

Introduction

This morning we are continuing our series through the Book of Exodus. It's sort of a biographical look at the life of Moses. We'll be in Exodus chapters 3 and 4; this is a really long passage of Scripture for us to read for one sermon, so I want to invite you to hang with me. This all fits together; it all works together. So, if you have your Bible, I want to invite you to go ahead, get it out, and open it to Exodus chapter 3. We are going to read, basically, two full chapters of Scripture, but you're going to see how it all works together. It's talking about how God called Moses, and we want to understand how it is that God wants to call us and work in us. So let's look at Exodus chapter 3; we're actually going to begin in verse 2 and go from there.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked and behold the bush was burning yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, 'I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.' When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' And He said, 'I am the God of your 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 at God.

"Then the Lord said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?' He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.'

"Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM.' And He said, 'Say this is to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' God also said to Moses, 'Say this to the people of Israel, "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent Me to you." This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, "The Lord, the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with mild and honey." And they will listen to your voice and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, "The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God." But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.'

"Then Moses answered, 'But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, "The Lord did not appear to you."' The Lord said to him, 'What is that in your hand?' He said, 'A staff.' And He said, 'Throw it on the ground.' So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. But the Lord said to Moses, 'Put out your hand and catch it by the tail'—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— 'that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.' Again, the Lord said to him, 'Put your hand inside your cloak.' And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then God said, 'Put your hand back inside your cloak.' So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. 'If they will not believe you,' God said, 'or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.'

"But Moses said to the Lord, 'Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since You have spoken to Your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.' Then the Lord said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.' But he said, 'Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.' Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and He said, 'Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.'

"Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, 'Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive.' And Jethro said to Moses, 'Go in peace.' And the Lord said to Moses in Midian, 'Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.' So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

"And the Lord said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord. Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve Me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.'"

"At a lodging place on the way, the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, 'Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!' So He let him alone. It was then that she said, 'A bridegroom of blood,' because of the circumcision.

"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. 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. Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. 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 worshipped."

1. Our God chases.... and chooses. (3:2)

God is a calling God. That is the message of Exodus chapters 3 and 4; and to display His power, in order to perfect a people and to create a nation, God will choose people. He will pick them. He will call them and He will say, "You have been here but now you will be here. Spiritually you have been an alien but now you will be in My family. I am now calling you for My purposes and in My time." I want us to think, "If God is calling, what does that call look like?"

In Exodus 3, I think immediately we see that when God calls, it is God who does the calling. We start with a burning bush that is not consumed by the fire. In verse 2 and verse 3, an angel of the Lord, the Lord Himself, speaks to Moses from this burning bush that is yet to be consumed. When God calls, it is God who calls. It's no stranger. There's no mistaking it. It is God who does whatever He must do in order to get our attention. There is only one burning bush in the Bible. There is only one Damascus road experience, but there are times when God will do what He must do in order for you to see clearly that He is now inviting you to be part of what it is that He is asking you to do. He will do what He has to do to get your attention.

I had a friend who was struggling with a call to the ministry. He thought that God was asking him to be a pastor, but he didn't really want to do it. He kept doing the thing that maybe you and I do whenever we feel that we're being called to something that we don't want to do. He kept making excuses and reasons about why he ought not to do the thing which he felt God was telling him to do. Finally he was sharing with one of his friends... a mentor, another pastor... and he said "I think God might be calling me into the ministry, but I don't know what to do about it." His mentor laid his hands on his shoulders and prayed over him, "Lord, make this man sick until he does exactly what You are asking him to do." He said that as he was being prayed over, he looked up and thought, "Well this is a terrible prayer..." (Laughter) "...I do not like this prayer." It was over and he said, "Amen." Now some people would say it was the power of suggestion, but my friend went home that night... I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit... and he got sick as a dog. He got sick the next day. His stomach was churning; he felt miserable. Finally he said, on the third day, he just cried out to God and said, "I cannot take this anymore. I will do whatever it is You want me to do. I will be a minister"... and he stopped feeling sick. You know, I don't know if you've ever had that sort of experience where God does things in a big way to get your attention. But just like a burning bush that was designed to get Moses to turn aside and see what it was that God wanted him to do, God will do what it is that He asks us to do in whatever way necessary so that we will not give credit to anyone else, but we will say, "It was God who called me to do this."

