



Genuine Faith

March 16, 2025

Exodus 4:27-31

Clint Pressley

²⁷ The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. ²⁸ And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. ²⁹ Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. ³⁰ Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. ³¹ And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.

(Pastor Prays)

Louis Armstrong is a great trumpet player and singer from a bygone era. He had a nickname, Satchmo. So I looked up why do they call Louis Armstrong, Satchmo? It was short for Satchel Mouth. Louis Armstrong had lots of lots of songs and albums that he put out, many of them were on the charts back in the 30s and the 40s. He sang songs about Ezekiel. He has an album called, Louis Armstrong and The Good Book. If you have Spotify, go find it after church, you'll thank me next Sunday. He sang songs about Ezekiel and about Noah, about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. And he had a song entitled, Go Down Moses, and it's based on Exodus Chapters 3 and 4. And in the story

we read from Exodus chapter 1 all the way to chapter 4, it is Moses who gets all the press and all of the attention. Maybe it's because he wrote the Book of Exodus. But here in Exodus chapter 4, at the very end, is a very rare look, a very rare aside look at the faith of another man. His name is Aaron. Aaron is Moses' brother. They have not seen each other in quite some time. Aaron is probably around 83 or so. If you're in your 80s, take heart, here's Aaron. We're going to pay attention to Aaron here at the end of chapter 4. We're going to notice how God uses the faith of Aaron and it speaks directly to how God might use your faith to endure, to stand, to speak, and to take the step to act or to repent. Or maybe this morning God will grant that you have faith in the Gospel of Jesus. That you will hear that Christ lived in your place and died in your place, and God raised him from the dead and he will save you if you trust Christ alone. Whatever your faith is...

Genuine Faith Always Shows Itself

If you have genuine faith, it always shows up. What did James say? Faith without works is dead. If you call yourself a Christian, there will be evidence of your Christianity. Let's go back to verse 27. We will just walk through it to get some context, then we'll come back and make some applications. Join me there in verse 27. You'll notice that it is a change of scene. ²⁷ *The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him.* The Lord said to Aaron. So far, we've been watching as God spoke to Moses. What is going on simultaneously with God speaking to Moses? God is also speaking to Aaron. There in verse 27, the Lord said to Aaron, who is 83 years old, I want you to go into the wilderness. Aaron is living in Egypt. It's going to get worse in Chapter 5. Right now, he is probably some sort of elder or leader or influencer in the community. But he is going to the wilderness to meet Moses who is coming up out of Midian. Aaron is coming from Egypt. They're going to meet at what is known as the Mountain of God, which is Mount Sinai. That's where the 10 Commandments will show up in a few chapters. So he went and met him at the mountain of God and he kissed him. They had not seen each other in 40 years. They have a whole lot to catch up on. There is a whole lot that can happen in 40 years. For

those of you who have been going to your class reunions from high school, when you go to the 10th reunion, not much has changed. You still sort of look pretty good. At 20 years, age is starting to catch up with you a little bit. The Botox is not working anymore. I have my 40th coming up, and I had somebody contact me on Facebook Messenger to ask me if I plan on going to the 40th anniversary of your reunion. Absolutely not! But what can you catch up on in 40 years coming out of high school? Getting married, having children, those children having children, now, there's so much to catch up on. They've not seen each other in all this time. They're catching up on life.

And once they get that out of the way, in verse 28, look what happens. Moses told Aaron, okay, we've talked about that enough, let me tell you why I'm really here. God has spoken to me. You see that verse 28. *28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do.* Aaron has heard, go meet your brother. Moses has heard, you lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. I'm going to deliver them and I'm going to use you to do it. So Moses tells Aaron, God has told me that I'm going to lead the people out of Egypt. Here, let me show you what he's given me. So he throws his staff down on the ground, it turns into a snake and he picks it up. He puts his hand in his coat and when he pulls it out, it's leprosy. He used all three signs. He poured the water out and the water on the ground turns to blood. Aaron sees all of that. So Aaron's like, it sounds good to me. I hear what you're saying. Let's go and talk to the people.

