No Excuse

Exod. 3:11 “Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

Introduction

- People are born excuse makers.
  - They have been since the beginning of time.
  - The first man, Adam, blamed both Eve and God for his fall into sin in the third chapter of Genesis.
  - From then until now, his descendants have followed his example by laying the blame somewhere else whenever things go wrong.
  - As a parent I can tell you that this is a trait that is inherent in humanity.
  - At the earliest ages where children have the ability to cognitively deduce that they are about to get into trouble for some action they begin to make excuses.
  - Nobody has to teach them how.
  - Nobody has to help them figure it out.
  - It just comes naturally.
  - And, unfortunately, it’s a trait that we never seem to grow out of.
  - From the youngest to the eldest, we are all guilty of making excuses.

- Let’s first clarify that not all excuses are bad.
  - They can be valid and reasonable if our intentions and motives are pure.
  - Sometimes our excuses are genuinely based upon what we believe to be the truth in a given circumstance.
  - But the extent to which we can give illegitimate excuses never ceases to amaze me.

- According to a news service, the Metropolitan Insurance Company received some unusual explanations for accidents from its automobile policyholders.
  - Let me share with you a few excuses that were given:
    - "An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car, and vanished."
    - "The other car collided with mine without warning me of its intention."
    - "I had been driving my car for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had the accident."
    - "As I reached an intersection, a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision."
    - "I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the embankment."
    - "The telephone pole was approaching fast. I attempted to swerve out of its path when it struck my front end."
    - "The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him."
    - "The indirect cause of this accident was a little guy in a small car
I want to talk to you tonight about excuses, but my subject runs a little deeper than car insurance claims.

- Making excuses is a form of escapism in which we refuse to accept responsibility for either our actions or our decisions.
  - While some excuses are perfectly legitimate, most excuses contain an element of dishonesty in them.
  - Alexander Pope said that an excuse is worse than a lie, because an excuse is nothing more than a guarded lie.
    - We use excuses like some kind of emotional pain killers
    - They take the edge off of our guilt
    - and create a false sense that we are not responsible for some thing that we have done or should have done.
- I want you to know tonight that God has a plan and a purpose for your life.
  - You were not saved just so that you could make heaven your home.
  - You were saved so that you could share this wonderful truth with others who are lost before it’s too late.
- I am afraid that, when it comes to actually serving God, when it comes to fulfilling His purpose for our lives, we are all too adept at making excuses to avoid or postpone our moral responsibility to a lost world.
  - Have you ever wondered why revival is often talked about but seldom actually arrives?
  - I can tell you why, its because the impetus for revival is in my hands and your hands.
  - And, as long as we are busy making excuses for why we can’t fulfill God’s purpose for our lives, revival will be on hold.
- A wise man once said that excuses are the nails that are used to build a house of failure.
  - While that may be so, I believe tonight that excuses are the stumbling blocks that hinder the revival that God wants to give to His church.
  - I think its high time that we confronted our addiction to excuses!

Our text concerns a man who was not that different from you and me.

- God had a purpose for his life.
  - God had a plan that relied on Moses.
  - But when God approached him, on the backside of a desert in the middle of nowhere,
    - Moses repeatedly offered excuses as to why he was not the proper person to do what God was calling him to do.

God needed the help of Moses to set his people free.

- God appeared to Moses in a bush that burned with fire but was not consumed.
  - When Moses approached, God spoke to him:
    - Exod. 3:6 – 8
I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

Right at the outset, God declares his intention to deliver the oppressed Israelites.

He has seen their afflictions, He has heard their cries, and He is determined to set them free from their bondage.

He goes a step further, in verse 10, and declares his intentions for Moses:

"Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exod. 3:10).

God has a plan for your life that is not that different from His plan for Moses.

There are people around you that are in bondage.

They put on a false front for all the world to see.

But your God has heard their cries and He has seen their afflictions.

And it is His desire to set them free.

Just like he called Moses, he’s been calling you.

That’s the reason why he filled you with the precious gift of the Holy Ghost.

Moses began to make excuses.

It’s important to note how Moses responds to the call of God.

He acted just like many of us have: He started making excuses!

In effect, he said:

“You know what, God? You’ve got the wrong guy.
I’ve got sheep to care for.
I have my own family to consider.
I’m afraid I’m a bit too busy right now.
Hit me up next time around.”

