

Exodus

Sermon #3: God Calling

Exodus 3-4

Dr. Matt Cassidy ---- September 1, 2024

Hello—Good morning, Grace Covenant Church! Hey, we are on our third weekend of our study of the epic called the Exodus. We're seeing a lot about God's will and being surrendered to that.

This is about God's calling. You can even think about it literally. Have you ever been at a social event or even a business meeting and you get a phone call and you look and think, *Oh, I'd better answer this?* That's what we're talking about today—God calling us.

And by the way, since we're going through the Book of Exodus, just as a reminder, on September 22, if you don't know, save the date. We'll be studying the Passover that morning. And then we'll enjoy a Passover/communion meal that night with a night of worship. So, if you'll put that on your calendar, it will be starting around 6:30.

As we're looking at this section of Scripture right now, it's mostly been about Moses. Moses' first forty years were spent growing up as a prince of Egypt. And his adult life is known for this story, that he's defending a fellow Hebrew from an Egyptian, kills that Egyptian, buries him, and is found out.

Now the storyline we're looking at in chapter 3 and 4 is the calling of Moses. He's been a shepherd, a fugitive, for forty years, living out in the desert.

Meanwhile, while all this is taking place, God is working quietly and behind the scenes. Chapter 3, God moves to the forefront and it's going to start getting loud. Chapters 3 and 4 of Exodus are often referred to as "the call of Moses." But it's actually a call from God. God initiates this call. And it is this call that Moses better answer. *I better get this.*

Every Follower Receives Two Callings

Now the reason that I think this is important for us to study is because every follower of Jesus Christ has received two callings: a calling for salvation and a calling for ministry.

The calling for salvation is God dialing, calling us, and we start off by minding our own business, and then all of a sudden, we're longing for something more. We're looking for a purpose, or maybe we're crushed by the cost of our decisions—sin. And then we hear the call, this “Come and follow me and I will take your ordinary life and I will make it extraordinary.” It's the call of salvation.

But there's also a call to ministry. Every follower of Jesus Christ is expected to be a servant of the King. It says you need to be salt and light in the world around you. *You are my ambassadors*. You are called to be ministers to our church, business, neighborhood. Everywhere we go we are bringing the message from God.

And when God calls us---I'll tell you this—in ministry, particularly, when you feel like God is nudging you to talk to someone or do something bold, it's too scary and uncomfortable and costly, and sometimes even dangerous. So, we fear.

Today we're going to look at a beautiful passage that helps us. Because when we feel God's Spirit giving us these gentle nudges to do something that, generally, we don't want to do, we'd better answer these callings. We better answer this call.

Moses' Encounter with God

The story itself—chapter 3. If you had asked Moses, “What are you doing out here in the desert, Moses?” he'd say, “Wasting my life.” It's another ordinary day for this shepherd, and from God's point of view, it's not a waste, because Moses needed to learn some shepherding skills. And Moses needed to learn some humility.

So, it's graduation day, and now God is entering this story on an ordinary day. Chapter 3, verse 1 says: “Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert”—in the middle of nowhere. “He came to Horeb, the mountain of God”---also known as Mount Sinai.

Exodus 3:2-3

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

Verse 2: “And the angel of the Jehovah appeared to him in flames of fire from a bush. And Moses saw that the bush was on fire but that it was not consumed”—not burnt up. “And so, Moses thought, ‘I’ll go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.’”

“And then Jehovah saw that he had gone over to the bush, and spoke and said, ‘Moses, Moses.’ And Moses said, ‘Here I am.’”

“‘Do not come any closer,’ God said. ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.’ Then He said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’”

“At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.”

This is Moses’ first real encounter with God. And look how Jehovah sets the tone. He sets the tone immediately, and the tone is, “You are in the holy of holies here.” He gives him two commandments. Don’t come any farther—literally, don’t take another step. The second commandment is for him to take off his sandals, because that common dirt is now holy ground.

Even the phrase “the angel of the Lord” literally means God himself. God is in that bush. And how does He display His grandeur and His holiness? It’s not the first time and it won’t be the last time, but it’s with fire. God is showing himself and His nature with fire.

