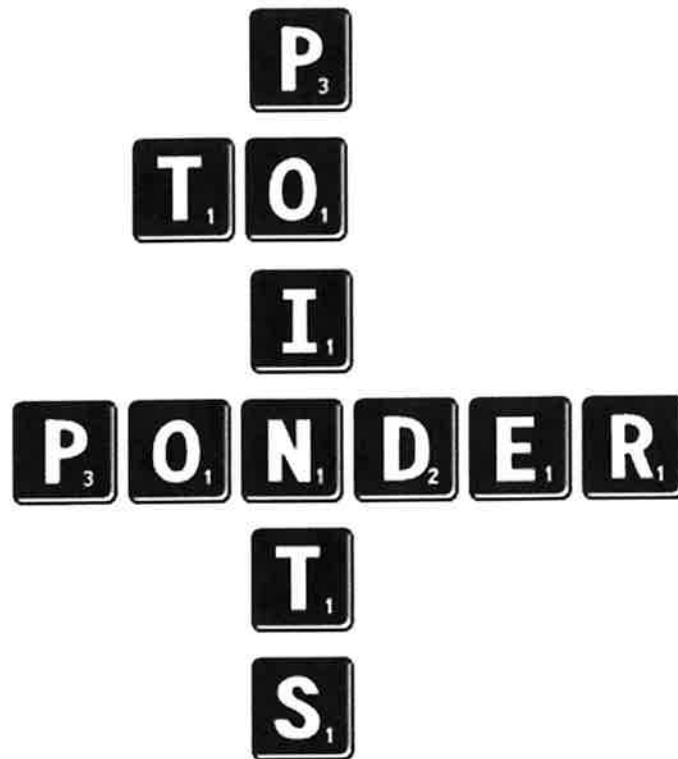




2025 Weekly Devotions

Week of: October 13th - 19th

Sermon: October 12th



October 13

1 Timothy 6:1

Exodus 4 begins by continuing the conversation between God and Moses. The reader will note that it is exceedingly obvious that God desires, and even commands, Moses to return to Egypt from Midian. The lack of ambiguity and the source of the command (God Himself) makes verse 18 a bit curious at first glance.

Think about the sequencing here: God commands Moses to go back to Egypt then Moses asks his father-in-law, who was also, in some senses, his employer, for permission! Some might read about this interchange and find it disturbing. After all, isn't the Lord the greater authority? Isn't His Word enough? The simple answer to the question is yes! God is the authority, and Moses was obligated to obey God rather than any man, his father-in-law and earthly overseer included. Nevertheless, Moses is not chastised for this decision nor is there any hint in the text that God took issue with the action. Why? The answer is that Moses was not so much seeking permission as he was showing proper honor and respect.

Jethro had taken care of Moses for years. He had seen to it that Moses and Moses' burgeoning family had all that was needed for their well-being and, consequently, it was good and right for Moses to be forthright and humble in seeking Jethro's approval, not because Jethro's denial would change Moses' plans but because Jethro was the authority in the larger family structure and, therefore, had a position of respect. There is something incredibly important in this interaction for us today as we consider how we are to respond and interact with our earthly bosses. I believe that 1 Timothy 6 sheds some great light on the principle that motivated Moses in Exodus 4. In the first verse of chapter 6, we are reminded that "bondservants" (a word that is somewhat generic but refers to those who operate in subjection to an earthly authority) are to "honor" their masters.

The term honor means to respect and value the person above us. In this case, Moses demonstrates honor towards Jethro in seeking out his superior and communicating in a manner that both clearly communicates his desires and seeks Jethro's blessing as well. Stated differently, Moses honored Jethro by ensuring that Jethro knew the what and why of his decision. Rather than leaving the man in a lurch, Moses made sure to show proper respect.

As you consider your own lives, remember that we are to show honor as well. As Christians, you should honor those who are in direct authority over you. This means we must be faithful to communicate with those who are tasked with overseeing us so that they can understand and respond to our decisions. In this way, we show proper consideration for God's Sovereignty in placing them over us and proper respect for our God who commands us to faithfulness in this arena.

October 14

Matthew 10:19-20

I can relate to the Moses we meet in Exodus 3 and 4. Like our forefather in the faith, I have been guilty of making many excuses and justifying my own desire to disobey the Lord when He clearly calls me to action. Defenses and reasons for disobedience are not hard to come by, but they are evidence of a rebellious and faithless heart.

