew crowds. Wouldn't have been a very popular individual today in the church. He was not trained in rhetoric that he had knowledge which he imparted to them, and that's what God blesses. He blesses his truth. And when we have his truth, we are simply to respond in faith and he'll work his will.

Augustine and Calvin and others who at first resisted the call to serve God, to take up the challenge, and yet finally yielded, finally obeyed were blessed and greatly used. So we can be encouraged because God can use each of us who have put our faith in him.

So as we conclude, I ask the question; have you done that? Have you put your faith in Christ as Savior? We've spoken this morning about serving God, of receiving blessings, but that can only be enjoyed by those who are his; those who have believed in Jesus Christ as Savior and in so doing have entered into a relationship with God. Believed in the one whom as we celebrate in this Christmas season entered into human history when he took to himself a human nature. When he became a man for the purpose of dying on the cross. Dying as a substitute for sinners. Receiving in himself the judgment that was due to us, who have never believed in him, then I invite you to do so. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and enter into life eternal. And accept the call that he is given to you which he is given to every Christian; to serve him wherever you are in the capacity that you can.

Let's bow now in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we do thank you for the truth that we have before us; things we've considered. We look at Moses, we look at some of the other men of history, we are reminded of ourselves because we are not a people that of ourselves have the ability to do the

things that you call us to do. We certainly can't change the hearts of people who resist the truth, but you can. And you can work through us in mighty ways.

And so we ask that you would give us faith. And give us confidence in your truth that we might serve you well and serve you faithfully. We pray these things in our savior's name. Amen.