

Slide #	Scripture Text & Message [Slides in red]
	<p>Good morning. Normally at this time in the service, our Senior Pastor, Paul Wallace continues his expository preaching through scripture. Specifically, Wayside Bible Chapel is working through the Book of Revelation. However, this week, Pastor Paul and his incredible wife, Mariko are away on vacation. So, Revelation will resume next week with Chapter 7.</p> <p>My name is Dan Rawlins. I am one of the Elders at Wayside, and when Paul is away, the Elders take turns filling the pulpit. Last year, about this time, Paul and Mariko also took a vacation, and I had my first opportunity to preach a sermon. Today is my second chance to preach a sermon, and again, I ask you for an umbrella of mercy....</p> <p>Last year, we began an expository journey through the Book of Exodus and covered Chapters 1 and 2. This year, we will cover Chapter 3 and halfway through Chapter 4. At this rate, if I teach through two chapters of Exodus each April, and unless the Lord returns before then, we should finish the book of Exodus by the year 2053, just before my 99th birthday.</p> <p>In honor of God's Word, let's stand while we read Exodus 3:1-4</p>
1.	<p>¹ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² 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. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called out to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I Am." Exodus 3:1-4</p>
	<p>So here we are at one of the best-known encounters with God recorded in scripture. By way of review, let's consider how Moses came to be tending sheep at Mt. Horeb on the west side of the wilderness.</p> <p>In the 7th Chapter of the Book of Acts, Steven gives a defense of his faith before the Sanhedrin, and it includes a summary of the history of the nation of Israel. He describes how God appeared to Abraham and made a promise that from him would come a great nation that would live in a land God reserved for them. God repeated the promise to Isaac and Jacob, and then used Jacob's son, Joseph to bring the families of Jacob and his sons – 75 people in all -into Egypt to preserve them during a famine.</p> <p>What Steven then says about the first 40 years of Moses' life gives us a good background to discover what we can learn from today's passage:</p>
2.	<p>¹⁷ But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸ until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. ¹⁹ He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive. ²⁰ At this time, Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in</p>

	<p>his father’s house, ²¹ and when he was exposed, Pharaoh’s daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. ²² And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in words and deeds. ²³ When he was 40 years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. ²⁴ And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵ He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. ²⁶ And on the following day, he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, “<i>Men, you are brothers, why do you wrong each other</i>” ²⁷ But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, “<i>Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?</i>” ²⁸ <i>Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?</i>” ²⁹ At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. ³⁰ Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. Acts 7:17-30</p>
	<p>So by this account, Moses spends the first 40 years of his life in Egypt, living in the Pharaoh’s palace and “<i>being schooled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians</i>”. Then Moses acts impulsively in his own understanding, and without consulting God and attempts in his own power to reconcile the injustice the Israelites are experiencing as slaves in Egypt. Because of that action, he is forced to flee Egypt and lives for the next 40 years of his life tending sheep in the desert of Midian.</p> <p>Moses is now 80 years old, and we rejoin him in today’s text with his flock of sheep:</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>¹ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. Exodus 3:1</p>
	<p>This day starts off as just another normal day for Moses...in the desert with the sheep. Think about it, That is what every day has been for Moses for the past 40 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same desert • Same sheep • Same smells • Same routine • Every day for 40 years. Every day for 14,600 days <p>He is a shepherd in the middle of the desert – quite a contrast to living in the Pharaoh’s palace his first 40 years.</p> <p>Quite a contrast. Compare this to what it must have been like for his first 40 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the palace • Schooled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7) • Moses knew that Egyptians <i>despised</i> shepherds. Moses wrote the first five books of scripture, and in Genesis 46:33-34, when he records Joseph bringing his family into Egypt, he writes the following about what Joseph told his brothers:

<p>4.</p>	<p>³³When Pharoah calls you and says, “<i>What is your occupation?</i>” ³⁴you shall say, “<i>Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers</i>”, in order that you may dwell in the land of Goshen, for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians. Genesis 46:33-34</p>
	<p>Yet, these 40 years of herding sheep in the wilderness is God’s providential preparation of Moses for leading the people of Israel in this same wilderness for the next 40 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses has learned how to survive in the desert. • Moses has learned how to lead sheep. That is really not unlike leading a large group of people. • And he is learning humility. <p>Scripture tells us Moses is leading his flock in the western edge of wilderness, near Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. Steven tells us in Acts 7 that this is also Mount Sinai. The two names are interchangeable.</p> <p>It is not a coincidence that on this ordinary day, mostly unlike the 14,600 days that preceded it, that Moses has brought his flock to a place that figures prominently in redemptive history. It is the providence of God that Moses is in this place on this day, however ordinary the day might have seemed before this encounter with God.</p> <p>When God is going to move in your life, he will not warn you in advance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He won’t give you a dream the night before and say, “<i>Be aware, tomorrow will be a big day!</i>” • And when you least expect it, God can choose to intervene in your life and change your direction. <p>Let’s read on: (Exodus 3:2)</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>² 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. Exodus 3:2</p>
	<p>Now, I can’t see past this. A man is all alone in the desert, and a bush starts burning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every time I drive to Phoenix and get over the mountain south of Camp Verde, I look across the vast desert landscape and try to imagine what <u>I</u> would feel if I saw one single bush burning somewhere in my wide field of vision. • What do you think Moses did? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did he say, “<i>Behold! Verily, a bush burneth!</i>” ○ Do you think his blood pressure might have gone up a little bit? ○ Do you think he might have been a little excited about it? • This bush is amazing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It spontaneously burst into flames. ○ It burned, but it did not burn up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No ashes. No crinkling of leaves or branches. Nothing fell to the ground. It was just burning.
<p>6.</p>	<p>³ And Moses said, “<i>I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.</i>” ⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called out to him out of the bush, “<i>Moses, Moses!</i>” And he said, “<i>Here I Am.</i>” Exodus 3:3-4</p>

	<p>Notice that after God appears, he waits to see that Moses responds to seeing the bush before he calls out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Moses turns aside, • Then God calls out of the bush, “<i>Moses, Moses!</i>” <p>Why did God call Moses’ name twice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don’t know. <p>This is an unexpected source of divine revelation. Up to this point in the Biblical narrative, God has spoken to his people in various ways. Abraham and Isaac each heard an audible voice. A burning bush is unusual.</p>
7.	<p>¹ Long ago, at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,... Hebrews 1:1-2</p>
	<p>Be open to God getting through to you in ways that are unusual, different and unpredictable. If God wants to call you in an unusual way, he can do it. Maybe God need to reach you in a special way because you are hard-headed or oblivious.</p> <p>So think about it. If you are walking through the desert with some sheep...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And you see a bush burst into flame....<i>it might not get your attention.</i> • And if the bush burns, but does not burn up....<i>you may think, “hmmm, that’s unusual”....but it still might not get your attention.</i> • But, if the bush TALKS to you...that will get your attention. <p>So, Moses is in the middle of nowhere, and the burning bush calls his name, saying “Moses, Moses”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever had God do that to you? (not called you “Moses”), but do something to get your attention? • God may have lit a bush on fire near where you work or live a half a dozen times, saying “<i>talk to that person.</i>” Maybe there are other situations needing action, family relationships, friendships, etc. • You know it. What does God want you to do? • I don’t know how God is trying to communicate with you, but I know we don’t have a dead God. He is trying to bring each of us to a point...to get our attention... so he can use us for his purposes. <p>What is He asking you to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may be that you are doing something that is absolutely wrong, and God has lit a bush on fire and is saying, “<i>NO MORE. This ends today.</i>” • I don’t know what it is, but all I am saying is that when God taps you on your shoulder to get your attention, you’d better pay attention. <p>God calls Moses, and Moses replies “Here I am”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That’s a good answer. <p>Let’s read on: Verses 5 & 6</p>
8.	<p>⁵ Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ And he said, “I am the God of your father, the</p>

	<p>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. Exodus 3:5-6</p>
	<p>Up to this point, Moses’ general disposition was one of curiosity. Once he realizes he is having an encounter with the one true Holy God, he gets serious. This part of our passage today also reveals some key things about God.</p> <p>Scripture tells us that the voice that emanates from the burning bush is the angel of the Lord. The angel speaks as God. The angel of the Lord communes with man in a way angels do not normally interact. There is something unique about this angel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He not only speaks for God, he speaks as God. • Who else in the Bible is both identical with, and yet distinct from the LORD? • Who else in the Bible is able, without abandoning the full essence of his deity, or diminishing his divine holiness is able to accommodate himself to the company of sinners? • Who else is able to affirm both the wrath of God and supremely display his outreach of mercy? • The Angel of the Lord is nothing less than a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus to Moses in the burning bush. <p>The Angel of the Lord is the Lord Jesus, himself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And yet, Christ has no body until the incarnation. • This is a unique and perplexing manifestation of Jesus. As unique and perplexing as a bush that is burning without consuming itself. As unique and perplexing as a voice that comes from the bush and is identified as God. <p>God tells Moses to take off his sandals, because the ground he is standing on is holy ground.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is holy about this place? It is just a chunk of desert. Moses has been coming here for 4 decades. • What makes it holy now? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presence of God. ○ God’s presence grants ordinary circumstances and ordinary places with extraordinary status. ○ If the Lord is in this place, and the Lord brought you to this place...then embrace it. • The Lord’s command to Moses to remove his sandals signifies two things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First, God desires that Moses should be enabled to remain in the Lord’s holy presence. (“standing on holy ground”) ○ Secondly, what conditions are necessary for that to take place? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simple obedience. (“take off your sandals”) • It is the same for us today: We enter into the holy presence of God by obedient faith:
<p>9.</p>	<p>¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, ²² let</p>

	<p>us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.” Hebrew 10:19-</p>
	<p>After God tells Moses to take off his sandals, God tells Moses a little more about himself: ⁶And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob</p> <p>God reminds Moses of his membership in the covenant community of God’s chosen people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the call of God, Abraham left everything behind and set out for an unknown destination. • Isaac faced the impossible odds of death itself and experienced rescue by a God who did indeed provide, and whose promises can be trusted. • Jacob discovered the folly of living by his wits when he should have been trusting the promises of God. <p>It was by his identification with these three patriarchs that the God who called Moses wanted to be known.</p> <p>God had not changed from what he had been to these three men in those days long before Moses. He is still the God who calls into the unknown, overcomes impossible odds to keep his promises, bothers with those who have tried and failed and is the God who can still take the unpromising raw material of our lives and transform it.</p> <p>Let’s read on: Exodus 3: 7-8</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>⁷ Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the afflictions of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, ⁸ 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.” Exodus 3:7-8</p>
	<p>God now begins a progressive revelation of his will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I’ve seen it. • I’ve heard it. • I know their sorrows. • I have come down to rescue them. <p>There is a description of the promised land:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good and broad land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Only 75 people came to Egypt as the families of Jacob and his sons. Now there are millions. They need a good and broad land. • A land flowing with milk and honey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A plentiful land ○ A land that will sustain the great chosen people of Israel.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very specific land: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and mosquito bites.

	<p>God says, “I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.”</p> <p>This must have brought a tremendous amount of joy to Moses. His people have been going through some really hard stuff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses, in his heart and mind is saying, <i>“Come on Down! They’re hurtin’ something fierce! Come on down and fix this mess!”</i> • I’ll bet there are many of us who are thinking that kind of thing, and praying that kind of prayer right now: <i>“God, come down and do something about this!”</i> • This world is in misery, desperate for some kind of hope. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are heartbreaks more than we can count, just in this room. ○ God has seen that. • We cry, <i>“God, come on down and do something!”</i> • The people you relate to every day are putting up a façade that everything is “fine,” when they are dying on the inside. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ And God sees it. God hears their cry. <p>God says now, as he said to Moses, “I have come down to deliver them.”</p> <p>Now here’s where the twist comes. Let’s read on. Exodus 3:9-10</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>⁹“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. ¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, children of Israel, out of Egypt.” Exodus 3:9-10</p>
	<p>Did you catch that? Same conversation. Only a few words in-between.</p> <p>Listen to this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have come down to deliver them” (verse 8) • “Come, I will send you.” (verse 10) <p>How do you suppose Moses responded emotionally to that?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God: “Moses, I have come down to deliver them” “Now you go...” • Moses: “No!, No!, No! You said you were coming down! <i>Get down here right now!”</i> <p>You see, Moses did not understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses going out in obedience to God was God coming down. • A famous pastor, E.V. Hill, who is now in glory, preached a famous sermon on this text that was titled, “You Are God’s Answer!” <p>God has chosen in this day and age, just as he did in Moses’ day to use his people to address the problems of this fallen world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want the preacher to do it. • But God says, “No., No. I am sending you.” <p>Consider this passage from Ephesians:</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>¹¹ “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and the teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-12</p>

	<p>A little while ago, I postulated that maybe God has placed a burning bush in your pathway. Did something or somebody come to mind? What is the situation where God has chosen to use you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nobody else is in the same position to act in that particular situation as you are. God’s providence has placed you there. <p>If you are human, you are probably making mental excuses right now about why you shouldn’t respond to God’s call. We want to use our circumstances and problems as an excuse not to do God’s will.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are really good at rationalizing. <i>“Well, I would do that ...if only...but I can’t...so I won’t”</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may not believe this, but I was on a gymnastics team in high school that won many state championships. Our coach had a saying when I or one of my teammates said we couldn’t do a new move he wanted us to try. He would respond, “Can’t means won’t” The Evangelist Billy Sunday, when given an excuse from a church member for not being able to do something God was calling them to do, would say, “An excuse is the skin of a reason, stuffed with a lie.” <p>That is precisely what Moses does next in this passage. He makes excuses. He makes Five Excuses. They are the saddest, wimpiest excuses you have ever heard in your life. He tried to get out of this.</p> <p>To Moses’ credit, he uses this time he has alone with God in the wilderness to unload all his hang-ups. He is brutally honest with God, and in the process, he learns that God will provide all that he needs to be obedient when God calls him to His service.</p> <p>Let’s read Exodus 3:11</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharoah and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” Exodus 3:11</p>
	<p>First Excuse: Moses says to God, “<i>Who am I?</i>” Translation: “<i>I am a nobody. I can’t do this...</i>”</p> <p>That is an odd question he asks God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moses, you grew up in Egypt. You were schooled in all the ways of the Egyptians. 40 years ago, you thought you were “all that.” You took things into your own hands, and killed an Egyptian who was abusing the Hebrew slaves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When we act in our own strength, without God’s calling, we can be impetuous. We can forge ahead and blunder without counting the cost. But now he says, “<i>Who am I?</i>” It sounds humble, but it’s just disobedient. <p>How does God respond to Moses?</p> <p>Let’s Read Exodus 3:12</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>¹² 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.” Exodus 3:12</p>

	<p>God’s answer when we say “I am a nobody”He says, “I know.” God does not respond by puffing Moses up, and saying “<i>sure you can do it..</i>” He doesn’t say “<i>I will make you somebody. I will make you great.</i>”</p> <p>Instead, God said, “I will go with you.” Translation: I am a somebody.</p> <p>And the proof of that, God says, is that you and your people will worship me on this mountain. That will happen in Exodus Chapter 40. Come back in 2053 to learn all about it.</p> <p>God is not looking for extraordinary people. He is looking for ordinary people who will trust an extraordinary God. You and God together are a team that can’t be beat.</p> <p>Moses’ life to this point is punctuated by two extremes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first 40 years living in the palace in Egypt: High Self-Confidence = failure • At age 80, encountering God in the bush: No Self-Confidence • Biblical Balance: God Confidence. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” <p>The principle: “Moses, It is not who you are. It is who is with you. If I am with you, it doesn’t matter who you are. That is not the issue.”</p> <p>Consider the Great Commission, in Mathew 28:18-20, particularly what Jesus says at the end:</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p><i>¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the Age.”</i> Matthew 28:18-20</p>
	<p>Boy, if we Christians could really grasp that. It’s great to be here in the fellowship of the Church today, but that’s not where the great commission happens. It begins today when you leave this building. Wherever you go, God will be with you. When you have an opportunity to make disciples, God will be with you.</p> <p>You’d think God going with him would be enough for Moses. But its not.</p> <p>Let’s read on in Exodus 3:13</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p><i>¹³ 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?”</i> Exodus 3:13</p>
	<p>Moses’ first question was “Who am I?” His second question is even a bigger one. He asks God, “Who are you? What is your Name?”</p> <p>We could do a whole sermon right here, but we are going to skip a rock over it this morning.</p> <p>This is an important question for Moses in the context of the situation.</p>
	<p>Moses grew up in the Egyptian religious systems that had a pantheon of Gods, all who had names and specific functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aphis: “The Bull”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ra: “The Sun God” • Cirrus: “The God of the Nile” • Hecca: “The Frog Goddess” <p>Moses is suffering an identity crisis for God. In reality, this is excuse #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am unknowledgeable. I won’t know the answers. <p>So God tells Moses his name in Exodus 3:14-15</p>
17.	<p>¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I am who I am” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you.” ¹⁵ 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.” Exodus 3:14-15</p>
	<p>God says “I AM who I AM”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eternal now. • The self-existent one • The ever-present one • The all eternal one • The perfect one. <p>This is my name forever. This is my memorial to all generations.</p> <p>Sometimes we live our Christian life like a mattress that sags in the middle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We look back. My past is forgiven. My sins are washed away by the blood of Christ. • We look forward. My future in heaven is secure. It’s gonna be great. • The ends are taken care of. It’s what is in the middle that sags. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We worry about the “now.” ○ The now is where God wants to speak to you. The Holy Spirit was given to us to interact with our lives NOW. <p>God then tells Moses more specifically what he is calling him to do. We find it in Exodus 3:16-22</p>
18.	<p>¹⁶ Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, ‘The LORD, the God of your 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, ¹⁷ 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 milk and honey.” ¹⁸ 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 let us go a three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. ²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; when you go, you shall not go empty, ²² 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.” Exodus 3:16-22</p>
	<p>Sounds like God will accomplish his purposes, and the women will get to go shopping... But Moses has not yet run out of excuses. Excuse #3: “What if they don’t believe me?” Let’s read about it in Exodus 4:1-3</p>

<p>19.</p>	<p>¹ “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.’” ² The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.” ³ 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. Exodus 4:1-3</p>
	<p>Moses’ Excuse: “<i>What if they don’t listen to me or believe me?</i>” God’s Answer: “<i>It’s not your responsibility. It’s your responsibility to share God’s word. It’s God’s job to cause a response.</i>”</p> <p>But God is really not direct with his answer. Instead God asks Moses, “What is in your hand?”</p> <p>Moses had a staff. It was a stick. A common tool of a shepherd.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants to use your everyday life in an extraordinary way. What is in your hand? A hammer? A computer keyboard? A spatula? • Whatever it is. Do with it what God commands. Throw it down in obedience, and he will do amazing things. <p>When God told Moses to throw down his staff, it became a snake. Moses put his knees to the breeze and boogered right out of there. Let’s read what happened next in Exodus 4:4-9</p>
<p>20.</p>	<p>⁴ 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. ⁵ “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.” ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ “if they will not believe you,” God said, or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. ⁹ 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 take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.” Exodus 4:8-9</p>
	<p>When God lights a bush to get your attention, and calls you to a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He will go with you. • He will tell you what to say. • He will equip you to do the work <p>It’s our job to be obedient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s his job to accomplish what he sent you there for. • Obey, and he will take care of the rest. <p>.....Unless you are Moses and want to go for Excuse #4. It’s found in Exodus 4:10-12</p>
<p>21.</p>	<p>¹⁰ 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.” ¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf,</p>

	<p>or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you should speak. Exodus 4:10-12</p>
	<p>Excuse #4: I don't talk very well. This is interesting, because Steven, in Acts Chapter 7 tells us: And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in words and deeds. Maybe if you tend sheep in the desert for 40 years, you don't talk much. And, as educators say, <i>"If you don't use it, you lose it."</i> God's answer: <i>"I will tell you what to say."</i> God' gentle persistent patience endured through four wimpy excuses. God's presence with Moses is the answer to every objection so far. Then we get to what Moses really wanted to say all along. Excuse #5, found in Exodus 4:13-17</p>
	<p>¹³ But, he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else." ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. ¹⁷ And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs." Exodus 4:13-17</p>
	<p>Excuse #5: Oh Lord, Please send someone else. God's Answer: <u>NO!</u> <u>I AM COMING DOWN!!!!</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To empower you. • To go with you • To tell you what to say • I am coming down, BUT I WANT <u>YOU</u> TO GO. <p>The mercy of God understands our weakness, and meets us in our frailties; The sovereign magnificence of God fulfils his own purposes without adjustment or alternation – from beginning to end.</p> <p>In spite of all his excuses, Moses obeyed. God used him because he obeyed.</p> <p>Because the Lord is truly sovereign over all things, then the only reasonable response to his call on our lives is to trust him. It is his omnipotence that matters, not our incompetence.</p> <p>Brothers and Sisters, Keep trusting in the One who keeps you trusting.</p>
	<p>Benediction: From Pastor Don Geiger</p>

Go into the world in peace.
Have courage.
Hold onto what is good. Honor all men.
Strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak,
Help the suffering, and share the Gospel.
Love and serve the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.
And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
Amen.

- Bulletin Questions:
1. Review Moses' life up to the day of this passage of scripture. (See Acts 7:17-30)
 2. What is Moses doing at the start of the passage? How is it the same as any other day in the past 40 years? How is it different from any other day in the past 40 years?
 3. Who is in the burning bush?
 4. What does God say he will do? What does he ask Moses to do?
 5. What is the first excuse Moses gives for not obeying God? How does God answer Moses?
 6. What is the second excuse Moses gives for not obeying God?
 7. What does God say his name is? What is the significance of his name?
 8. What is the third excuse Moses gives for not obeying God? How does God respond?
 9. What is the fourth excuse Moses gives for not obeying God? How does God respond?
 10. What is the last excuse Moses gives? How does God respond?