So they come out of the desert and the camera angle now turns back to Egypt. The next time we see them, they are down in Egypt and they're meeting with the elders of the people. Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel, all of the influencers, those that people will look to for their decision-making and the trends. Let's get all of the elders together and let's convince them. So that's what they do in verses 29-30. Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and he did the signs. This is important. So here's what God has told Moses and here are

the signs to prove that this is actually true. You have words spoken and signs that prove the words.

This is very similar to when in the New Testament, Jesus sends the apostles out. He sends out the seventy. He gives them authority to preach and to cast out demons and to provide healing. That authority, those signs, are given to prove what they're saying is the truth. The apostles had that sort of power. That power was there to give credence to their words. Moses has words and he has signs to say these words are actually true. When the apostles died, that power to heal and cast out demons is gone now. But we have the authority and the power of the word. This is why here at Hickory Grove, we push the Bible so much, because that's where the authority is. It is not in a person, it's not in me. It's in the Bible. So when you open that book and you're by yourself, and you're reading the Bible, what you are reading is the authoritative, inerrant, and infallible word of God and it has sway over your life. But here in verse 29, they have the signs and the word so the Israelites down in Egypt will believe what God has told to Moses. In verse 30, Aaron spoke the words. Remember the sequence. Moses would have the words, he would tell Aaron, and Aaron would tell the people. Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses. They did all the signs and something miraculous happens in verse 31. Remember how worried Moses was? I think this is the Old Testament picture of conversion. They don't know the name of God and all of a sudden, Moses and Aaron are there doing these signs and the people believe. In fact, they are so glad that God has visited them, that God cares.

This is Good News right here for you. That in your pain, God cares. Here you have a picture of the people seeing the goodness of God and yielding themselves to God. Here you have men and women that heard the Old Testament form of the gospel and they call on the Lordship of God. We would preach it like this. God has loved you with an everlasting love and pursued you. He's loved you to the degree of giving his own son to take the punishment that you deserve. He's poured out his wrath that you deserve on Christ. There at the cross, he killed his son instead of killing you. God raised

him from the dead to prove that the sacrifice and the justice has been satisfied. And if you will put your faith in Christ and Christ alone, you have conversion, and you will be saved. That salvation leads you to worship. It's a picture of faith. So with that in mind, let's go back now and make some points about faith. Here are a couple of things to consider, number one.

Faith has a mission

I get that in verse 27. *²⁷ The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him.* God called Aaron to go do something. God had a mission for Aaron. God had a mission for Moses. God has a mission for you. So the mission has truth. The mission will have people. What is the truth of the mission for us? It is the Gospel of Jesus. This is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is what compels us, what drives us. It drives us not only to put our faith in Christ, but to follow him along the road and to grow as Christians, to become closer and closer to God as you go stronger and stronger in your faith.

Not only that, God gives us our faith and has a mission that is seen in the people around us. You have people in your home that God has put there for a mission. If you are a parent, and you have a child living in your home, your mission is that children. Do you have people in your neighborhood that do not know Christ? God has put them there for you to reach for Jesus. Do you have a wayward child you haven't heard from, they are your mission. You have somebody you work with, somebody you go to school with. If you ever question whether or not God has a purpose for your life, as long as lost people are around you, you have a mission.

But not only that, faith has a task. Look, we do something if you're a Christian. James said that without works, faith is dead. Faith with works is alive. There is a ministry to be involved in. I'm thankful for the things that our church is doing. Maybe your mission is to stand out front and greet people. Maybe your mission is to drive a shuttle. Maybe your mission is to be a part of hearts and hammers. Maybe your mission is to be a part of the arm of mercy that comes

from Hickory Grove. Either way, when you are saved by God through faith in Jesus, he sends you on a mission. You see, faith has a mission. That's not all. Let me give something else, number two.

Faith maintains joy

When you trust Jesus, something happens within your life, there is change. A joy enters in. I get that in verse 27. *27 The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses."* So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. They embraced. Way back in verse 14, God tells Moses that Aaron is going to come to meet you, and when he sees you, he's going to be glad in his heart. Aaron is so glad that he kissed his brother. You know when you have faith, there's a joyful element. It's a joyful element seeing someone come to Christ, seeing brothers reconciled, knowing that you've trusted God. There's a joyful element with you believing the promises of God, when you trust in the Gospel of Jesus, knowing that God has loved you and saved you. There's some joy in having fellowship. Thank God for the fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ. We had a double funeral here yesterday, a husband and wife died pretty close to one another. And I am thankful for the Sunday school class, community group that provided the meal. They're just brothers and sisters taking care of one another. We'll have another funeral here this afternoon and brothers and sisters will be taking care of one another.