Excuse # 1: I’m not qualified

But Moses said to God, " Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11)

Moses was focused on himself, instead of on God.

This is our cardinal mistake.

This is the main reason why we rely on excuses to release us from fulfilling God’s will for our lives.

Because we know that, in and of our selves, we aren’t able.

- We aren’t good enough – But He’s God enough!
- We don’t have enough ability – But He does his best work in
our inabilities!

- We see impossibilities — But with him all things are possible!

  - Excuses put the focus squarely on us.
  - God wants us to realize that the burden of producing revival is on Him!
    - We sow and water — But He gives the increase!
  - Listen to the words of the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:5-6
    - "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."
  - Some of us need to learn that our sufficiency is of God.
    - That means that we rely on his capabilities, not ours!
  - God’s response to Moses’ excuse? “Certainly I will be with thee” (Exodus 3:12).
    - He was saying, wait a minute Moses, if I am with you, who can stand against you?!?!?
    - God was with Moses and he will be with you too — its time to get rid of your excuses!

Excuse #2: I don’t know enough.

- Moses next pled his lack of an exhaustive knowledge of God:
  - “Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?” (Exod. 3:13)
  - Moses was declaring that he had not been to Bible college.
    - He had no experience as a Sunday school teacher or a preacher.
    - His next excuse was inexperience.
      - Surely, God, there’s someone more qualified than me.
      - Isn’t this a job that preacher should do?
      - I don’t know enough about you.
      - I don’t know enough about the bible.
      - I haven’t had enough teaching.
      - I won’t know how to answer all the questions.
      - I’m just barely saved myself, surely I’m not responsible for helping someone else find the way.
  - What was God’s answer?
    - Exodus 3:14: And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.
    - God is saying, in essence, “I will be what I will be” or, as I am fond of saying, “it is what it is.”
      - Essentially, he’s telling Moses that this relationship is going to begin and end with trust.
      - It’s all going to be about faith.
      - He’s saying, “Trust me, I’ll give you the right words to say at the right time!”
• Because, it’s not about how much you know.
  o It’s about who you know.
  o God was saying, “It’s about WHO I am, and it’s about what I will do.”
  o And, you won’t fail because I won’t let you!
• We’ve all been guilty of doing exactly what Moses did.
  o We get the focus on ourselves and our lack of knowledge and we invalidate a ministry and a purpose for our lives that flows from Him, not from us.
  o I’ll never forget standing in Taiwan the first time.
  o I was scared to death.
  o I’ve never been to Bible College but I’m going to minister and exhort right alongside Lee Stoneking.
  o If I had listened to my flesh, if I had focused on myself, I would have run away.
  o But, that’s not faith.
  o Faith says, try me and see. Test me and find out if I will come through.
  o That’s how God works!

Excuse #3: I am nobody.
• Moses next pled his lack of authority and prestige.
  o Basically, he said, “I’m nobody and they won’t listen to me.”
  o Exod. 4:1: And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.
• It becomes more and more clear as we run through these excuses that Moses is still focused on himself.
  o He keeps leaving God out of the equation.
  o He was assuming that his success was going to be determined by his own human ability rather than by the power of God.
• God responds by working not one, but two notable miracles.
  o In essence he says to Moses, “Look man, you can’t turn a rod into a serpent and change it back again, neither can you give yourself leprosy and then cleanse it.
    ▪ I really doesn’t matter what you can or can’t do.
    ▪ It only matters what I can do and I can do anything that needs to be done!
• Once again, all of our excuses are centered on ourselves and our own abilities or lack thereof.
  o When are we going to realize that it’s not about us?!?!

Excuse #4: I’m not good at talking
• Finally Moses gets desperate.
• Reaching way back in his bag of excuses, he grasps the final straw, the one that has always worked before.
  o This is an excuse that I’ve heard a multitude of times.
  o I’ve heard pastor’s wives use this excuse.
I’ve seen preachers offer this excuse.

I know some dear old prayer warriors that would do just about anything for God that are quick to provide this excuse:

Exodus 4: 10: And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

- I’m just not good at talking to folks!