The real issue with Moses' protests is not the content of his concerns. The people of Israel were prone to disbelief, he obviously was not an eloquent speaker, and he was being asked to go back to a land he fled for good reason! All of these justifications are reasonable on their face, but they leave out one very important Person. The obstacles that Moses mentions are problems for mere mortals, but they were no match for the Lord.

I suppose what I am trying to say is that the presence of the Lord is the distinguishing factor between our doubts and our obedience in faith. What would make Moses successful was not his natural giftedness nor was it the earnest faith of the people of Israel, what dictated the success of Moses' mission was that God was present.

Think about how many times Moses encountered a circumstance that was totally unwinnable save the Lord's intervention. What could Moses have done to fight the Egyptians at the Red Sea? What plan could Moses have put together to feed the multitudes in the wilderness? How would he have governed the people without the reception of the law? The truth is that Moses needed God every step of the way and the beautiful reality is that God was promising to be with Moses in Exodus 3 and 4.

In the same way, we need the Lord today and He promises to be with us. In our devotional passage for the day, Jesus is offering some encouraging Words in this vein as He reminds the disciples that they have no need to fear when they are delivered over to antagonistic rulers. Now, on the face of it, we might be prone to think that we would have every reason to be nervous in such circumstances! Like Moses, many of us are not great with our words nor quick on our feet. How could a disciple possibly stand before a ruler and be calm? The answer is not in our ability; the answer is in the power and presence of our great God.

Notice here that Jesus says that these moments provide opportunity for the Spirit of God to intervene. Essentially, Jesus is reminding the disciples that they have no need to panic because the great "I AM" will always be present. This means that our excuses have no place in our time of need, not because we are sufficient or well-equipped to handle the issue but because God is able and with us. Dear brother or sister, I realize that the world is a daunting place sometimes. I further realize that what God has called us to in standing for the truth and offering a defense for the hope that lies within us is not easy. Consequently, we may be prone to respond to our clear commission like Moses did, but Exodus 3 and 4 remind us that this is a mistake. The same God who called and empowered and guided Moses is the One who is with us today. For this reason, we have no cause for alarm and no valid excuse to choose to disobey His directions in our lives.

October 15

Matthew 2:20

Have you ever attempted to put yourself in Moses' shoes for a moment? I realize that his story has many twists and turns but, for the purpose of today's devotion, just think for a minute about what it must have been like to contemplate a return to Egypt. Remember, Moses had fled Egypt, and specifically Pharaoh, and for good reason! He was a murderer and, consequently, an enemy of the state. He ran to Midian to guard his life and now the Lord was calling him back.

I wonder sometimes what it would have been like to be on that journey. Surely his nerves were not all the way settled. I would surmise that memories began to flood his mind as he reached the outskirts of his previous home and I am sure that he was extremely concerned about the possibilities that awaited him.

Moses' consternation is understandable, but I don't want you to miss God's grace in prompting his return. Grace is all over the Scriptures. We see grace in the sacrifice of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, daily provision of food and, in this case, God's revelation. What I mean is that God was gracious to reassure Moses that those who were hellbent on killing him were no longer alive. Instead of simply calling Moses to return and expecting him to go with no clue as to what may await, the Lord saw fit to speak to the most obvious, and concerning, challenge before the journey even began.

The text reminds us of a later passage of Scripture which records a very similar event. You'll remember that Mary and Joseph were commanded by God to flee their homeland in order to avoid the murderous plans of King Herod who was threatened by the birth of the King. Obviously, they fled for different reasons (Moses was a killer who drew the ire of Pharaoh and Jesus' parents were innocent instruments of God in bringing Christ into the world). Nevertheless, there are parallels.

In both instances, the Father gave the parties in question both an instruction to obey and revelation to reassure and motivate. He told them not only what to do but also what to expect. He gave them the insight that their greatest fears need not be fears because they were already taken care of prior to their reappearing.