What faith does is it maintains joy. And when that happens, there is this growing understanding of providence. Here's how you know you're growing as a Christian. When you start grasping a deeper understanding of providence. Here's what I mean. We can celebrate that the storms that have just passed through the United States did not come through Charlotte. We would call that a smiling providence. God protected us. In the same time frame, those storms went across Mississippi and Alabama and Georgia. People died there. That is the same providence, but it is a hard, frowning providence. It's still an act of God, and we see God in that, doing something, whether it's something we really like or something we don't. And the deeper you have a grasp of that, the more you can appreciate and thank God for the

good ways that he has blessed you. You're growing in an understanding of providence. So, here's the third thing, number three.

Faith is obedient

It's right there in verse 27, the Lord said to Aaron, go to your brother and Aaron went. God said something and Aaron did it. Now there's some of you sitting in this room, now that you've known enough Bible, you've claimed to be a Christian, you have it close by, you can read it. You know what the right thing to do is. You are just not doing it. And maybe today is the crossroads. You stop compromising. Too many people will have one foot in the world and one foot in being a follower of Jesus. And maybe God brought you here just to hear that today. Stop the compromise. Maybe it has something to do with the job that you have and you're working somewhere that's taking you away from the Lord, from God's house, from God's people. Maybe you're in a relationship with someone and that someone is pulling you further and further away from what you know to be true and right and good, further from the gospel that you love and the Lord. You know the right thing to do. When you say you believe, faith then is obedient. The Lord said to Aaron, go, and Aaron went. Maybe there's a habit you need to break that is unbecoming and dishonouring to the Lord. Maybe it's an attitude, you have a terrible attitude. That is not Christian and you need to break that. It's a practice. Maybe you are like Moses and have all those excuses. What part of God's word are you not obeying? Faith has a mission. Faith maintains joy. Faith is obedience. And here is a fourth one to consider, number four.

Faith has a story

There's a story there in verse 28. So Aaron and Moses meet and Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord. And with all the words of the Lord he told them to speak, and all the signs that he commanded him to do, look at the story. There are two things you have there. What God said and what God did. Most important is what God has said. We get that from the Bible. That is why we do the kind of preaching we're doing here. I'm not making up stories. I go

to the Bible and we read what God has said. And what God has said points exactly to what God has done. And what has God done? Think about what God has done for you in the perfect life of Jesus as our substitute and in his death on the cross as the atoning work of God that takes away his wrath. Think about God raising him from the dead. And if you trust in Jesus alone, in that work alone, you will be saved. We know what God has done.

And then, secondarily to that is your own testimony, your story. Every person here, all of God's children, have a testimony. Think about what God has done for you, and I want you to think of it in three categories. So you have your salvation story, how you became a Christian. So your salvation story is not that you were in a car wreck one day and you survived the car wreck and you started coming to church, that's not salvation. That's you acting out of a guilty conscience or something. It's not salvation. Your salvation story needs to include when you heard the Gospel of Jesus, his life, death, and resurrection, and you trusted in Jesus, you turned away from your sin, and you were saved. You were converted and you were changed. Every salvation story should be understood in the light of conversion. You were a sinner going to hell, condemned by God. You are now a child of God, saved by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. That's your salvation story. You don't have to know when it was exactly. You might not even point to a time. You just need to know that's how you were saved. So that's your story.

Then there needs to be a sanctification story. That you actually are growing as a believer. Look, I've been here 15 years now. I've seen some of you for 15 years, we never grow in a straight line. We always have ups and downs and each year we get just a little bit further. And I've seen some of you grow in grace and you love God's word and you are being useful in the ministry. All of us have a story of how we are growing closer to God. It is our salvation story, our sanctification story, and underneath that needs to be a provision story. How has God provided for you, what is the goodness of God in your life? You have food to eat, a house to live in, and a car to drive. You have friends to love you that God has continually provided for. You understand that faith has

a story to tell. Moses told a story to Aaron, that's four. Let me give you a fifth point.

