

“ImPerfect Examples: Moses”
Exodus 3:11-14, 4:1, 10-13 NLT
June 24, 2018

Rev. Dave Baldrige

Palm Harbor United Methodist Church, Palm Harbor, Florida

We are so good at making excuses. We come up with some crazy one. **(Image=Sorry I Can't Today—My sister's friends' mother's grandpas' brothers' grandson's uncle's fish died. And yes, it was tragic.)**

Of course, for years there has been excuses for children not turning in homework. Children today have become more sophisticated with their excuses. For example: My brother put my homework on eBay. I tried to get it back, but I wasn't the highest bidder.

We simply use to say, “The dog ate my homework.” But now it is, “The dog ate my homework then my science project ate my dog.”

We've even become technological in our excuses about being late for work. **(Image=iPhone is broken. NO way to set alarm clock for work.)**

And of course, who has not used an excuse where we blamed someone else. **(Image= I had to organize decorations for my dog's birthday party.)**

And of course, even though we've preached series on “Can't Miss a Sunday,” here's a new one about missing church: **(image=I was on my way to church and was almost there when I look at my cell phone and it said “No Service” ...so I turned around and went home.)**

Oh, the excuses we can come up with. In our summer series that we began last week we are looking at ImPerfect Examples. People in the Bible that God used in spite of or with their imperfections, and how God might do the same with us.

Today our ImPerfect Example is Moses and oh wah a master he was of making excuses. The story is found in Exodus chapters 3 and 4. In chapter 3 there is the calling of Moses. Moses was out minding his own business. Just another day of work---tending the flock for his father-in-law Jethro. As he is out there doing his ordinary job the extraordinary happens. There was a blazing bush engulfed in flames, and yet it didn't burn up.

Moses says, “This is amazing. I must go see it.” Isn't that just like us. When there is an emergency or perhaps flashing lights and emergency sirens...we have the urge to wonder “what's going on.” We want to see what's happening.

So, to satisfy his curiosity Moses comes to take a closer look. When God called to him from the middle of this bush that was on fire but not burning up. God called, “Moses, Moses.” Ah oh, the use of the double name syndrome. Double name usage means “Pay attention.”

Abraham on Mount Moriah when he was getting ready to sacrifice his son Isaac heard, “Abraham, Abraham.” (Genesis 22:11).

God encouraged Jacob in his old age to go to Egypt saying, “Jacob, Jacob.” (Genesis 46:2) When boy Samuel was called in the middle of the night. “Samuel, Samuel.” (1 Samuel 3:10). And even David’s cry of agony over his son Absalom, saying “Absalom! Absalom!” Or Sarah crying out to this Dave when he does something stupid, “Dave, Dave.” Ok, you got my attention.

Now God would have had my attention at the bush on fire without burning, but to make sure he calls out “Moses, Moses.” Moses, sharp fellow that he is says, “Here I am!” Good response there Moses. Then God tells him to take off his sandals for he is standing on holy ground.

God tells Moses He has seen the oppression of His people in Egypt. He has heard their cries of distress. He then tells Moses that He is go to send him to Pharaoh to lead His people out of Egypt.”

And now we get to the excuses by Moses. Before we come down to hard on Moses let’s see if these excuses might, just might be similar to some of our excuses when God calls us.

¹¹ But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?”

MOSES’ 5 EXCUSES

1. But....I am a _____ (Exodus 3:11)

Who am I? Me go before Pharaoh? Me lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. Why I am NOBODY.

Here is God’s response: **¹² God answered, “I will be with you. And this is your sign that I am the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain.”**

Excuse #1---I am a nobody. God’s answer. I will be with you.

You may think you are a nobody, but God has a different opinion. And regardless of what you may think there is the God promise of “I will be with you.” If God is for you who is against you?

¹³ But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

MOSES’ 5 EXCUSES

1. But.... I am a NOBODY. (Exodus 3:11)
2. But...I don’t know all the _____ (Exodus 3:13-14)

The fill in here is ANSWERS. Moses excuse is that he doesn’t know all the answers. And my question if “Who does?”

Here's how God responds: ¹⁴ **God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you."**

Wow...that makes everything clear. He still doesn't necessarily have all the answers. God responds, but he stills makes excuses.

MOSES' 5 EXCUSES

- 1. But.... I am a NOBODY. (Exodus 3:11)**
- 2. But...I don't know all the ANSWERS (Exodus 3:13-14)**

If you keep making excuses because you don't have all the answers then you are going to be making excuses for a long time.

4 But Moses protested again, "What if they won't believe me or listen to me? What if they say, 'The LORD never appeared to you?'"

MOSES' 5 EXCUSES

- 1. But.... I am a NOBODY. (Exodus 3:11)**
- 2. But...I don't know all the ANSWERS (Exodus 3:13-14)**
- 3. But...They won't _____ me. (Exodus4:1)**

The fill in is BELIEVE. But what if they won't believe me? Maybe Moses is even saying, "I'm not sure I believe you."

