

## **Open your Bibles to Exodus 4:10-17.**

- We're continuing our study of the book of Exodus.
- This morning we come to the end of the conversation between God and Moses at the Burning Bush.
- And this morning we will consider the fact that God is the merciful God who is to be obeyed.

## **Beginning in chapter 3, God commissioned Moses to go to Egypt and free the Israelites.**

- And so began a conversation between them. And in this conversation, Moses offered many objections for why God should choose someone else for the job.
- So far, Moses has said, "Who am I? What do I say?" and "They won't believe me."
- Today he will offer one more objection: "I can't speak well."
- God has answered each of these objections with revelations of Himself, His promises, and His power.
- He'll do the same again with this final objection.

## **But then Moses will say a final thing. God will get the last word, but Moses will say one more thing.**

- And in what he says, we'll see the heart of the matter behind all of his objections.
- Moses will say, "Lord, please send someone else."
- Moses did not want to do this job. Moses was reluctant to become the Deliverer of Israel.
- He would do it. But he did not want to, at first.

## **And in this text, we will read of how God became angry with Moses for this.**

- Moses has given many objections to God in this

conversation. And they have been legitimate.

- Moses has been afraid and weak in faith. And God has kindly answered his every fear in order to strengthen his faith that God can do anything with anyone.

- And God hadn't gotten angry yet.

- But when Moses makes an open statement of flatly NOT WANTING TO OBEY GOD...that's when God got angry.

- So in this text, we'll be reminded that God hates disobedience.

- Weak faith doesn't anger Him. Fear doesn't anger Him.

- It is REBELLION that angers Him.

**But then we'll see how God was still even more gracious to Moses.**

- God had mercy on him, even though he sinned.

- And God did not cast him away, even though at first Moses was disobedient.

**In this text, we will again get a glimpse of our God.**

- He will reveal something of Himself to us. He'll show us how He deals with His People.

- And all of this ultimately points us to the Perfect Savior, the perfectly obedient and willing Lord Jesus Christ.

**Brothers and sisters, I hope to remind you today of who our God is.**

- He is a God to be obeyed.

- And He is also a God who is incredibly merciful and gracious with an often disobedient and reluctant

People.

- And He is this way with us for Christ's sake.
- May God bless the preaching of His Word.

**If you would, and are able, please stand with me now for the reading of the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God.**

### **Exodus 4:10-17**

[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, 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 shall speak."

[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."

## **(PRAY)**

*Holy God,*

*• You have spoken in your Word. And you alone are God.*

*• So we humble ourselves before the Scriptures and ask that you would open our hearts and minds to receive them with understanding and faith.*

*• Speak through the preacher. Speak to the hearer.*

*• By your Spirit, put the Word deep in our hearts.*

*• Teach us full obedience, holy reverence, true humility.*

*• Show us your glory in your Son, Jesus Christ.*

*• And change us. We beg you to work in us and conform us to the image of Christ by your Word and Spirit.*

*• Glorify yourself today.*

*• We ask these things in Jesus' Name and for His sake.*

*• Amen.*

**1.) As I said in the introduction, Moses keeps making objections to the commission God gave him.**

• Moses has told God that he is unworthy and unequal to the task set before him. And God has said, "But I will be with you."

• Moses has said that he doesn't know what to say to the Israelites. And God said, "Tell them I AM sent you."

• Moses has said that the Israelites wouldn't believe him. And God gave him signs to validate his message.

• And now our text begins with Moses' final objection.

**In v10, Moses said, “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.”**

- Moses’ objection was basically, “I can’t speak well.”
- Literally, the text says, “I am not a man of words...I am heavy in mouth and heavy in tongue.”
- Moses claims that he’s not a good speaker. That he’s unable to articulate his thoughts into flowing speech. That he gets tongue-tied and isn’t a good public speaker.
- And he assumes that to be God’s spokesman requires him to be an excellent speaker.