Faith takes action

So our attention now turns to a conversation in the desert. We don't know how long it took when this happened, but there in verses 29 and 30, look at the action. Moses and Aaron went and gathered all the elders of the people and Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and they did the signs in the sight of the people, they did what they were told to do. They believed God. Some of you here that have claimed to know and love Christ, there are some things that you know you need to do. Is there a person that you need to call right after church and you need to apologize to or be reconciled to? You need to make the call. You need to not sleep until you make the call. You need to take the step. There are some of you here that have something in you that's holding you back. There are some of you who are just frankly, drinking too much. You need to stop drinking. When did everybody start drinking so much? I've heard about gambling. Are you doing that? Some of you who come to church have the foulest mouth. Why in the world? You see, faith takes action. Listen, you and I are to take some action. You need to be a part of some ministry. You know, we're going to commission 25 people today who are going on a short-term mission trip. They are going to help missionaries in South Africa. You don't have to do that, but you need to do something. Maybe God is calling preachers in this room today. Preachers who will go and preach the gospel. Maybe God's called you? Maybe you need to let something go. There are people here at Hickory Grove, living in compromise. They are claiming to love Christ and the gospel, and yet living a sinful life in his time. Let that go. Faith does something. If you trust Jesus, then obey. By God's grace, take action. Maybe that's why God brought you here, to have your backbone stiffened up a little bit so you can walk into taking obedient action for the Lord. That's five points. I'll give you a sixth point.

Faith kills worry

What are you worried about? Do you remember how worried Moses was back in Chapter 3 and 4? Remember when he was talking to God and God said this is what I'm going to do. I want you to go and tell the people of Israel that I'm going to use you to lead them out. Moses was like, who am I? I don't really speak that well. My tone is real flat. I'm going to need some help. He even said, they are not going to believe me. But Moses and Aaron go down there, and in verses 29 and 30, they lay out the whole plan. They use all the signs. Then, in verse 31, the people believed, just like God said they would. Not one thing that Moses was worried about came to fruition. Now it's important to see that. A whole lot of the text was given to Moses worrying and very little is said, in a matter of fact way, when they told the elders, the elders believed. Not only did they believe, they worshipped. Remember what Paul said about worry. In Philippians 4:6-7. Some of you need this. ⁶ *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* ⁷ *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* You need to memorize this. You need to have it in your heart. For all of you facing the unknown, or all of you that have been told you have a really terrible health scare and it has rattled you, for all of you looking at Monday and Tuesday and you don't know exactly what's going to happen, Paul says, do not be anxious about anything but make your request known to God. Ask him with Thanksgiving. Just lay it out. Let your requests be made known to God and here's what's going to happen. It's going to be fixed. I don't know that all the problems are going away, that your health is going to return but what you hear is the promise of God and the peace of God. It's a long time since you had peace. The peace of God can't be explained, it can't be written down. People are going to say, there's no right for you to feel as good as you feel. The Peace of God that surpasses all understanding is going to guard you in two places, your heart and your mind. What are you worried about? Money? Do you have a meeting that's coming up? Is it your health or a wayward child? The job's gonna be gone, maybe the marriage. By prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God

that passes all understanding will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus. Faith kills worry. Let me give one last point, number seven.

Faith learns to worship

It's where this is going in verse 31. We have the conversion now, Moses and Aaron tell the story of God who's going to provide deliverance. Verse 31 tells us that the people believe. I think this is an Old Testament picture of a New Testament Church, a New Testament truth of the Gospel. They heard the goodness of God in verse 31, they believe when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel, that God had seen their affliction. And when they believe that, they bowed their heads and worship. Philip Riken, a great preacher of another day says, this God is to be adored. He is a God that we're going to find out rules every human heart by his sovereign will. He is a Lord that says, Israel is my firstborn son. He is a God who loves his children the way a good father here on Earth does. He is a God that does what his justice demands. His justice demands that the wages of sin is death and that sinners should go to hell. His justice calls for us going to hell and yet he provides what his justice demands, Jesus. It's the gospel. When we read this passage, we are reminded that he is a God who has seen our misery and cares. He is a God to be worshipped. Genuine faith always shows itself, and it always worships.

(Pastor prays)