Whenever God calls, it's interesting how He calls. He does it in a way that lets us know that it's Him, but He also calls people that we would probably not choose. When you read in Exodus chapter 3, (we talked about this a little bit last week) we tend to think of Moses as already a holy individual. Do you know that in Exodus chapter 3, this is the very first recorded incident we have of God and Moses ever speaking to one another? Now, Moses was a Hebrew; he knew of his people. Maybe he had seen their worship. Maybe Moses had been worshipping but we think probably not, and this is the reason why not: Because when the angel of the Lord appears to him, he doesn't know who it is. God introduces Himself to Moses and He says, "Moses... I am the God of your father (whom we haven't met at this point, in the Book of Exodus)... and I'm the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob." Now, whenever we hear that, we think, "Wow! He is really laying out that He is a namedropper." God's a namedropper. He says, "Hey, these are the people that I am their God, so you probably ought to pay attention." We think of it in a very American sort of context. Right? "I am the God of George Washington, and Jefferson, and Adams..." We think of sort of these big forefather-type people. There's a pretty interesting thing that God is doing right there. He is

calling Moses, saying, "Hey, Moses... I'm the God of your father who gave you up. I'm the God of Abraham... the guy who gave his wife away twice. I'm the God of Isaac, the one who ended up giving the inheritance to the wrong kid. I'm the God of Jacob, the kid who was the trickster and wrestled with God. All the people that you would never choose, just like you think that I shouldn't pick you... guess what? Here's My calling card. I picked Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I am the God who picks failures and uses them for My Name." That's who this is that's calling Moses.

I think it is funny because whenever Moses goes to the people, how is he supposed to tell them that he was called? He was supposed to say, "Well, I was called by the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." So the elders are like, "Oh... well, I mean, God did call all those other failures, so maybe He did call you, Moses." It's kind of an interesting thing, but God is choosing whom He will choose for His purposes. God is not choosing the most qualified nor the most eloquent. He is choosing the person whom He believes will give His Name the most glory. So in choosing Moses, He recognizes that even though Moses is weak, God can call him. You see, as a church, we rest in the truth that, despite being sinners and imperfect, God has called us in Jesus Christ. It is a beautiful truth for us to remember. Have you ever heard that famous quote of Groucho Marx saying he would never want to be part of any club that would allow him to be a member? Think about that for a second...okay, you got it. Right? This is the way the church works. You think, "I would never want to be a part of any church that would let ME be in the church because look how messed up I am." But that's actually the beauty of the Gospel. It is that in the grace of Jesus Christ, through the cross, anyone... all of us failures, all of us who have shortcomings... we all can be invited into the Kingdom. If you feel like you are completely a failure and you are unworthy and incapable... be careful because God might be about to call you to lead a nation... Because it's in your weakness that He is made perfect in His grace.

2. He Purposes. (3:10)

But God doesn't just call and doesn't just choose. He also gives a particular purpose to Moses. He gives him a job. Now read this, verse 10 in chapter 3: "*Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.*" So God chooses Moses and gives him a really, really big job. "Go and bring My people out of Israel." I want you to think about Moses. He is standing there. He is a shepherd, working for his father-in-law, and God says, "Hey... I've got a small thing I'd like you to do. Just head on back to Egypt, and bring all the people out. So basically take charge of the entire group of people. There's a few hundred thousand... not a big deal." Moses says, "What? You want what?" Does this job seem a little too big for Moses? If it does, good... because guess what? The call of God, whenever it comes, will always be very clear from God; He'll tell you exactly what He wants you to do, but I can almost guarantee you this: Whenever God calls you, it will always disrupt what your plans are. The God of the Bible is a disruptive God. He disrupts our patterns.

You see, when we start talking about calling in Scripture, I'm always reminded of my Mom. She had this uncanny ability... I would stand close to her... I'd be there talking to her... She would never tell me anything that she needed, but then I would go to the pantry, and I would get the Lays potato chips out. They were fresh... the salt, the grease coming out of there. I could smell it. I would sit down on the couch, turn on the television, and as soon as the first chip was just centimeters away from my tongue... then, my Mom would say, "Steve... could you go do this for me?" She would give me a job. It was like she waited until I was comfortable before she would tell me. Some of you are like, "That's a great idea! I think I'm going to start doing that to my kids." If you look in the Scripture, God likes to wait until you are completely comfortable and then He calls.

Moses probably said, "Lord, I don't know if You know this... I'm up for 'Shepherd of the Week' next year. You know, You could probably just give me a little bit of time. You know, my father-in-law is really starting to like me. Things are going well. I have been really getting into a good flow with the shepherding thing. I've kind of figured out how things are rolling now. You could probably just leave me right here." And He says, "Moses, I want to disrupt your pattern to do what it is that I need you to do."