Well, God is going to show them His might and power. God tells Moses to throw his shepherd's staff on the ground. It turned into a snake! Now Moses is a smart one, because scripture says he jumped back. Then here is the miraculous part...God tells Moses to reach out and grab its tail. Huh, uh...no way...it would be a miracle before I did that. Well, Moses did that and it turned back into a shepherd's staff. Wow.

God then tells Moses to put his hand inside his cloak. He did but when he took it out his had was white as snow with a severe skin disease...perhaps leprosy. God then has Moses put his hand back into his cloak and take it out again---then time when he takes it out its as healthy as the rest of his body.

Now you have to 'hand' it to Moses he is now doing what God says. He's made 3 excuses, God counters with these 2 miraculous events and then tells Moses that if they don't believe these then takes some water from the Nile River and pour it on dry ground. The water from the Nile will turn to blood.

Great. Now Moses believes right? He is going to do what God says. Nope...more excuses.

¹⁰ But Moses pleaded with the LORD, "O Lord, I'm not very good with words. I never have been, and I'm not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled."

Tongue tied. Words get tangled. The Message Bible interprets as a stutterer and stammerer.

Oh, the excuses.

MOSES' 5 EXCUSES

1. **But.... I am a NOBODY. (Exodus 3:11)**
2. **But...I don't know all the ANSWERS (Exodus 3:13-14)**
3. **But...They won't BELEIVE me. (Exodus4:1)**
4. **But...I'm not very good with _____ (Exodus 4:10)**

Oh, the may not be very good with words, but here God's response.

¹¹ Then the LORD asked Moses, "Who makes a person's mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD?"

¹² Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say."

Who made your mouth Moses? If I have called you to do something won't I provide a way. It's not just ability it is availability. I will not call you to do something that I will not empower and help you finish.

Now have you noticed all the excuses in the scripture passage start with BUT. Lot's of buts.

Moses is such a perfect imperfect example. You would think even after the miracles of staff to snake, and clean hand to unhealthy hand that he would have got it. Poor Moses. Mo is slow. Yet another excuse.

¹³ But Moses again pleaded, "Lord, please! Send anyone else." Oh, come on Moses. I'm sure we have never given the Lord that many excuses when He has called us to do something.

MOSES' 5 EXCUSES

1. **But...I am a NOBODY. (Exodus 3:11)**
2. **But...I don't know all the ANSWERS (Exodus 3:13-14)**
3. **But...They won't BELEIVE me. (Exodus4:1)**
4. **But...I'm not very good with WORDS. (Exodus 4:10)**
5. **But...Send ANYONE else. (Exodus 4:13)**

Have anyone, but me! And yet with all the excuses, God used this imperfect example for His purpose. You see there are no excuses that God cannot overcome.

Now you may be saying...ah, but Dave you don't know how imperfect I am. Well let's quickly look at some Biblical examples of imperfect people.

Abraham -Was old.

Job – Went bankrupt.

Moses – Had a speech problem.

Gideon – Was afraid.

Samson – Was a womanizer.

Rahab – Was a prostitute.
 Samaritan Woman – Divorced.
 Noah – Was a Drunk.
 Leah—was ugly
 Jeremiah – Was young.
 Isaiah---preached naked
 Jacob – Was a cheater.
 David – Was a murderer.
 Jonah – Ran from God.
 Naomi – Was a widow.
 Jeremiah and Timothy---were young
 John the Baptist---ate bugs
 Peter – Denied Christ three times
 Martha – Worried about everything.
 Zacchaeus – Was small and money hungry.
 The Disciples – Fell asleep while praying.
 Paul – A Pharisee who persecuted Christians before becoming one.
 Zacchaeus—was too small
 Lazarus—was dead.

Now if God can use these folks...even Lazarus, can He not use you XXXX Stop making excuses and let God work.

Just a few days ago on June 19th MTV presented the Movie and TV Awards and the Generation Award Recipient. Chris Pratt was the award recipient. An actor since 2000 many know him from his Guardians of the Galaxy movies, or Avengers: Infinity War or Jurassic World including Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom which opened this weekend. As he received his award he gave “9 Rules from Chris Pratt.” 4 of his 9 rules had to do with Christianity. Perhaps he shocked the entertainment industry with his speech—especially #9 (**clip of speech---** *"Nobody is perfect. People will tell you that you are perfect just the way that you are, you are not! You are imperfect. You always will be, but there is a powerful force that designed you that way, and if you are willing to accept that, you will have grace. And grace is a gift. Like the freedom that we enjoy in this country, that grace was paid for with somebody else's blood. Do not forget that. Don't take that for granted."*)

Preach Chris Pratt preach. Nobody is perfect. You are imperfect, you always will be---but there is grace. That grace was paid with Somebody’s blood. Do not forget that. Don’t take that for granted. Moses an imperfect example but used by God.

The apostle Paul said, **"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT)**

Oh, to know His grace. To know He’s with you. To God be the Glory. To know He’s never going to let you down.

