

Turning Point: From Hesitant to Confident

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Exodus 3:1-4:18 (NIV)

This is a long Scripture reading, you can read it all of it later on. But for now, let's highlight a few verses:

^{3:4} When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." answering God

^{3:10} So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

^{3:11} But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

^{3:13} Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

^{4:1} Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'?"

^{4:10} Moses said to the Lord, "Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

^{4:13} But Moses said, "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else."

^{4:18} Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me return to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are still alive."

Introduction

Growing up, many times my mother would call to me, "where are you" and I would answer "here." What she usually wanted was both my presence and attention. Usually, she would explain to me why she required both my attention and my presence: usually, something had to be done or she had something important to tell me

Once the Lord had Moses' presence and attention, He told Moses what was required of him. At this moment, Moses did not refuse or agree. Instead he hesitated to say "yes." And in Moses' hesitations, I see myself and others. May the Lord strengthen us and may we place our confidence fully in Him.

Hesitations – Stalling

Moses' first hesitation was "who am I?" (Ex 3:11). This speaks of his humility and a feeling of being unfit for the assignment. Think about it, God is almighty, Pharaoh was a formidable opponent and Moses himself, a mere man.

For the "who am I" hesitation to exist, your attention has to be on yourself and others, and not primarily on God.

Moses' next hesitation was in the form of a scenario, "who shall I say?" (Ex 3:13). Moses knew that the Egyptian Gods have names according to their functions and that the Israelites have been exposed to them. Yet, the Israelites had been calling out to God and they needed to know that Moses has been sent by the same God to whom they called out. Moses did not need a new name for God, he needed to describe God to the Israelites in terms of who God is and in terms of how God relates to the many Egyptian gods.

The "who shall I say" hesitation if fuelled by uncertainty – the Israelites would want to know the name of their own God and therefore what to expect of God and Moses needed an answer.

Moses then changed tactic and started with the "what if" (Ex 4:1) hesitation, which also speaks a possible scenario; one that has not happened yet. Moses was hesitant because the Israelites would most probably not take his word; they would want proof.

The "what if" scenario speaks to something that may or may not happen. At the same time, it speaks to the need for backup, if needed. In other words, "what if" speaks to speculation and uncertainty, whether it is rational or not.

Finally, Moses played the "send someone else" (Ex 4:10 & 4:13) hesitation, first based on an apparent speech impediment, and secondly Moses still did not see himself as the ideal man for this mission of God.

The “send someone else” hesitation speaks of an unhealthy mentality of comparison; others are better than me; I do not have what they have and I am not who they are. For this mentality to thrive, you place yourself in the lesser and focus on what you don’t have or are lacking.

Building Confidence

The question of why Moses was hesitant is not fully answered. What we do know is that at the time he was shepherding Jethro’s flock, which accounts for why he asked Jethro to release him. On the other hand, a shepherd is being sent by God on an extremely courageous mission.

- “Who am I.” Moses was saying “I am a nobody” because his focus was on himself. God did not argue or correct Moses, The Lord simply told Moses “I will be with you.” Both Moses and God were correct. The transition, however, from the one tasked to the One tasking.

To transition from “who am I” toward confidence requires shifting the source of your confidence from self to God. Looking at who you are; me looking at who I am and what we are in ourselves capable of, must simply point us to Jesus, not because we are worthy, but because He is Worthy and we are loved.

- “Who shall I say.” There is only one God and Moses was speaking to Him. In the Name of God, “I AM,” God communicated that He is self-existence, the Being of beings, His eternality (all time passed, present and future), His immutability (God cannot change), His consistency, His faithfulness (particularly in fulfilling promises), His omniscience, His omnipotence and His omnipresence. God is saying, “I am what I am at present, but I am what I have been, and I am what I shall be, and shall be what I am.”

To transition from “who shall I say” toward confidence is in understanding who you believe in and serve. This requires of us to start grasping who God is in relation to ourselves and who He is in relation to the many other gods that are found in the world. There is only one true and eternal God and He loves you. It is His desire to stand in a living relationship with you.

- “What if.” Life is full of “what ifs.” Yesterday has passed and God has not yet given us tomorrow. Maybe it will rain in two weeks, maybe not. On the one hand, it is good to

have a “what if” plan in place is it does not speak to nonsensical speculation, because nonsensical speculation has the ability to paralyze us and feed our greatest fears.

To transition from “what if” to confidence requires a shift from irrationality to rationality. Key to this transition is identifying what is rational and then grounding all hope and trust in Him who does know what tomorrow brings. It’s about trust.

- “Send someone else.” Moses still did not see himself as the ideal man for this mission of God. Despite God promising to go with him, revealing His name, demonstrating miraculous signs, and telling him that He will help him to speak and guide him what to say.

A mentality of comparison is one of the killers of confidence because it replaces God’s vision with your vision. It replaces what God sees in you with what you see in yourself.

Conclusion

Was Moses’ hesitation a failure in faith, belief or trust in God? Maybe. Did he want all the answers before saying yes? Maybe. Was he serious about God and the call of God? Yes.

Now, suppose, for a moment, that God calls you – from the middle of a burning bush – by name and you answer Him, “Here I am.” How would you respond when God starts to unfold His plan?

Moses’ amazement (the burning bush) turned into reverence, then hesitation and then confidence. But only after God had a few harsh words with him.

Will you too place “who am I,” “what shall I say,” “what if” and “send someone else” into the conversation with God? Or will you confidently move from “here I am” toward “here I am doing?”

“As is our confidence, so is our capacity” William Hazlitt.

Amen.