A great Hebrew scholar, Alec Motyer, says that this is Moses’ conversion experience. Up until this point, Moses believes in God. But now He’s experiencing God. So it is with the nature of fire itself. It is beautiful and it’s terrifying. We want to bring fire into our home, maybe even into our bedroom. *Let’s put a little fireplace there in our bedroom. I hope and pray that it doesn’t burn our house to the ground.* There’s something about fire: it overwhelms most of our senses. Sometimes it’s too bright to even look at. It’s very difficult to feel without getting burned. The smell of the smoke will kill us. And sometimes it will sweeten the air. And then, we can hear the roar of the fire when it’s out of control.

That's how God is making himself known with this fire. It's an experience. You don't believe in fire until you have experienced it.

**In the year of grace, 1654, on Monday, 23rd of November ...
from about half past ten in the evening until about half past twelve.
FIRE!**

**The God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of the
philosophers and savants. Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace.
... Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy. ... This is eternal life, that they might
know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has
sent.**

--- Blaise Pascal

Blaise Pascal, a seventeenth philosopher and scientist, had an experience with God. He used to believe in God. Then one night—fire. He wrote in his journal about this experience, and he sewed that journal into his jacket. It would be with him at all times. No one knew about it until his death. Here's part of what it said: "In the year of grace, 1654, on Monday, 23rd of November ... from about half past ten in the evening until about half past twelve. FIRE! The God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of the philosophers and savants. Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace ... joy, joy, joy, tears of joy. This is eternal life, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent."

That's Pascal's story. He went from believing in the god of the philosophers to having an encounter with God, an experience with God, that changed his entire life from ordinary to the extraordinary. Everyone is supposed to have that calling to call themselves followers of Jesus Christ. Let me say it this way. You might believe that Jesus died for you. But if you haven't experienced what that does ... maybe you're almost there. Or if you're just curious about the difference between believing in God and experiencing God, we'd love to talk to you about that. If this is something that hasn't happened to you, you should talk to someone at the church, or maybe the person with whom you came here. But you can let us know at the visitor's desk, or go

online and contact us, and we'll have someone talk to you. This is what it means to experience God. This is the conversion call.

Well, His first words to Moses were about the holiness of God. And the second words that God says to Moses are, "I'm the God of your father Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And He's saying, *I'm the God who makes promises and keeps promises. I'm the God who's making your life part of this bigger story. This is a God story, Moses. And I'm fulfilling the promises I made.*

A. The VALUE of Jehovah

God is entering in a very bold way now because it's His story.

In the next section, I want you to look and maybe count how many times God is going to use the first-person pronoun, the word "I." God's going to take responsibility for this story, because it is His story. He uses the word "my" because it all belongs to Him. This is His story.

Exodus 3:7-9

The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.

Verses 7 through 9 say, "And then Jehovah says, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites'—the

land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. “And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.”

B. The MEANS of Jehovah

God sees this. God is concerned with this. God is going to fix this. And how is God going to do that? What are the means? He’s going to call Moses.

Exodus 3:10

So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.

Moses needs to get this. So, in verse 10, He says, “So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” When God calls, it’s quite often scary and uncomfortable and costly and dangerous, no doubt.

And one cool thing about this story is what I want to spend our time focusing on. What is wonderful about this story and what I want us to spend our time focusing on is that God understands that. And God wants us to bring our concerns and our fears to His attention. *Bring them. What are your questions? Ask away.*

So, as we’re looking through this passage, I want you to see how Moses is going to respond to the call. And I think many of us are going to say, “Well, I can relate to that.” And then, look how God responds. Look how He answers to that. That’s the outline of the next several verses.

1. Self-Doubt: “Who Am I?”

So, the first doubt that Moses has is self-doubt. He says, “Who am I?” And God comes back and says, “Don’t be afraid. I’ll be with. You.”

Exodus 3:11-12

But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

¹² And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

Verse 11: “But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’” That’s where we all start, isn’t it? *Who am I to do this?*

And then in verse 12, “And God said, ‘I will be with you. And this will be a sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will bring them to worship God right here on this very mountain.’”