Now, when we talk about call and we talk about purpose, it's very important for us to understand that in the Scripture there are certain things that every believer is called to do. Every believer is called to evangelize. You can't say, "Well, I feel that God really hasn't called me to share my faith." No... you don't get to do that. Why? ...Because we have the Scripture. Everything that is in the Scripture that's commanded to us, that is a call on every believer's life. We are all called to evangelize. We are all called to make disciples. Every one of us is called to live a life of holiness, according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. All of us are called to those things. But there come times when God will give a particular purpose to you. Through His Holy Spirit, through the Word, and through prayer, He will show you, "I am leading you into this particular manifestation of those things." So, we're all called to evangelize, make disciples, etc. He will say, "Now, I want you to do those things for Me, in this particular context." He will say, "I want you to do this job for Me." Now, it's important for us to know... God will never ask us to do something in contradiction to His Word because God's Word is in line with God's character. So, if people come to me and they say, "God called me to do "X" and "Y" and it goes up against the Bible, we say, "Well, that's not possible because God would never contradict His Word." However, if it is in line with God's Word and it goes along with the call that He has already given every believer, then guess what? If you're feeling that and you're struggling with it, there's a good chance that God might be calling you, disrupting your patterns, giving you something else to do because the God of the Bible is about interrupting what it is that we're doing, to do what it is that He wants us to do. Have you ever noticed that in the Bible God never ever goes to someone and says, "Just keep doing exactly what you're doing, in exactly the way that you are doing it, and everything is going to be great." He always says, "I want to require radical change out of you." Why? Why does God work in that way? ...Because in those moments His glory is demonstrated... when we do things differently. Big massive undertakings like taking out the people of Israel with no training, no expectation, a dishonored individual... why would that even be possible? ...Because God says, "This is what I want." When He does that... people go, "Whoa! God is working in that person's life."

3. He Provides (3:14)

After He gives this particular purpose... now this is interesting... He moves us from the spiritual couch and says, "Now I want you to do this." If you notice that Moses immediately, because he is a spiritual giant, he has five excuses that he gives God. (Laughter) He says, "I don't know if You know this, Lord... first of all, who am I? I mean, I am nobody." The Lord says, "Don't worry about, it; I'll be with you. I will give you Myself." "Hmmm... That's a pretty good one. Okay. Well, who are You? I mean... we just met just a few seconds ago, and you're talking to me out of a burning bush. Are you really a reputable God that I could follow?" And He says, "I AM WHO I AM, and I will be who I will be. So, yeah; you're going to be with Me." "Okay... yeah... that seems pretty good. Well... What if they don't believe me? I show up there and they're not going to believe me. What's going to happen then?" He says, "I tell you what. If they don't believe you then what you're going to do is this: I am going to give you signs, and you're going to have this ability to have your staff turn into a snake, and you're going to have the ability to have the water from the Nile turn into blood. I am going to give you all these things that you need." "Well, Lord... I don't personally have the ability; I mean, I'm not really a good speaker." "Well don't worry; I'm the One who made the mouth in the first place, so I'll make yours work." And then Moses says what I believe is really the

truthful and honest excuse. He gives five but I think the first four are just building up to the last one. This is what he says in chapter 4 verse 13... I think maybe the verse that is my life verse... "But he said, 'Oh my Lord; please send somebody else.'" (Laughter) Has anybody here ever said, "Lord, please send somebody else!" Yeah... We don't want to go. He's saying, "Who am I?... Who are You?... I don't have the ability... They're not going to believe me." Why is Moses saying all of those things? ...Because he doesn't want to go. And God says, "I will take care of every need that you have along the way." Your only job is to get up and do what I'm telling you. If God is calling you to do something that you believe you cannot do... then guess what? It probably is from God because He gives jobs that only He can do, so that He can provide. He wants to give you the things that you need for that task so that He can demonstrate that this job was never designed for you in the first place. It was designed for the God of the universe to fulfill. He wants you to know this job is too big. In Isaiah chapter 6, Isaiah has a vision and finds himself in the throne room of the Lord. He says, "The train of the Lord filled the entire room." He has a vision and he sees angels there, and they're taking coals and they're purifying his mouth. And he says, "Wow... I am unclean. I don't deserve any of this." Then he hears a voice from the Lord, and the voice says, "Who will go and whom shall we send?" and Isaiah says, "Here am I; send me." Samuel hears from the Lord and over and over and continually goes to Eli and says, "Here I am... Here I am." Finally Eli understands that the Lord is speaking to Samuel, and he says, "You tell the Lord the next time He speaks, 'Here I am.'"