As we consider both stories, I want to remind you that the Lord has done something very similar for us as well. Brother and sister, the Lord has called you to follow Him into some very challenging circumstances. He has given us clear commands to insert ourselves into the battle between good and evil, but He has also given us so many promises to reassure and invigorate us as we do so. He has told us that no evil will prevail in our lives (Psalm 91:10-11), He has told us that His work will prevail (Proverbs 19:21) and He has reminded us that all things will result in our good (Romans 8:28). In these promises, the Lord works to reassure our hearts by reminding us that our greatest enemies have all fallen by the wayside and, therefore, the threats that might be overwhelming to our troubled souls should be no concern as we follow His instructions.

October 16

Genesis 17:10-14

Every once in a while, we come across a portion of Scripture that seems very strange to us! My assumption is that many of you felt a bit odd about the way that God behaved in verses 24-26 as Moses later describes the Lord's seeking to kill Moses. Why in the world would God seek to harm the very one He has just called to return to Egypt in order to liberate His covenant people? Furthermore, why would God seemingly do this without warning?

The question is a good one and, thankfully, it has an answer! You see, the issue at play here is that Moses was called by God to lead His covenant people but the covenant that bound the Lord and His people together was not being obeyed by the very one who was called to be the leader!

Circumcision was not an option for the people of Israel, in fact Genesis 17:14 tells us that those who are not circumcised should be "cut off" from their people. If Moses was going to lead these people, he must not be "cut off" from them. What God is showing us here is not some schizophrenic tendencies, He is demonstrating His concern that those in leadership over His people be in conformity to His stated will.

This is a very important principle even for us today. While we are no longer under the Old Covenant and, therefore, are not required to follow its ceremonial precepts (including circumcision), we are very much expected to heed God's instructions through Christ our Savior and when those in leadership over God's people in His local church do not heed His commands, bad things inevitably follow.

In many ways, the Lord's actions in this story are demonstrative of His mercy towards Moses. His seeking to kill Moses provided great motivation for Moses to be faithful to a rite that he should have already obeyed prior! Furthermore, His actions towards Moses are a great reminder to us that He is intent on our obedience to Him in all facets of our lives. Folks, disobedience is not cute, and it is certainly not something we should expect to get away with! The Lord is deadly serious (pun intended) when it comes to our obedience to His Lordship. Does this mean that He will actively seek to kill us when we disobey? No! It does mean that He would send His Son to die because we have disobeyed and it further means that those who have no concern to honor the One who died for us are, more than likely, cruising for a moment when God not only seeks to kill us but sees to it that we are judged forever by virtue of our denial of His rightful place as Lord over us.

October 17

1 Corinthians 1:27

Chapters 3 and 4 of Exodus record no less than 5 times that Moses objected to God's call to return to Egypt in order to liberate Israel. Theologians and commentators have pointed out that there seems to be a bit of an escalation as it relates to Moses' tone and the content of his objections. First, there appears to be more reverence but, as the story progresses, we finally arrive at Moses' final objection in which he simply says, "please send someone else"!

The final objection unveils the unwilling nature of this chosen instrument, but all of the objections taken together remind us that Moses' unwillingness to go is rooted in a true concern of his ability. Now, as was pointed out on Sunday, the ground of the issue is not whether Moses (or anyone else for that matter) is "qualified" for service. The truth is that no one is up to the task of serving the Lord by themselves. No, if we are going to be useful in the Lord's hands, we desperately need His intervention and power.

Today's devotion is not meant to rehash the point of the sermon so much as it is to call our attention to another, biblical truth as illustrated by the story of Moses' call to return to Egypt. This narrative reminds us that God often chooses the least likely, and least qualified, to accomplish His purposes.

This is the point that Paul is making in 1 Corinthians when he reminds us that God uses the weak and the foolish instead of the wise and strong. Why would God do this? For the same reason that He does anything... His glory! God's point to Moses was that there is no need to fear anything because of His presence. Moses could not say "I am" qualified but he could say the great "I AM" is with me and when people noted his imperfections and weaknesses and saw the great signs that God performed through this otherwise unimpressive vessel, the obvious result would be God's glory over and above anyone or anything else.

If you feel unqualified or inadequate for the task that God has called you to today, I want to remind you of two absolute truths. First, you are absolutely not able to accomplish what God has commanded you to do in your own strength. Second, this is the point! God's desire is not for you to look within for strength or competencies, His purpose is to have you look to Him and, in so doing, lead those around you to do the same.