- Do you remember how I said that Adam blamed Eve, then he blamed God for his failure?
  - This is the final act of desperation.
  - This is the excuse that trumps all others.
  - Moses is doing the same thing that Adam did.
  - It’s God’s fault that he can’t do what God wants him to do because, God didn’t equip him for the job.
    - I just can’t talk to people.
    - I get all tang toungeled.
    - It’s not my fault.
    - That’s just how I was made.
  - Many people today offer the excuse that they are not public speakers.
    - They declare that because they do not have the ability to sweep an audience off its feet,
      - That they are automatically eliminated from their responsibility to be a witness of the great grace of God.

- What was God’s response?
  - Exodus 4:11 “And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?”
    - God said, Hey! I made you. And I can enable you to do anything!
    - The last excuse that will ever hold water is that this is just the way I made you – because the one who made you can make you into anything I want to make you into.
  - Moses – You may not be much for talking, but your voice is about to bring the Pharaoh to his knees.
    - Nations are going to tremble.
    - Strongholds are going to come down.
    - My people will be loosed.
      - When you stand and say, Let my people go!

Moses’ excuses provoked the anger of God (Exod. 4:14).

- Finally, Moses gives in.
- Exodus 4:13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

But not before he angers God:

Moses’ excuses were an insult to the truthfulness of God, for in each instance God promised to make him adequate for the task to which he was being called.

- Moses’ excuses were actually declarations of his lack of faith in the
promises of God.
  - And finally, Moses, with all of his excuses, provoked God to anger.
    - Exodus 4:14 tells us that the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses.
  - **God was angry for two reasons:**
    - **First, God was angry for Moses’ sake.**
      - God was just as interested in Moses achieving his greatest possible potential as he was in delivering the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.
      - God was unhappy with this man who was staggering back in unbelief and depriving himself of the opportunity to achieve his divine destiny.
      - I want you to know, tonight that God gets angry with us when we make excuses.
      - When we stagger around in mediocrity and nothingness when we could achieve something really worthwhile in the Service of God – it angers God!
    - **Secondly, God was angry with Moses for the sake of the suffering Israelites.**
      - Moses was uniquely equipped by virtue of his personal knowledge of the court of Pharaoh and by virtue of his forty years in the wilderness to be the deliverer that God called him to be.
      - But, it wasn’t just about Moses.
      - God was upset that he wouldn’t respond to the burden of knowing the condition of his brethren.
      - This thing is bigger than you.
      - God’s not just calling you for your sake alone.
      - He’s calling you because a lost world desperately needs to hear your testimony!
    - I want you to know, tonight, **that you do not have to be perfect for God to use you!**
      - Moses was far from perfect, yet God used him in a mighty way when he got past his excuses.
      - Tonight, I want you to know that God can use each of us.
        - God can use you!
        - He’s not waiting for you to get perfect.
        - He’s only waiting for you to get past your excuses!
        - He’s not worried about your abilities, he’s only concerned with your availability.
        - Why don’t you drop the excuses and make yourself available to God!

**Conclusion**

In a certain mountain village in Europe several centuries ago, a nobleman wondered what legacy he should leave to his townspeople.

- At last he decided to build them a church.
No one saw the complete plans for the church until it was finished.
When the people gathered, they marveled at its beauty and completeness.
Then someone asked, "But where are the lamps? How will it be lighted?"
The nobleman pointed to some brackets in the walls.
Then he gave to each family a lamp, which they were to bring with them each time they came to worship.
"Each time you are here the area where you are seated will be lighted," the nobleman said.
"Each time you are not here, that area will be dark.
This is to remind you that whenever you fail to come to church, some part of God’s house will be dark."

• I want to remind you tonight that you are an important part of what God is doing in Lake City.
When you shrug off his calling with your excuses, you may think that there is no real consequence to your actions.
  • But what you don’t realize is how important you are to the plan of God.
    • Great revivals start with small things and small, seemingly insignificant actions.
    • It may very well be that the person that God is trying to get you to reach out to, is the individual that will ignite the revival that will sweep this community like a wildfire.

• God has a plan.
• He’s only waiting for you to answer his call.

• Let’s make up our mind tonight: No more excuses!
  • I can obey God.
  • I can share my testimony.
  • I can make a difference.
  • And so can you!

• Doug Hall once said, “Don’t make excuses. Make things happen. Make changes. Then make history.”
  • I believe that God is ready to make history in Lake City if we will quit making excuses!