I don’t know if you saw it. You’re going to see it over and over again—did you catch it? Five times God says, “I.” Three times God says, “My people.” *I’m going to set them free. Moses, I’m going to send you on this errand.*

And Moses says, “Who am I? But who am I?” Moses is saying, *I can’t do this.* And God says, *Yeah, I know. You’re not going to. This is my story. You’re just going to be an errand boy.* He says, *I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I’ll be right here.* And that’s His proof: *You’re going to bring these people right back to this very same mountain.*

Know this absolute truthful principle, Grace. I mean, write it down. You’re going to see that when God calls, when He gives us these nudges to act out on faith that are uncomfortable, sometimes costly and sometimes dangerous; He’s going to follow that call with an “I’ll be with you.” From cover to cover, from beginning to end of the Bible, you’ll see God challenging people in a call to do something. And He’ll say, “Be strong and courageous.” And then the next sentence is “I will be with you.” The call is followed by a promise of His presence. I will be there.

And one of the ways we can apply this—how do we keep in mind the very presence of God when we’re acting according to His will? Personally, I need help. I need something to remind me that I’m not alone. So, when you’re walking into your office, when you’re ringing a neighbor’s doorbell, maybe asking them to join you for something—a meal or a trip to the church—you’ve got to do something to remind yourself that you’re not alone.

When I started preaching years ago, my stage fright was not manageable. And one of the ways that I was able to overcome my stage fright is that I would start by looking for an empty seat. And that's where Jesus was sitting. I preached to Him. Hopefully, He liked what I was saying.

There have been seasons in my life that were exceptionally difficult, and I carried this little token with me. [*Pulls small wooden cross out of his pocket.*] It's one of those crosses I got in Bethlehem. It's just there to remind me that I'm following up on what God is asking me to do, but who am I? I don't know. He says, *I am with you.*

There's a ministry at Grace that is a knitting ministry, oddly enough. And they knit prayer coverings, prayer blankets, for people who are going into surgery. If you're going to have surgery, let the Care Ministry know, because when you're in pre-op in that freezing bed with nothing but a piece of toilet paper on you, you can lay this blanket over yourself, and it covers you in the presence of God. Are you afraid? The answer is that God is present.

2. Ignorance: "Who Are You?"

Moses has another problem. He says, "I am ignorant." He says, "Well, who are you, God?" So, in verse 13: "Moses says to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites ...'---that's his audience---"and I say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and then they ask me, "What's His name?" What am I supposed to tell them?"

Not only is Moses doubting himself, but he thinks everybody else doubts his abilities, and rightfully so. The last words he hears from his fellow Hebrews before he's chased out of Egypt were, "Who made you ruler over us?" And he's going to hear that again.

Exodus 3:14

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

And so, God answers the question with, "Well, I'll teach you." Moses says, "What's your name?" And here's God's response: "God said to Moses, 'I AM who I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: "I AM has sent me to you.'"

Exodus 3:15

God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘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, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.”

“God also said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites, “Jehovah, Yahweh, the LORD”---see how it’s in all capital letters? That’s His formal name—“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, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.”

What is your name?

I AM that I AM. Tell them I AM.

When God calls us and we feel inadequate, and we don’t know what the answer’s going to be, He says, *I’ll provide the answers for that. I can help you.* Honestly, that’s one of the purposes of the local church. One of the things that we do here at Grace Covenant Church is guide people to become like Christ at work, in marriage, in your social lives, how to obey all that He’s commanded you. In your ministries that are about to be, He’s here to teach you through the church.

And I’d like to spend a bit of time on “I AM that I AM.” It’s called “the great I AM.” That’s His formal name. It’s extremely difficult to translate from the Hebrew. The short version is just the verb “to be.” The idea is that God is saying, *My name is ... I’m a being itself. I am independent. I am dependent on nothing, and everything is dependent on me. I am self-sufficient. And yet, I also power every electron.*

C. S. Lewis wrote this—when he’s translating this passage, he says, “I am me, I am myself, and all that passes between.”

He stands alone. If you’re familiar with the philosophical proofs of the existence of God, He would be saying, *I’m the end-cause cause. I am the unmoved mover. I don’t have a beginning. I’ve always been.* That’s what He’s saying.

And then in this passage, He goes on to explain how He's the director of all of history. And He's answering Moses' question, *What am I supposed to do when they don't believe that I'm the messenger from You?* God says, *I'm the director, and I wrote this story.* And God himself shows up by saying, *Look, here's the script of what's going to happen. So, go and tell the elders.*

This is chapter and verse. *We're going to go before the Pharaoh, it's not going to go well, it's all part of the plan. I'm going to come and rescue, it's all part of the plan. You'll be back on this mountain to worship me.* He's showing himself to not have just foreknowledge, but the power to make this plan work.

This section of Scripture right here—know this, Grace—write this down---the God who calls you and me with gentle nudges, speaking to our conscience, trying to move us to go from here to there—this passage is clear. The God we're hearing is Yahweh, Jehovah, the great I AM, God Almighty. And these nudges, these calls—we'd better take this call. He is the maker and the ruler of all things, the seen and even the unseen. And He chose you. And now He's calling you to do some ministry for Him, for His glory. He will do the work. You just need to follow. And He's going to send you places that are scary and uncomfortable, sometimes costly, and even dangerous. But look what we have so far in our outline. He is with us. He will never leave us or forsake us. And He's doing the hard work. It is Yahweh, the I AM, who is preceding us.

3. "How Can I Know? How Can Anyone Know?"

Well, Moses has more concerns, and maybe we would too, when God sends us to places, and we can understand that. So, the third protest that he has is, "How can I know?" I mean, how can anyone know?

Exodus 4:1

Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?'"

Now we're in chapter 4, verse 1: "Moses answered, 'What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, "The I AM did not appear to you?"'" *You've never had an experience with Yahweh.*

And I love how God answers this. He answers it with a show of power. And when we look at this section of Scripture sometimes, we say, *Wow, this is a God of miracles!* And God provides three miracles, three signs, for Moses, so that he can show other people he's been in the presence of the most holy God.

Exodus 4:2-3

Then the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?”

“A staff,” he replied.

3 The LORD said, “Throw it on the ground.”

Verse 2: “And then Jehovah said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’

“‘A common staff,’ he replied.

“And then Jehovah said, ‘Throw it on the ground.’”

And so, Moses throws it on the ground, and it becomes a live and living snake. And what I like is that it says that Moses runs from the snake, which is the only thing he does right in this whole two chapters. He runs from the snake.

And then Yahweh says, “Grab this thing by the tail,” which Moses does. And immediately it returns to being a staff. And God says, “If they don’t believe that, do this. Put your hand inside your cloak.” He pulls it out and it’s leprous—death itself. He tells Moses, “Put the hand back in.” He pulls it back out and it’s like all the rest of his skin.

And then Jehovah says, “If they don’t believe the first or the second miracle, do this. Grab some water out of the Nile River, pour it out on dry land. And before it hits that dirt, it will be blood. And they’ll know then.”

Moses says, “How can I be sure? How can anyone be sure?”

And He says, “Let me give you three”—in our vocabulary—“God stories.” Let me give you three God stories that will be memorable. It will become lore for your family and for forever.

I want you to know that God is still doing miracles. He’s still trying to show you that He’s the one behind the great works that are going on in your life. Ask for a miracle. If He’s called you to do something uncomfortable, scary, costly, maybe even dangerous—“I could use a little help here, God. Could You just give me a sign that it’s definitely You?” Before you take a

job, something that big, or buy a house, something that expensive, or go in and share your faith, say, “God, prove to me that You are with me and that this is part of Your story, that You’re doing the hard work.”

When Melinda and I moved here a long time ago to start a church in 1986, it was the worst time in Austin’s history. So after three years of failure, we were living hand-to-mouth, and I was desperate. And I applied for a job at another church here in Austin. I think that was on a Wednesday at their Wednesday night meeting. And then that weekend I was teaching at this huge Baptist youth camp. And Melinda and I prayed, “God, what are we supposed to do? If I get a job offer, should I take that job offer or not?” We said, “We’ll pray about it over the weekend. I’ve got to go down to south Texas to do this camp.”

On the third day of teaching Walk Thru the Bible, it was night, and this older man came down and sat right next to me—just the two of us. He was a perfect stranger. He said, “Well, Matt, what are you going to do with your life?”

I said, “So far, wasted. I don’t understand what’s happening.” I told him about the interview.

He just listened for a long time. And then he just paused and looked right at me and said, “I’ve been a trial lawyer for thirty years. I’ve never lost a case with a jury. It’s because I understand people. And I want you to know that I understand who you are in this brief time. Don’t take that job. Just wait. If something doesn’t come up, you can even call me. But don’t take that job.”

I ran to the phone, woke up Melinda, and said, “We’re not going to take that job if it’s offered.”

God was miraculously intervening. Two weeks later I’m teaching a Sunday school class at a church that was a better fit for me. You might have heard of it—Grace Covenant Church? God intervened.

God is eager to give you a miracle to give you courage, to let you know that He’s with you and He’s the one doing all the heavy lifting.

4. "I can't talk. I Am Inadequate."

Exodus 4:10

Moses said to the LORD, "O 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."

Well, Moses has a fourth excuse. "I can't even talk. I'm not adequate." Verse 10 says, "Moses said to Jehovah, 'O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past or since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.'"

It's still about Moses, isn't it? I, I, I ...

Exodus 4:11-12

The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now go; I will help you to speak and will teach you what to say."

And God comes back and says, "It's not your work." Verses 11 and 12: "Jehovah said to him, 'Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, Jehovah? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.'"

Moses says, "I can't do this." And Yahweh comes back and says, "Do you know who's calling you? You should answer this. I made everyone. I'm going to go ahead of you. I'm going to bring about provisions for you. I'm going to cause people to have dreams or nightmares before you even have a conversation about Christ with them. You're not doing the hard work. It's not your story." God says, "It's my story. Just surrender."

The battle belongs to the Lord. The ministry belongs to the Lord. That's the theme of the calling. The battle, the ministry, belongs to the Lord. And Moses keeps making it about him and his inadequacies.

5. Moses Refuses God's Call

Exodus 4:13

But Moses said, “O Lord, please send someone else to do it.”

His fifth protest is, “No, I’m done. I don’t want to go.” So, he refuses God’s call. “But Moses said, ‘O Lord, please send someone else to do this.’” No matter what God says—*I’m bringing you my presence, I’m going to teach you, I’m going to give you miracles, I have all the power to make this work*—Moses says, “Send someone else.”

It’s all about Moses and all about his limitations. He’s missing the director and the writer and the sovereign God, because he’s focusing on something that’s too scary, too uncomfortable, too costly, or maybe even too dangerous. And as you might imagine, this is not a question that has an answer, in some respects.

Exodus 4:14-17

Then the LORD’s anger burned against Moses and He said, “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. ¹⁵ You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. ¹⁶ He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. ¹⁷ But take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it.”

And so, in verse 14: “And then Jehovah’s anger burned against Moses and he said, ‘What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. But take

this staff”—don’t forget the staff!—” ‘in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it.’”

Please call someone else.

And Yahweh says, *But I’m calling you. You should take this call.*

And so, in God’s mercy, He encourages Moses one last time by saying, *I’m going to bring you a co-laborer.* He does that with us, doesn’t He, in places where we feel like we are still too overwhelmed because we’re focusing on ourselves? And God says, *I’m going to send you a beautiful wife or husband so you can go through this journey of ministry. I’m going to send you a coworker so that you’re not the only person at work. You can pray together for the men and women around you. You have a co-neighbor that is in on this understanding of ministry, and you guys can serve your neighborhood together.*

This is a beautiful expression of God just tolerating Moses and using soft determinism, a pretty strong nudge, to get Moses to do what he would want to do. We all receive a call. We all have a call to salvation, we have a call to ministry. And even in the general overarching call to ministry—you can see this in Matthew 28—Jesus is answering our objections even when He’s talking. *Well, who am I?* His disciples seem to say to Jesus when He says, “Go to all the nations.” He starts by saying, “All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth.” So, you should just take this call and obey it.