Our God does not need qualified men or women; he is seeking those who are humble enough to know that their strength and hope of success depends entirely upon Him. Moses didn't want to go because he knew he couldn't do what God commanded on his own. What he would find is that God was going to go before him and do marvelous things through him all for the purpose of using him to accomplish a glorious plan that was so far above him.

October 18

Exodus 4:23

As is always the case, this week's chapter has far more content than one sermon could ever hope to cover. Consequently, I am going to take a day or two at the end of our weekly devotions to consider a few topics that merit our attention but did not make their way into the sermon on Sunday.

The significance of today's verse could be easily missed. Notice here that God's Words here denote not only the command to Pharaoh ("let my people go") but also the reason for the command ("that they may serve me"). This sets up the struggle for power that will characterize the next several chapters.

Pharaoh thought of himself as a god and, consequently, he hated the idea of submitting to the one true God! Additionally, Pharaoh's commands and domineering authority over the nation of Israel were prohibitive to the people in their worship and service to their true God but, just as importantly, his treatment of the Israelites was totally antithetical to the love God had for His chosen people. Just as a parent would not stand idly by as another authority figure demeaned and harmed his physical child, so the Exodus is the story of our faithful Father not remaining distant as a tyrant sought to abuse His covenant people.

Philip Ryken summarizes this portion of Exodus 4 writing, "To Pharaoh the Hebrews were lowly slaves, but to God they were beloved sons. Thus, the problem with Pharaoh was not simply that he was a slaveholder (although that was bad enough), but that he was preventing God's children from serving their Father. Instead of being free to call God "Father", they Israelites were forced to call Pharaoh "Master." Do you see the point here? The Exodus is a story both of the Father's desire for His own glory (which He would receive in His triumph over Pharaoh) AND a story of God's love for His children.

God was calling Moses back to the land he had fled because he loved both Moses and His people too much to allow them to remain in their present condition. It was the Lord's affection for His people that drove Him to stand against Pharaoh's abuses, and it was the Lord's affection that caused Him to call Moses. God was not attempting to embarrass Moses; God was using Moses for the good of others.

In the same way, the Lord's love for His children is a primary motivation behind His calling us to obedience. Why should we obey commands like the Great Commission? One reason is because we know that God loves those, He chooses to save too much to allow them to remain underneath the tyranny of Satan, a despotic and prideful slavedriver. His love demands action, and His action is often undertaken through us! This means that our call to follow the Lord is not only about us, it is about all those who God loves that He will redeem, by His power, through us.

October 19

Psalm 9:10

We spent very little time on the last portion of the chapter this past Sunday morning, so it seems fitting to end our devotions for the week with a reminder of the glorious truth contained therein. You'll remember that the Lord both called Moses to a monumental task and then promised him numerous blessings to help him along the way. In the closing sections of chapter 4, we are reminded that God is faithful to do what He promises.

In brief order, here are some of the fulfillments of God's Word as recorded in chapter 4: Aaron went out to meet Moses on the mountain and agreed to help Moses, the elders and the people believed Moses and Aaron by the signs that God demonstrated and, presumably, Moses was allowed back into the land, in part, because the Pharaoh who desired him dead some 40 years prior had died, just as God had stated.

Repeatedly we see the faithfulness of our great God. While it is still quite true that Moses was called to a monumental task, it is equally true that God demonstrated His willingness and desire to empower and provide for Moses all along the way.

It seems to be likely that some of you are at a similar crossroads. I'm not saying that you are on the precipice of standing up to a world leader, but I do believe that many of you have been called by God to pursuits that scare you and I further know that God has given us numerous reassurances in His Word for the journey.

Let the conclusion of Exodus 4 be a soothing reminder to your soul that God is always faithful. He provides, He makes a way, He comforts and He guides. You may be prone to feel abandoned or helpless, but these feelings are not in concert with the truths that undergird and strengthen us in our journey.

Sometimes the Lord's intervention is miraculous, after all, He was preparing to split the Red Sea! Most of the time, His assistance is more of the garden variety. He provided a friend for the journey, He provided safety for the passage, and He provided elders and people who believed the message that Moses was tasked with sharing. Don't overlook the seemingly tiny evidences of His grace and trust that He will be with you every step of the way as you seek to follow Him.