You see, the challenge... the charge... that's given to the people of God is that when God calls, our instinct is Exodus 4:13... "Oh Lord, please send somebody else." But the answer of Samuel and of Isaiah stands in stark contrast: "Here I am Lord; send me." When you are called, even though you don't feel that you have the things that you need for the job, God gives them so that you might know that He will provide.

George Muller, an incredible man of faith, has written these incredible prayer diaries and planted orphanages across England in the 19th century. He famously declared that he would never go and ask for funds for his orphanages, but he would only pray that he would believe... that he would trust that God would show up and provide the things that he needed. There was this incredible story in his diary of prayer. He says that that morning they sat down at the table and all the orphans, the children, were there at the table. They were ready for breakfast, and they prayed for the breakfast. They said, "Lord, thank you for this food we are about to have, thank you that You always provide, and thank you for taking care of us." What Muller knew but none of the children knew was that there wasn't a stitch of food in the kitchen. They were praying for food that was not on the table. As they said "Amen," Muller writes in his diary that a knock came at the kitchen door, and the neighborhood baker stopped by and said, "I just had a sense that you might need some things for the children today." And he brought him some bread.

4. He claims. (4:24)

Our God is a God who provides just in time, all the time, and the reason that He does it is so that you will quit deluding yourself into believing that you have anything to do with your provision, but it all comes from Him. And He wants you to know that, yes, the task that is set before you of making disciples to all nations is way too big. Yes, He wants you to know that whatever particular task He might be calling you to do feels daunting and impossible to do with the skillset that you currently have in your own life. He wants you to understand and know that so then, therefore, when He gives you what you need, you cannot take the credit but instead you say, "God alone provides." (Clapping) ...And that is the way that the call of God operates. You will never have everything in your hand when God calls. Listen... you're never ready to get married, you're never ready to have kids, and you are never ready to be obedient when God calls you. But guess what? He gives you what you need anyway. He gives it to you in that moment. The reason that God calls is

so that He can provide for you what you need, when you need it, so that you can stop saying, "Hey, look how great I am," and instead you can say, "Look how great my God truly, truly is."

So then we get to maybe the most puzzling verse in the entire Book of Exodus... Chapter 4, verse 24: "At a lodging place on the way, the Lord sought to kill Moses." Does this seem like a bad strategy to anyone besides me? (Laughter) "Well, I've called him and I'm going to give him everything he needs. Now I'm going to kill him... That's going to be great." I mean, what's that about? Is that weird to you?

I was very grateful this week; a man in our church, Dave Bell, sent me an article that he had been recently exposed to from Dallas Theological Seminary that was sort of an exegesis of this passage. I am very thankful for that. It made a great point. It said that in this passage, the reason that the Lord is revealing Himself to kill Moses, is actually for a couple of very interesting reasons. First of all, Moses apparently had not circumcised his son. Now at this point you remember that this was a covenant people, and this was a covenant sign. In Genesis chapter 12, God had called Abraham and He said, "I'm going to make you into a great nation, but the sign that I want you to use is this; I want you to always circumcise the males of your tribe, and that will be a physical distinguishment between you and all other people that you are set apart... that you are My people... and you will do that." For whatever reason, Moses had not done that. Now, there's a lot of scholarly conjecture that Zipporah was the reason that Moses had not done that because Zipporah his wife was raised in Midian. She was probably a polytheist. She probably was not very familiar with this concept... with this tradition... and so she had rebuffed it and said, "We're not going to do that." So the Lord forced her hand and appeared as if He was going to kill Moses. Zipporah understood that if she did not relent to the covenant that God wanted, then she would lose her husband. So apparently, only seen by Zipporah, she then circumcises her son, and the wrath is taken away. Why does that matter? It matters because God wants Moses and his family, when they do this task, to be doing the task in His Name. God doesn't need Moses to bring the people out of Egypt. Do you know what I mean? All God has to do is just flick His finger and all of the Egyptians are wiped out and the Israelites can walk out. God does not need Moses to do this. God can do whatever He wants to do. But what God desires is to use Moses to accomplish this task. The thing is that God doesn't want the task to be accomplished unless it is accomplished in order to declare that the Lord is the One who did it; therefore, He needs to bring Moses and his family into the covenant. Even Zipporah, who didn't want to be part of that covenant, has to be brought along. "Listen up. If we're going to do this, this has to be done in My Name. I'm the One who called. I'm the One who provides. I'm the One who tells you what you're going to do, so therefore you will do this in My Name."