**Now, this seems like Moses’ typical fear that we’ve seen so far.**

• But there is also a note of irreverence here. He says, “either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant.”

• Moses seems to be indicating that God has overlooked his weak speech. As if God hadn’t factored that in.

• And there may be some accusation going on as well: God should have made him able to speak better if God really expected him to do this work. But nothing in his ability to speak has changed since the conversation began.

**Now, we don’t know what exactly Moses was referring to about his weak speech.**

• But we read in Acts 7:22 that while he was still in Egypt as a young man, he was “mighty in his words and

deeds.”

- And, thus far, it doesn't seem that Moses had much of a problem speaking to God Almighty.

- So this objection is, in my opinion, probably just Moses' own self-evaluation in light of his fear and weak faith, and not the objective truth of his abilities.

- But catch this: Moses is, once again, focusing on himself and his abilities (or lack thereof), and not on the Great I AM who is calling him to do the work.

### **And that's why God answers him like this:**

- 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?”

- God is basically saying, “Moses, I give ability and disability.”

- God is sovereign over all human ability and disability.

- He makes the mouth. So He can make men speak.

- He determines who can speak or not, hear or not, and see or not.

- Therefore, Moses' ability or disability to do something is no matter for God.

- If Moses truly had a speech impediment, then it was from God. And God could remove it.

**The bottom line to all of this is that regardless of what Moses can or cannot do, God CAN do it.**

- God can make Moses able to speak for Him.

- God can make the Israelites to hear.

- And God can make the Israelites to see that Moses is sent from God.

- Moses doesn't matter that much, actually. The power

is in God who can do all things.

- If God can turn the staff into a serpent, then God can take Moses' mouth and make it speak clearly for Him.

**So then, in light of God's sovereignty, God said,**

- "Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak."

- There are no excuses for Moses.
- God will be with him in general (3:12). And God will specifically be with his mouth to tell him what to say, on top of giving him the ability to say it how he ought.
- So Moses MUST GO. God isn't budging on His command.

**And now we come to Moses' final words in this conversation. And in them, the truth comes out.**

- [13] But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else."

- This is disobedience. Period. Moses doesn't want to do it. He doesn't want to go back to Egypt.
- He doesn't want to obey God's command.
- And this shows to some degree, I think, that Moses' objections, while some were reasonable, were rooted in the fact that he didn't want to do it.
- And God allows things to get to this point so that it could be recorded for our benefit.
- God has taken away every excuse from Moses. So now the main issue can be revealed.

**Now, Moses is very indirect and polite and proper in the Hebrew here.**

- He says, "Send whoever you want to send." And

what's implied is "Except for me."

- But at the end of the day, politely refusing God is sin. It's rebellion against His revealed will.

**And this is really ironic, given the whole context of the conversation:**

- Early in chapter 3, Moses hid his face in terror and awe when he realized that God was in the Burning Bush.

- God has revealed His holy Name to Moses, declaring His sovereignty over all and burning holiness.

- And twice in our text today, Moses has called God "Lord" (Adonai). "Adonai" means sovereign/ruler/master.

- So Moses has knowledge, is afraid, and openly declares that God is sovereign ruler over all.

- And yet, Moses says, "I don't want to do what you've said, God."

- This is absolutely nonsensical. Moses is saying no to GOD. The irony is astounding. This makes no sense.

- Know this: Sin is irrational. Sin is illogical. Sin makes no sense. Sin is foolishness.

**And it's at this point, when Moses reveals that he desires to disobey God, that we read, "Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses..."**

- Brothers and sisters, God hates disobedience. God hates sin. He is displeased with stubbornness.

- Now, the text doesn't dwell on this at length, and it doesn't tell us how God's anger was manifested. But God's anger toward Moses at this point is recorded to tell us that God does not take this lightly.

- Nobody in the OT had a closer relationship to God, in



some senses, than Moses. And even Moses' rebellious attitude was hated by God.

- Take that seriously, Christian!

**But what is really astounding is that though God is angry with Moses, God goes on to basically say, "I'll give you Aaron to go with you."**

- Aaron, Moses' older brother was a good speaker, according to God.
- And God had apparently already summoned Aaron to go and meet Moses in the wilderness.
- So, though Moses had displeased God with his disobedient attitude, God had mercy on him and decided to send Aaron with him to do the work.

**And here's how it will work: In vv15-16 God said,**

•"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."

- God will speak to Moses and tell him what to say.
- Moses will speak to Aaron and tell him what God has said.
- And Aaron will speak the words of God on Moses' behalf.
- Moses is God's prophet. And Aaron will be like a prophet to Moses and Moses will be like God to Aaron.
- And God promises to be with both Moses' and Aaron's mouths to ensure that exactly what God wants said is communicated.

**NOTE:** This tells us something about what prophecy is: It is nothing less than the Word of God.

- And it tells us what it means to be a prophet: It is to be a spokesman for God.

- Prophecy is from God's lips to the prophet's ear. And from the prophet's lips to the People's ear.

- And God oversees the whole process to ensure that His Word is precisely and perfectly spoken to His people.

### **BUT DON'T MISS THE BIG POINT:**

- Moses' unwillingness to go angered the LORD. But God showed kindness upon kindness to Moses anyway.

- He gave Aaron to help Moses.

- Now, I don't believe God compromised. I believe Aaron was the plan all along. All that comes to pass has been foreordained by God. And God doesn't compromise.

- What's going on here is God is revealing what kind of a God that He is: More merciful and gracious to His People than we could've ever hoped for.

- There isn't a pagan god of Egypt that would've shown this kind of mercy toward a worthless human who refused to do as he was told.

- But our God is not like the gods of the nations.

- He is "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness..." (Exodus 34:6)

- That is not ALL that He is. But He is ALL of those things.

- And we praise Him for it!

**God didn't strike Moses down, though Moses certainly deserved it.**

- And God didn't reject him or cast him out.
- He could've just killed him there and used Aaron as His prophet.
- But instead He is kind to Moses.
- Behold, the patience and mercy of God!

**God then ends the conversation by telling Moses to take the staff that he will do the signs with.**

- What's implied there is, "GO. Take the staff with you, Moses. And go."
- God didn't relent. God was merciful and kind. But God didn't relent or compromise His commandment.
- He provided Moses with help. But He didn't change His Word to him.
- And the conversation is over. God will not hear any more on the matter. The case is settled. Moses WILL DO as God has commanded.
- And so, he is to simply obey and go back to Egypt, meeting Aaron along the way.

**In summary, we see that Moses' objections and questions, though reasonable in some sense, had an underlying desire to not do as God said.**

- And his disobedience angered the LORD.
- God is to be obeyed. For He is GOD.
- But though He was angry, His love for Moses did not change. And so, God was merciful to His sinful servant.
- Let's now think more deeply through these things.

**2.) Brothers and sisters, this text reminds us that**

**we MUST submit ourselves to the will of God.**

- Obedience to God is not an option. And that's because God's commandments are not suggestions. They are commandments. And we are morally obligated to obey.

- Disobedience **ANGERS** God. That is blatantly clear in our text this morning. He hates it.

- He may be gracious to us even though we sin. And we praise Him for it! But that in **NO WAY** minimizes how serious sin is and how much He truly detests it.

- By our disobedience, we move ourselves out from God's smile and under His frown, so to speak.

- We make ourselves liable to His discipline. And we disrupt our fellowship with Him.

**And catch this from the text:** Even reluctance to obey is sinful and angers the LORD.

- Moses didn't technically disobey the command. He did go to Egypt in the end, as God commanded. He just didn't **WANT TO**.

- And his reluctance to obey angered God. Why? Because it's heart disobedience, even if it never goes any further.

- Guys, even if we eventually do what we ought, any initial reluctance, sighing, or whatever is sin.

- Not obeying in the end is worse, of course. That compounds sin upon sin. But know that reluctance to do the will of God is still truly sinful. (Just like adultery is worse than lust. But lust is still truly sin.)

**God is not angry with our fear, necessarily.**

- God is not angry with our admission that we are weak.

- God is not angry with a weak faith that needs to grow.
- But what angers Him is disobedience and unwillingness to submit to Him.

**And this is righteous, holy, reasonable, and just.**

- Just think about it for a moment: Who are we to defy the Almighty?
- We are His creatures. He is far above us in every way. He is GOD. And we simply ARE NOT.
- So who do we think we are to not snap to attention and say, “Yes, Lord,” and then immediately attempt to do whatever He has commanded?
- It is pure arrogance and rebellion for us to do anything else.

**Brothers and sisters, we would do well to remember that God is GOD.**

- He is I AM. He is Lord (Adonai). He is Master, King, and Sovereign Ruler. We have to remember these things.
- Yes, He is our greatest Helper, Friend, Lover of our souls, and Savior. I’m not taking away from that AT ALL.
- But we must remember that this Helper, Friend, Lover of Sinners, and Savior IS LORD AND GOD OVER US.
- As Moses said, Christian, He is your Lord.
- How then, knowing that, believing that, can we say, “Lord, Master, God, Savior, I don’t think I want to do what you’ve said.”
- That is foolish, ungrateful, wicked, arrogant, and rebellious.
- But it’s what we do when we willfully refuse to walk in God’s ways.

**But notice that our resistance and reluctance doesn't change the command of God.**

•In v12, after God answered Moses' objection about why he shouldn't obey, God says, "Now GO..."

•He was inflexible in His command. It didn't go away.

•We see this also in v17 as God tells Moses, "take the staff..." Take it where? Take it with you to EGYPT.

•That's just another, "Now GO" from God.

•He hadn't changed His mind or relaxed His command. Moses had to go because God demands it.

•My friends, know this: God will not alter His commands for you. He won't relax His standards for anyone. You must submit to Him and obey.

•You're not going to change His mind. You're just going to be guilty of sin.

**Now let's make this real for this congregation.**

•Let's consider some areas in which maybe some in this church are guilty of reluctance or even disobedience:

1. Fathers, are you leading you families in regular times of Scripture reading, prayer, and praise to God?

•Are you taking time to intentionally instruct your family in the ways of God?

•Are you teaching your children a Christian worldview by which they can process and think through everything?

•This is Deuteronomy 6. Why do you delay obedience?

2. Mothers, are you guilty of finding unnecessary things

to do so that you can avoid spending time with your children?

- Are you constantly annoyed with them and so distance yourself from this?

- This is Titus 2. You are to love them and be with them to help them grow up.

- Why are you reluctant to obey?

**3.** Parents, do you neglect disciplining your children when they disobey you?

- Do you allow your children to ignore your commands, disrespect you, and behave foolishly with no real or consistent consequences?

- Do you spare the rod and so ruin your children?

- This is all over the Proverbs.

- Why do you delay your own obedience?

**4.** Husband, do you ignore the needs of your wife and are harsh with her?

- Are you cold and distant when you should be confronting problems in your house?

- This is 1 Peter 3. Why do you delay?

**5.** Wife, do you rebel against the authority of your husband and assert yourself as the head of the home?

- Do you speak badly of him to others, unnecessarily?

- Do you refuse to submit to his biblical requests?

- This is Ephesians 5. Why are you reluctant to obey?

**6.** Pastors, are ignoring certain sheep in the flock because they aren't like you?

- Are you delaying hard conversations you need to have

with church members because you don't want the headache or hardship?

- This is 1 Peter 5. Why do you disobey the Lord?

**7.** Those who have been wronged by a fellow church member, are you holding a grudge?

- Are you refusing to confront the problem gently and with humility, seeking restoration?

- This is Matthew 18. Why are you reluctant to obey?

**8.** Those who have done wrong but don't want to admit it, why won't you repent, apologize, and make amends?

- Why are you so stubborn and refuse to own it and seek reconciliation and pardon from the offended?

- This is Matthew 5. Why do you delay obedience?

**9.** Friends, is there some secret sin, some pet sin, however small you may think it is, that you are refusing to give up?

- You know it's wrong. But you keep seeking justification to continue to walk in it. You don't want to repent.

- This is all over the Book. Why do you stay in your sin?

**10.** Men, is there a call from God to you concerning a church office or some kind of ministry and you refuse to submit and pursue it?

- You're qualified. You're just not wanting to accept what the Lord is calling you to.

- This is Exodus 4. Why do you delay obedience?

**Brothers and sisters, daily renew your faith in Christ, daily renew your repentance, and daily seek**



## **to walk in obedience to your God!**

- Repent. The anger of God is kindled against you because you are rebelling against His commands.
- He doesn't want only your formal worship. He doesn't want only your formal Sabbath keeping. He doesn't want you to look good only on the outside.
- But He says this in 1 Samuel 15:22, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in OBEYING THE VOICE OF THE LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams."
- The LORD loves obedience more than anything!
- So give Him His due and repent and walk with Him!

**Now, listen:** There may be a time for asking questions.

- Moses was allowed to ask God many questions and seek clarity on His commands.
- Likewise, there will be times in our lives where we ask sincerely, "So what DOES God say about this?" or "What does God call me to do in this situation?"
- And so, there is a time to pray, seek counsel, and search the Scriptures for an answer. And sometimes it may take a while because we're fallen and slow to learn and believe.
- BUT once that time is past and the answer is made clear by God's Word and Spirit, then we GO. Period.

**ILLUSTRATE:** A former member of this church was converted to Christ from Islam.

- And when he was about to be married, his family in his home country asked him to come and receive a Muslim

wedding after he was legally married in America.

- He asked me, “Am I allowed to do that?” (He was a very young Christian. Less than a year in the Faith.)
- I talked to him and showed him how the Word says we must not associate with false religion.
- And after that I asked him, “So what are you going to do?” (I was expecting him to push back.)
- He replied, “It’s not WHAT I’m going to do. The Bible says I can’t do it. It’s HOW AM I GOING TO DO IT? How am I going to tell my family. I must do it. But it’s going to be hard.”
- That, brothers and sisters, is distinctively Christian.

### **Obedience is the mark of the true Christian.**

- Obedience that flows from faith, that is.
- We believe that God is who He says He is, that He is all-wise, that He is sovereign to command, that He loves us, that He has covenanted with us in Christ, that He desires our eternal good.
- And because we believe, we obey.
- Faith is the great distinction of the believer. But it is invisible. OBEDIENCE to God is the outward revelation of inward faith.

### **My dear friends, take these things seriously!**

- If we are God’s People, we must walk in His ways.
- This is the way of true faith.

### **3.) But our text is not all Law. It’s also full of the Gospel.**

- And I say that because God did not strike Moses down for his disobedience.

- God didn't destroy Moses for his sin. God was angry, yes. But He will still be patient with Moses.

- He was still full of mercy and grace for sinful, unwilling Moses.

- And so, He did not strike him dead. And He did not cast him off. But He patiently bore with Moses. He did not forsake him, but continued to be His God.

**Brothers and sisters, God is a God to be obeyed.**

- But He is also a God of infinite patience, grace, mercy, and love for His sinful People.

- Oh, you must obey Him. It is not an option. Your sin is truly sinful. You must truly repent and amend your ways.

- But know this as well: God will not cast you off because you have sinned.

- He will not forsake you, though you sin.

- He will utterly leave you, though you sin.

- He will remain your God. He will continue to love you.

- He will continue to forgive you as you repent.

- He will keep you in His grace always, for He is your God.

- Behold, the mercy and patience of God for His People!

**Dear Christian, for Christ's sake God is merciful and patient with you, though you are full of sin.**

- Christ has obeyed Him perfectly in your place. And by faith, His righteousness is yours in the judgment.

- Christ has made atonement for all the sins you would ever commit. And by faith, you have been washed clean by His blood.

- Christ has secured your place as a child of God. By faith you have been united to Him and so long as God

loves Him, God loves you.

- Christ has made your peace with God on your behalf. And for as long as the Father cherishes the Son and His work, you will stand in justifying peace with Him.

- And so, because of Christ, because you are IN HIM by faith, because He is yours and you are His, God will not cast you out.

- He will not forsake you, for He will not forsake His only begotten Son with whom He is perfectly pleased.

**He may discipline us in His wrath because of our disobedience. He may be angry with us because we sin, but we remain His children.**

- All for sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

- Hear me: God can at the same time be angry with you in the way of Fatherly displeasure, and yet remain your loving Heavenly Father.

**It's an imperfect analogy, but hear me out:**

- I am Piper's father. And I get angry when she disobeys me. I discipline her when she disobeys.

- But I will never stop being her father. Even when I'm angry with her disobedience, I still have deep, abiding, unceasing love for her.

- And I dare you to try to take her from me, even when I'm at my angriest with her.

- She is MINE! She is my child! And nothing will ever change that.

- Brothers and sisters, God calls you His children in Christ. He declares that He is your Heavenly Father.

- I defy all the powers of Earth and Hell to try to take you away from Him if you are in Christ!

- Nothing in all creation will be able to separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus, your Lord.

**My dear friends, God is to be obeyed.**

- Sin is serious. God hates it.
- And God is still merciful to His sinful People in and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**4.) Moses unwillingness and disobedience, as well as our own, points us to our need for Christ.**

- We need a perfect, perfectly willing, perfectly obedient Savior.
- And in Christ God has provided us with exactly that.

**Unlike us, the Son of God willingly obeyed all that the Father commanded of Him, being of one will with Him.**

- He gladly came to earth, sent by the Father, willingly, for us and for our salvation.

- The Servant of the LORD willingly served sinners every step of the way.

- His arm was not twisted. He was not reluctant. It was His food and drink to do the will of God.

- It was His joy, His desire, His own will to come and save us.

- He gladly came, loved, obeyed, and died for our sakes.

- He gave His life willingly for ours, according to the command and plan of the Father.

- And even when His human will righteously feared the wrath of God that was to come upon Him at the Cross, He still gladly and perfectly, sinlessly, submitted it to the

will of God. And He saved us by His submission.

**He is the Perfect Savior with a perfect salvation.**

•And He has left us with a perfect example that we are to strive to imitate.

**5.) Brothers and sisters, let all of this encourage you.**

- Be reminded of God's great love for you.
- Be reminded of what a perfect Savior you have in Christ.
- Be reminded of God's great patience toward you for Christ's sake.
- Rejoice and be glad. Praise God for His grace!

**But I beg you, do not despise the grace of God toward you.**

- Don't make little of it. Don't abuse His patience and grace.
- Don't you ever blasphemously ask, "Should we sin more so that grace may abound?"
- Don't grow lazy in your obedience.

**But rather have the flames of your heart fanned toward God because of His love for you!**

- Continue hard down the path of obedience!
- Why? BECAUSE He is so patient with you! Because He loves you anyway! Because He does not cast you off!
- Strive to serve Him with all your might particularly because of what He has done for you in Christ!
- This is pure faith! This is true love to God!

**Brothers and sisters, live for the One who loves you.**

- Obey the One who has saved you.
- Walk with the One who is patient with you.
- Give yourself over to the One who gave Himself for you.

**May God have mercy and help us to do so.**

- Amen.