I just feel like I don’t have the credentials, I don’t feel qualified.

Well, yeah, you shouldn’t, because you’re going to be doing this with the authority and in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Well, I don’t know what to do. How do we do what You’re asking us to do?

Even in the Great Commission, He’s saying, *You don’t have to write the truth. You just teach them to obey all the things I taught you. I came up with all the truth. I got that part. Just guide them to become like Christ in all of life.* And ultimately, when you read Matthew 28, in the last paragraph that Matthew records in the words of Jesus, you’re still afraid, because it’s uncomfortable and scary and sometimes costly and even dangerous.

And so He ends the call—before He hangs up He says, “And lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the age.” *Don’t be afraid. I’ll be there. And I’ll be bringing all my power with that—* even our general call.

God’s calling. You should answer that.

What's interesting is there's a theology of calling throughout the Bible. And with each one there are absolutely a lot of unique details experienced by those men and women. But there are two common attributes that all the callings have. One of them, the theme of today, is that it's not about you, it's not about me; it's God's story, and He's doing the work. One of the themes in each conversation He has is that salvation belongs to the Lord. The battle belongs to the Lord. It's God's story. And Yahweh, the great I AM who is bigger and stronger than our inadequacies, our fears, our hesitations, our lack of talent—I don't know if you've heard lately, but He loves, loves, loves to work with underdogs and retread—damaged goods. He specializes in that because they make Him look especially good.

The second common attribute of these calls throughout the Bible is how ordinary the people and circumstances are. And then God invades it, and it's extraordinary. Just in our story today God shows up and everything changes. I mean, it's just another day of a shepherd and it's the day that changed human history. It's just a bush, but now it's on fire and cannot be extinguished. It houses the very presence of the holiness of God. The dirt itself is now not common; it is holy ground. The staff—*don't forget your staff—that's not just a prop anymore; that belongs to me.* And ordinary shepherd become Moses.

Here's something to ponder. We can project this on Moses and then redirect it to our own souls. Think about this. Let's just pretend for a moment that God acquiesces. After these five protests God says, "Fine, I'll find somebody who will take this call." Now picture Moses on his deathbed a hundred years old or so, and he's thinking back. I'll tell you, it would be a deathbed of regret. He never had to fear anything, but he never had to face his fear. He never had ministry-related arguments with his wife (that happened); but he never got to reconcile those arguments and become more greatly attached than you can. (You can't do it any other way than to do ministry with your mate.) He never suffered soul-wrenching disappointment, but he never had a tear of joy. He lived safely. He's a pedestrian. He's a spectator. He's a lap cat. And he's not really human.

And I'll bet, lying on that bed—how does that go?—that he would trade every day from that day to this burning bush day just so that he could go back and say to the great I AM, "I'll take that call. Send me."

You don't want to live a life of regret, a life of complicit safety. Answer the call. He's going to take something common and he's going to make it miraculous. He's going to take

something ordinary and make it extraordinary. Can you hear the nudge, the whisper, the call? He's calling you to ministry. You better take that call.

Lord, the more I look at this, the more thrilled I am that we just play bit parts, and that You involve us in Your storyline; that You would choose to let us be involved. So, we celebrate this opportunity.

And Lord, we also acknowledge that You're asking us to do things that are uncomfortable, that are scary, that are costly, sometimes even dangerous. And as long as our little egos and frailties are at the center of our universe, we just keep making excuses of why we can't. Lord, I'd ask that You would help this story of Moses overcome those fears and help us remember that You are the center of our universe and You are the great I AM.

Lord, I'd ask that You would embolden this church and cause us to be courageous, because You're with us and You're doing the miracles. I'd ask that You'd speak loudly to us and that we would answer that call. And all God's people at Grace Covenant Church said Amen.