

LESSON 2

Moses: Strength Made Perfect in Weakness

Exodus 4:1–17

But Moses replied to the Lord, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent—either in the past or recently, or since you have been speaking to your servant, because my mouth and my tongue are sluggish.” The Lord said to him, “Who placed a mouth on humans? Who makes a person mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say.

Exodus 4:10–12

Class Overview: After encountering God at the burning bush, Moses still struggled to believe he was the right person for the job. His doubts and fears mirror the same struggles we often face when God calls us to serve. In this lesson, we see how God patiently addressed Moses’ excuses one by one, teaching that His strength is made perfect in human weakness. The Lord equips those who trust Him, not those who trust themselves. God’s response to every excuse was the same: *“I will be with you.”*

Class Objectives: By the end of this class, you should be able to—

1. Identify the excuses Moses used to resist God’s call.
2. Understand how God’s responses reveal His power and patience.
3. Recognize that weakness and fear do not disqualify a servant of God.
4. Apply the principle that God’s power is displayed through obedience, not ability.
5. Commit to trusting God’s sufficiency rather than personal strength in moments of calling or service.

Introduction

MOSES STOOD BEFORE THE BURNING BUSH AND HEARD GOD'S VOICE, yet he still doubted himself. The task seemed impossible: confront Pharaoh, lead a nation, and speak on God's behalf. Moses had already failed once in Egypt. Now he was older, slower, and uncertain of his words. Fear crept in, and excuses followed. In Exodus 4, Moses gives one reason after another for why he cannot do what God commands. His story reminds us how quickly feelings of weakness can drown out faith.

Yet the beauty of this passage lies in God's response. The Lord does not scold Moses or abandon him. Instead, He patiently answers each objection, demonstrating that His power is more than enough to meet every need. When Moses worries about being believed, God provides signs. When Moses complains about his speech, God reminds him that the Creator of the mouth can give words. And when Moses begs to be excused, God sends Aaron to stand beside him. Through it all, God shows the same truth we must learn today: His strength is made perfect in weakness. The question is never whether we are able, it is whether we will trust the One who is.

Historical Background

The conversation in Exodus 4 takes place on holy ground at Mount Horeb, a continuation of the events in chapter 3. Moses has already received his mission to return to Egypt, but he hesitates. At this time, Egypt was the world's most powerful empire, ruled by a Pharaoh who claimed divine authority. The Israelites had been enslaved for centuries, numbering in the hundreds of thousands. For Moses to go back and demand their freedom would have seemed suicidal. From a human perspective, his fear made sense.

But God was not sending Moses in his own power. The signs He gave, the staff turning into a snake, the leprous hand restored, and the water turned to blood, each demonstrated His authority over nature, disease, and even the gods of Egypt. These were not random miracles; they were previews of the plagues to come and proof that God alone was sovereign. Through these signs, Moses would learn that success depended not on persuasion or strength, but on obedience.

Moses' concern about his speech ("I am slow of speech and tongue") provides insight into how he sees himself. Some scholars believe he may have had a speech impediment, while others think he simply lacked confidence. Whatever the cause, God's response dismisses every excuse: "Who placed a mouth on humans? Who makes a person mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?" (Exodus 4:11). God reminds Moses that we do not limit the Creator of human abilities. The Lord's anger is stirred when Moses finally says, "Please, send someone else." Yet even then, God shows mercy by providing Aaron as a helper.

God's patience and power work together to shape His servants. He doesn't need perfect instruments—He perfects imperfect ones through His Spirit and providence. The same God who equipped Moses still meets His people in their weakness and enables them to serve His purpose with confidence and humility.

God Is Patient with Our Weakness

When God called Moses, the conversation did not end with instant obedience. Moses hesitated, wrestling with self-doubt and fear. His words in Exodus 4:1 set the tone: *"What if they won't believe me and will not obey me but say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'?"* Beneath that question was a deeper struggle; Moses did not yet trust that God could work through him. The same man who had once acted rashly in Egypt now felt too broken to try again. Failure tends to silence confidence, and forty years in the desert had taught Moses how small he was. But God was not finished with him.

God's initial response reveals His patience. Instead of rebuking Moses, He offers reassurance through tangible signs. The staff turning into a snake, the hand becoming leprous and then restored, and the water turning to blood all showcase divine power. Each miracle addressed Moses' question of "what if." God was saying, "I will confirm My word. I will be with you. I will give evidence that this is not your doing but Mine." These signs were intended not only for Pharaoh and Israel but also for Moses himself. They served as visual reminders that God's presence transforms weakness into strength.

Moses' fear reflects the doubts many of us have when God calls us to serve. We ask, "What if they don't listen? What if I fail again? What if I'm not good enough?" But behind each question stands the same patient God, ready to meet us where we are. He does not expect perfection before obedience; He builds faith through obedience. God's patience with Moses shows His grace. He does not turn away the hesitant or fearful; He teaches them to trust.

Notice how personal God's approach is. He asks Moses to throw down his staff, the tool he uses daily as a shepherd. When it turns into a serpent and then back into a staff, God takes something ordinary and fills it with His power. The lesson is simple but powerful: when we surrender to God, the most common things in our hands can become tools for His purpose. What we see as insignificant, God can use greatly.

This patient training reveals the character of God. He is not only holy and mighty; He is kind and understanding. He knows our fears. Psalm 103:14 says, "He knows what we are made of, remembering that we are dust." God shapes servants slowly through questions, doubts, and small steps of faith. Even when Moses' faith wavered, God stayed near. Every objection brought new reassurance. Every weakness uncovered a fresh display of grace.

For us, the lesson is clear: God does not abandon reluctant servants. He keeps calling, equipping, and strengthening those who feel unworthy. The path of faith isn't about proving ourselves to God but about learning to trust His patience and power. When we offer Him our excuses, He responds with promises. When we present our fears, He responds with His presence. And when we show Him our weakness, He responds with grace.

Our service, then, should never be fueled by self-confidence but by trust in the One who calls. God is not looking for perfect people, He is looking for willing hearts. The story of Moses reminds us that the Lord who was patient with him is just as patient with us. If He could transform a hesitant shepherd into a bold deliverer, He can transform our uncertainty into courage. His patience is not an invitation to delay forever; it is a call to take the next step in faith.

God Provides What We Lack

When Moses confessed, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent—either in the past or recently, or since you have been speaking to your servant” (Exodus 4:10), he revealed how deep his insecurity ran. He didn’t deny God’s power; he doubted his own usefulness. To Moses, leadership meant public speaking, persuasion, and authority; skills he didn’t believe he had. But God saw the situation differently. What Moses viewed as a flaw, God saw as an opportunity to display His glory.

The Lord’s answer cut through every excuse: “Who placed a mouth on humans? Who makes a person mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say” (Exodus 4:11–12). God didn’t deny Moses’ weakness; He redefined it. The question wasn’t whether Moses could speak, it was whether he believed God could work through him. This is where so many of God’s people stumble. We focus on what we can’t do, while God focuses on what He can do through us.

God’s words remind us that He is the source of every ability we have. The One who formed our mouth knows how to fill it. The same truth applies to every area of service. The God who gives gifts also empowers their use. The moment we step forward in obedience, His strength meets us in our need. We may not feel prepared, but God promises His help: “I will teach you what to say.” He does not hand us a script in advance; He walks with us in real time.

This pattern of divine provision appears throughout Scripture. Jeremiah told God, “I don’t know how to speak,” but the Lord touched his mouth and said, “I have put My words in your mouth” (Jeremiah 1:6–9). When Jesus sent out His disciples, He promised, “Don’t worry about how or what you should speak... For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what must be said” (Luke 12:11–12). God equips His servants by giving them what they need, when they need it.

Moses’ story also reminds us that feelings of inadequacy can be masked pride. When we insist we cannot serve because we lack ability, we are still making the work about ourselves. God calls us to shift the focus from *I can’t* to *He can*. It’s not about what we bring, it’s about what we

surrender. Weakness only becomes a barrier when we refuse to trust that God can supply what's missing.

God's provision goes beyond words. He offers strength to endure, courage to face challenges, wisdom for making decisions, and grace for every trial. For Moses, that provision even included a helper—his brother Aaron. God told him, "I know that he can speak well. . . . You will speak with him and tell him what to say. I will help both you and him to speak" (Exodus 4:14–15). God didn't take away Moses' weakness; He surrounded it with support. His solution was not to make Moses self-sufficient but to make him dependent on divine help.

Every servant of God must learn this essential lesson. We are not self-sufficient vessels; we are vessels filled by the Spirit and strengthened by others. When God calls, He also equips, and His provision always fits the task. The strength of our ministry will never rely solely on personal talent or training, but on the living presence of God working through surrendered people.

This truth frees us from hesitation. We don't need to wait until we feel completely ready. We don't have to refine our speech or perfect our skills before serving. God's command remains: "Now go!" His presence is the assurance of success. Our job is not to be capable but to be available. The Lord who formed our mouths and shaped our lives knows exactly what He's doing when He calls us to serve. Our responsibility is simple: to trust His provision and obey His call.

God Uses Imperfect Servants to Accomplish His Perfect Will

Even after witnessing miracles and hearing God's promises, Moses still hesitated. His final words in Exodus 4:13 are almost painful to read: *"Please, Lord, send someone else."* After every assurance and sign, Moses still wanted to step away. His fear had turned into outright resistance. But what stands out here is not only Moses' reluctance but also God's persistence. The Lord's anger burned, but His mercy remained. Instead of abandoning Moses, God changed His plan to include Aaron as his spokesman. This shows that God's purpose isn't dependent on perfect

people. He accomplishes His will even through hesitant, fearful, and imperfect servants.

This moment reveals the tension between human weakness and divine sovereignty. Moses' fear was genuine, but God's mission would not fail. The Lord's plan was larger than Moses' comfort. He had chosen to deliver Israel, and He would use Moses, whether or not he felt prepared. This is one of the most encouraging truths in Scripture: God's faithfulness is not limited by our frailty. His work continues even when our faith falters. What matters most is not the perfection of the servant but the persistence of the God who calls.

In providing Aaron, God demonstrated both judgment and grace. Aaron's inclusion was a concession to Moses' fear, but it was also a blessing of partnership. The two brothers would stand before Pharaoh together, their combined service fulfilling God's will. This reminds us that God often uses community to strengthen the weak. He rarely sends us alone. He surrounds us with others who complement our strengths and balance our weaknesses. In doing so, He teaches humility and dependence, not on us, but on Him and one another.

Throughout the rest of Moses's life, the same truth kept unfolding. His flaws never went away. He struggled with frustration, anger, and doubt. Yet, through it all, God worked powerfully through him. He confronted Pharaoh, led Israel through the sea, and received the Law on Sinai. The man who once said, "Please, send someone else," became the one through whom God showed His power to an entire nation. This change didn't happen because Moses changed himself — it happened because God never gave up on him.

That same persistence defines God's relationship with us. He does not discard those who hesitate or stumble. Instead, He shapes them through experience, correction, and grace. The apostle Paul later expressed this truth when he wrote, "We have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Our weakness highlights His strength. Our inadequacy magnifies His sufficiency. God's purpose is to display His glory through broken vessels that rely on Him completely.

This should bring us both humility and hope. It humbles us because we realize that none of us serves from a place of perfection. Every preacher, teacher, and servant of God carries flaws. But it also offers hope because God delights in using those flaws as part of His plan. If He waited for perfect people, nothing would ever be accomplished. Instead, He refines and repurposes imperfect ones. Like Moses, we may hesitate, fear, or falter, but God's grace keeps working until His will is fulfilled.

The lesson concludes where it started; with the assurance of God's presence. Even when Moses doubted and hesitated, God never took back His promise: "I will be with you." That truth carried Moses through Pharaoh's court, across the Red Sea, and through forty more years of hardship. It can also carry us. God's strength isn't based on perfect servants; it rests on perfect faithfulness. And that faithfulness has never failed.

Lesson Summary and Reflection

The story of Moses at the burning bush continues in Exodus 4 with a conversation that resembles our own prayers: full of fear, excuses, and hesitation. God had called, but Moses couldn't see past his weakness. He worried that no one would believe him, that he lacked the skills to speak, and that someone else would be better suited for the task. Yet, through every objection, God patiently revealed His power and His purpose. The lesson is not about Moses' confidence growing stronger, but about his dependence on God becoming deeper.

God's patience is one of the most comforting truths in this passage. He did not give up when Moses questioned Him. Instead, He provided Moses with signs to strengthen his faith, words to speak, and a helper in Aaron. Each act of grace shows that God does not demand instant perfection from His servants—He develops faith gradually. His patience reminds us that He understands our weaknesses, but He will not let those weaknesses have the final say.

We also see that *God provides exactly what His people need for the work He calls them to do*. Moses said, "I can't speak," but God replied, "I made your mouth." That exchange captures the heart of service. God does not

ask us to serve from our strength but from His. Whatever He requires, He provides—whether wisdom, courage, opportunity, or support from others. The calling of God is always matched by the enabling of God.

The third major lesson from this story is that *God's plan does not fail because His servants are imperfect*. Moses was hesitant and afraid, yet God used him to stand before Pharaoh and lead Israel to freedom. The success of the mission depended on God's faithfulness, not Moses' performance. That same truth supports every believer today. We are not expected to be perfect instruments, only willing ones. God works through weakness so that His strength may be shown.

When we assemble all of this, the message is clear: God's strength is made perfect in weakness. He calls ordinary, unsure people and fills them with His power. Our job is not to prove ourselves, but to trust Him. If God could transform a hesitant shepherd into a great deliverer, He can use anyone who is willing to say, "Here I am."

Key Truths

- God is patient with those who doubt or fear His calling.
- Every weakness becomes an opportunity for God to display His strength.
- The Lord provides everything His servants need to obey.
- God's plans are not hindered by human imperfection.
- True service flows from trust, not self-confidence.

Conclusion

God is not limited by what restricts us. He uses hesitant hearts, weak voices, and trembling hands to fulfill His will. The same God who called Moses calls us today to serve. He still responds to every excuse with the same promise: "I will be with you."

When you feel unqualified, remember that Moses felt the same way. When you fear failure, remember that God's power surpasses your fears. The Lord who formed your mouth, your mind, and your life knows exactly what He's doing. All He asks is that you trust Him enough to take the next step.

Memory Verse and Weekly Challenge

Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say.

Exodus 4:12 (CSB)

Here we see God's promise to every servant who feels unqualified. It shifts the focus from what we lack to what God supplies. When He calls, He equips. When He sends, He goes with us.

Weekly Challenge

1. Face One Fear.

Identify one area where fear or self-doubt has kept you from serving. Pray over it this week and take one small, concrete step of obedience.

2. Use What's in Your Hand.

Moses' staff was a simple shepherd's tool, yet God used it powerfully. Ask yourself, *What has God already placed in my hand?* Use it for His glory this week—whether time, talent, or opportunity.

3. Memorize and Pray Exodus 4:12.

Begin each morning repeating this verse as a prayer: "Lord, help me speak and teach me what to say."

4. Encourage Another Servant.

Look for someone in the church who feels uncertain about their role. Encourage them with the same truth God gave Moses: *You are not alone—God is with you.*

5. Reflect on God's Patience.

Spend time in prayer thanking God for His patience with you. Ask Him to replace your hesitation with trust and your weakness with faith.

For Discussion

1. Which of Moses' excuses in Exodus 4 do you most identify with—and why?

2. How has God shown patience with your weakness in the past?

3. What are some practical ways to rely on God's provision instead of your own ability when serving?

4. How does God's use of Aaron to help Moses illustrate the importance of working together in ministry?

5. What step of faith is God asking you to take right now, even though you don't feel ready?