I think that sometimes we convince ourselves, particularly in the 21st-century church, that we're doing stuff to help God out. Nah! What we are doing is being obedient vessels. Sometimes people will say, "Well, you know, I just want to do this or I want to do that because I feel that God is calling me to do that." Listen. It's good whenever God is calling you, but this is an important word for us, I think. We cannot simply do what God calls us to do. We must do what God calls us to do in His Name. Think about that. Jesus says, "Whoever brings a cup of cold water... In My Name..." There's this sense in which it's not just doing the task itself... it's not just doing the good thing itself, but there is something to the fact that while it would be very good for the Israelites to be brought out of Egypt... they must be brought out of Egypt understanding that the one who is the deliverer is sent in the Name of the Lord and is in the covenant presence of the Lord. So, therefore, whenever God calls you "Forgive this person" or "Lead this particular group" or "Disciple this particular individual" or "Do this act of obedience"... whatever that is, you don't just do the thing itself, but you do it in His Name because He has staked a claim on His people. I want you to think about this. This is a crazy, crazy truth: God has picked a people. I mean, think about that. That's mind-

blowing. It's baffling. That is a story of all stories. God has chosen some people and here's the crazy thing: You're part of it; He picked you. When He chose you, He called you. From before the foundations of the earth, He chose you and He called you. But He didn't do it just so that you could keep that to yourself or so that you could be an anonymous disciple. He did it so that you could do it in His Name, in His covenant, in His way... so that you would bear His mark. So the covenant of circumcision is not the covenant that's on the Church; now it's the covenant that's given at the cross and the covenant that's given in the empty tomb. But still the truth remains that we do so in order to bring glory to Him and not to us.

5. To Create Worshipers. (4:31)

This really brings us to the conclusion about this call. We get to the end of chapter 4 and it says, *"Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. 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 worshipped."* I want you to hear me. There is one reason why God always calls. There's one reason... always... when God calls anyone. It's always to make worshippers. It's always the reason that God calls. Always. If God is calling you today, you are a person who is not a person of faith but you have been feeling the draw of the Holy Spirit, God is moving in your life... He's bringing you into Him; you've been kicking against it... fighting against it this whole time. Guess what? He is bringing you near for one reason... so that you will give Him glory, not yourself. That's why He's doing it. If you are already in the Kingdom of God and God is calling you to do a particular task for His Kingdom... He is challenging you, "Forgive this person," "Disciple this person," "Start a Bible study in your office," "Do something in your neighborhood," "Carry My Name in this particular way"... whatever it is that God is challenging you to do, He is not doing it so that people will care about you. He is doing it so that people will become worshippers of Him. God is always out to get more fame for His Name. That is the way that the Lord operates.

In his book "Let The Nations Be Glad," John Piper, in the very first chapter... I think it's the second or third sentence... It's an incredible sentence. This is what he says: "Missions exists because worship doesn't." I'm going to say that again. "Missions exists because worship doesn't." The reason that we have to tell people about Jesus... missions... the reason that exists is because those people are not worshipping Jesus. That is it. God's ultimate goal... God's ultimate purpose is to bring all of the nations under His name, and every person in heaven, under heaven, on the earth... to then declare to God, "You alone, Father, are great." He's the One who wants all of that glory for Himself. He wants that because He's ultimate. He's it. He wants worshippers. Our job in our own life is to be a worshipper, and what our job is when we're called is to make worshippers. So therefore it is not accidental that at the conclusion of chapter 4, the people believed when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that He had seen their affliction. They bowed their heads and they worshipped because that is what God desires. It is for the people not to say, "Man... that Moses... He's pretty incredible stuff!" No. The Lord desires that the people then worship... that they give everything that they have back to the Lord. You see, whenever we stand up and preach and we teach in our own context, there are particular issues that we're concerned about. Right? I mean, a lot of hot-button issues in our day and age, and we'll speak about those very regularly. We'll say, "This is what the Bible has to say about this. This is what the Bible has to say about that." And we do that in order to speak to our age, to make certain that people in our context understand what we're about. In Moses' time, whenever the Book of Exodus was written, there were just, as in our day, cultural issues that arose.

Did you ever read Greek mythology? Do you remember that back whenever you were in high school and you had to read those myths? Do you remember that a lot of times the Greek gods would call on a person to have a quest, and the quest was almost always used for one of two reasons? One... to demonstrate that a person was worthy... or, two... they would go on this quest so that the gods would give them favor or blessing. Right? So they would either go on this quest to demonstrate their worthiness, or they would go on this quest so that they would be blessed. Let me tell you the crazy thing about the Exodus and the crazy thing about God giving Moses the covenant in the first place is this... are you ready for this? It doesn't matter if Moses fails; God has already chosen him anyway. Think about how different that is. Do you see that? You don't have to complete the quest and then God loves you. Right? You don't have to do the job and then God gives you favor. No. God gives Moses His favor, He chooses him, He brings him into the covenant... He declares, "I am already with you."

Listen, friends. Today, you don't have to do anything else for God to love you any more, receive you any more. He has already done that. But guess what? In spite of that, He still will call us on the way. Why? ...Because the point of our quest, of our adventure in faith, is not to demonstrate that I am worthy or that you are worthy or that this church is worthy. The reason that we do this is to do one thing... to demonstrate that He is worthy. That's the whole purpose of this entire thing. God is not basing the amount of love and affection that He gives us on our performance. Thank God for that! ...Because if it was based on my performance, I would be in a lot of trouble. However, God is saying, "I have chosen you. I have graced you. I have given you the cross. Now, because I have chosen you and graced you, I now ask you to go on your way and do these things, and you will bring glory to Me through your obedience. So therefore you can rest and you can say, "Wow... so you mean I don't have to save the world?" No, because you would be terrible at it. You couldn't do it if you wanted to anyway. So therefore you can rest and say, "I don't have to save the world; I just have to be obedient to whatever it is that God wants me to do."

A lot of people look at the methods that God chooses and they say, "That's a really bad method." The method is not there so that you can improve upon God's efficiency. The method is there to bring attention and glory to His Name. So all of this... this entire calling... all of this Exodus... all of this is designed to bring the people of Israel to the point where they say, "There's one God, His Name is the Lord, and we give Him all glory." In our context, the purpose is this: We have been called by God in Jesus Christ to walk and to make disciples and to be faithful to Him... not so that He will love us more, not so that He will give us stuff, not so that He will bless us... none of that stuff. The reason that we do it is so that therefore at the end of the day people do not say, "Man, that Steve Bezner is great." They say, "Jesus is incredible and look at what He is doing in that church." That's why we do this. So, I encourage you... walk in faithfulness and obedience but never once... never once delude yourself into believing that it has one iota to do with your name, but always point people back to the One who gave you deliverance... back to the One who provided... back to the One who saved. He alone is worthy of glory. Amen and amen. (Clapping)

So we come now to a time where we're going to respond, and this is what's going to happen. Some of us in this room, we need to say "Yes" to Jesus. I mean, we're just feeling it. We've been running from it and today is your day. You're not leaving here until you say "Yes" to Him. There is no reason for you to leave today without saying "Yes" to Jesus. Some of us, God has been calling us to do some things, and we are a lot like Moses. "Oh God, please send somebody else." Today, "Oh God, please send somebody else" turns into "Here I am; send me." So whatever God is calling you to do, today is your day to say "Yes". So let's do this right now. I just want to pray over you and we're going to respond. Let's bow our heads. First of all, I want to ask... nobody looking around... every head is bowed and every eye is closed. I want to ask you this. If you're here today and you say "Today I've really been feeling like God is telling me to say 'Yes'

to Jesus Christ but I haven't done it... today's my day but I'm scared." Would you just raise your hand so that we can see you. We want to pray over you right now. Anybody out there say, "Today's my day"? I see one right there. Anybody else? There's another one over there. Anybody else? I see two. There's the third one. Anybody else? Okay, I'm going to pray for you three right now. "Lord, I pray for these right now that are struggling. God, I pray that right now You would give them the courage to say 'Yes' to You. God, do not let them leave here without dealing with the conviction that You've placed in their heart." Okay, anybody here who says "God's calling me to do something. I don't want to do it, but I know that He is telling me." I want to pray for you. Would you raise your hand right now. There's a lot of them going up. Others? I want to pray over you. "Father, a lot of hands are up right now. I just pray that You would let these people know that right now is the time that You want to work in their heart, so Father I pray that today they would say 'Yes' and they surrender to You. God, I pray all of this in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen."