

Series: **The Courageous Life** – week 2
CDOBC – beginning on 9/13/15
Today's Title: **“Courage When You Lack Confidence”**
September 20, 2015 ~ selected passages in Exodus, and Acts 7

OBJECTIVE: To help believers have confidence in God, not their own ability.

Opening prayer

In modern-day America – and all throughout the world – if you are a Christian, living the Christian life in 2015 and beyond will require an increasing amount of courage.

The Christian communities response to the western world's move away from God and toward Godless living has produced reactions that I believe can be broken down into 3 categories.

The first category consists of those who deny anything is happening or changing – or they're simply unaware of the changes in the world / culture.

The second category consists of those who want to withdraw from the larger culture and retreat into Christian communities or communes in order to live with other like-minded believers.

The third category consists of those who want to push back against the Godless in the world with human force – maybe political force.

I believe each of these categories falls short of what the Church (individually & corporately) is called to do.

The first category fails to apply God's wisdom to life.

The second category is selfish and ignores the clear command Jesus gave to "make disciples of all nations".

The third category is trying to bring truth to the culture – trying to be "salt and light", but it relies too heavily on human energy, human power and human institutions. This category fails to realize this is a spiritual battle – not a political battle. These are not easy times we live in.

Personally, if I'm not careful I find myself in the third category of Christians. I first realized my heart and inclination toward this category in the 2000 Presidential election. For weeks I was glued to the radio and TV as the Presidential election results hung in the realm of uncertainty due to the 'hanging chads' in Florida.

I was completely stressed out and pouring all my thoughts, energy and attention to the next news update, instead of trusting the Lord – hoping in the Lord – and putting my confidence in the Lord. Reality was, political parties and political views were becoming my god and my savior.

Once I realized this and took some steps to change my thoughts and daily practices, my focus began to return to the true North God desires for each of His children – to stay focused on Jesus – on the cross – and the empty tomb!

I still struggle with this at times – but I’m now aware of the tendency and pull of my heart and mind in these matters.

But I must admit...when I look around at the direction the world is moving – and the direction our nation is headed – I don’t get excited – I become concerned – it’s sobering.

Winston Churchill said, “*We can’t live with un-wisdom, carelessness and a naïve good nature.*” (Source: The Church Awakening, by

Charles R. Swindoll, p. 204)

We need to open our eyes to the reality around us.

We need to understand the truth of Christ – the grace of Christ – the Gospel of Christ.

We need to develop the courage to live for Christ and the Gospel Message even if/when the world around us rejects – hates the name and message of Christ.

We need to live with courage – but our courage must be in Christ – His completed work of salvation – His love, truth and grace.

If our courage is rooted in human efforts and human institutions – then our courage will be wasted on things that won’t last.

I want my work – my effort – my blood, sweat and tears to last for eternity!

I want to my life to count for earthly good – but I want more than that! I want it to count for eternally good things!

But many people – including myself – look at our life and the problems of our world – and we wonder how God could use someone like me.

There are so many others who are:

Younger...

Stronger...

Better looking...

More talented...

More intelligent...

Much better at preaching and teaching...

More gifted and capable leaders...

They're more disciplined...

More sanctified...

More driven...

They have clearer goals...

Better strategies...

They pray more...

They serve others better...

They're more humble...

What can you add to the list?

We can look at the task before us – **'Reach people for Christ and helping them grow in their faith'** – and we can be overwhelmed by the size of the task and the stature of the called! (Us!)

We can look at the job before us – and we can easily lose hope – and courage – because we lack the confidence that we can do the job God is calling us to do!

This is week #2 in our series: The Courageous Life – and this morning we're looking at Moses. God called Moses to a huge task – an overwhelming and frightening task – and Moses gave God a bunch of reasons why he couldn't do it – he lacked the confidence that he was able to fulfill the mission God was calling him to – yet God used Moses in ways that not only impacted the Hebrew / Jewish people – but he:

- Brought the world superpower to its knees...
- Inaugurated over Israel's birth as a nation...
- Led the nation for 40 years...
- Talked face to face with God...
- Was one of a handful of people in human history to be used by God to perform miracles...
- Is still viewed today as one of the greatest – if not the greatest prophet of God.

This is the resume of a man who lacked confidence when God called him.

This is the resume of the man God used in greater ways than any other person in the O.T.

Turn to Exodus 2 – this morning we will look at 4 periods of Moses' life –

First was his period of self-sufficiency...

Second was his period of frustration and passivity...

Third was his period of self-doubt...

Fourth was his period of great accomplishments.

Moses was a self-sufficient man of action and justice

Ex. 2:11-19

We first meet the adult Moses in Exodus 2, and he has the power, passion and purpose of a prince!

Moses had the physical power of young man.

Moses had the idealistic passion of a young man.

Moses had the purpose of a good prince who wanted justice and kindness.

At this time in history, Egypt was the world's lone superpower. They were the most mighty and influential nation on the planet.

Moses was raised in the house / palace of Pharaoh - by one of Pharaoh's daughters – which made Moses part of the royal line – part of the royal family. He was a prince in the household of Pharaoh. There were a few others who no doubt were in front of him in line for the throne, but he was a member of the most powerful family on earth!

But Moses was different from the rest of his family.

Moses did not have Egyptian blood flowing through his veins – he had Hebrew blood (Jewish blood).

Probably due to the arrangement made with Pharaoh's daughter (see Ex. 2:6-10), Moses knew that he was different – and in many ways he identified himself with the Hebrew people – who were slaves to the Egyptians. This slavery had existed for many years – and the Egyptian Pharaoh and his slave masters were very harsh and cruel toward the Hebrew people.

We read in **Exodus 2:11-19** about Moses acting in the interest of justice, but doing so in his own self-sufficiency.

(Read Exodus 2:11-19)

We can also read about this account in **Acts 7:23-25** where Stephen – before he is killed as the first martyr in the Church – is giving a Cliff-Notes version of Israel's history to the religious leaders of Israel.

Acts 7:23-25

23 “When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites.

24 He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian.

25 Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.”

Moses identified more with the Hebrew slaves than the Egyptian people and at 40 years old he intended to rescue them from their Egyptian Oppressors. In his self-sufficiency, he sought justice, but he also committed a great injustice by killing a man outside of the legal

process. His justice was one-sided and biased. In his physical power and passion, he became judge, jury and executioner. He was a prince in Egypt – he had authority – he could have commanded the Egyptian guard to stop – arrest him and have him reprimanded or punished – but he took matters into his own hands. His guilt is proven by his checking to see if anyone was looking and his attempt to hide the body by burying it in the sand.

In self-sufficiency Moses acted before God’s call to him for action.

He acted outside of God’s will and timing.

I believe he wanted to do the right thing – but he went about it the wrong way – in his own physical power and self-sufficient way.

Moses was frustrated with life and became passive Ex. 2:20-23

Moses settled for life as a passive pastor (shepherd).

He was a prince of Egypt – a member of the royal family of the most powerful nation on earth – and he ends up tending sheep and goats for 40 years!

Look with me at **Exodus 2:20-23**

20 “And where is he?” he asked his daughters. “Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat.”

21 “Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage.

22 Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, ‘I have become an alien in a foreign land.’

23 During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God.”

We see 2 things happening in Moses’ life – and I believe we see something of his mindset / thinking in these verses also.

First, we see the length of time he is in hiding – 40 years (vs. 23: “long period”; Acts 7:30)! To go from the palace of Egypt – to the nomadic tents in the Midian desert is a drastic demotion.

I believe Moses loses his passion for life and his passion for justice. Of course this didn’t happen all at once, but over the years, I believe the passions of his youth faded away and he settled into a life of small goals.

Now, I don’t believe caring for and providing for your family over 4 decades is a small thing – but this is Moses we’re talking about!

I believe God calls each of us to something in addition to providing for and serving our own family. He calls each believer to serve His Bride – the Church – and God has gifted and equipped each of His kids to fulfill their part of the Body of Christ!

Back to Moses...

Second, I believe he is frustrated with his new life – especially in the early years – and I believe we see this frustration revealed in the names of his two sons – Gershom and Eliezer.

Gershom’s name means: ‘I have become an alien in a foreign land.’

Eliēzer’s name means: ‘My father's God was my helper; He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.’

Exodus 18:4

“...and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, ‘My father's God was my helper; He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.’”

Gershom was born first – which means his birth was chronologically closest to Moses’ arrival in Midian and new life he took on. The naming of Gershom focuses on how Moses has been displaced – it’s a reminder of what he doesn’t have – a reminder of his reduced status and power – from royalty to rancher.

Eliezer’s name also looks back to what happened – there’s nothing hopeful about the future in these names. Moses was frustrated over the drastic change in his life – and instead of seeking God’s will and God’s help to make a difference in the life of his fellow Hebrews in Egypt, he settles into a passive lifestyle for the next 40 years.

But then...God shows up in the burning bush – and another chapter in Moses’ life begins to unfold...but:

Moses lacked confidence to succeed in God's mission for his life.

Moses became a fearful / hesitant prophet, and we know this was his mindset because of the excuses he gave to God. He starts out with polite excuses – ‘beating around the bush’ (pun intended!) to hint at his unwillingness to say ‘yes’ to God’s call on his life. (vs. 10)

Exodus 3:11

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

Exodus 3:13

Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

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’?”

Have you ever had someone make excuse after excuse for why they can’t do something?

Then he begins to make excuses that don’t seem to be based in reality.

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.”

Exodus 4:13

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

Exodus 6:12

But Moses said to the LORD, “If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips ?”

Exodus 6:30 *(repeating excuse from vs. 12)*

But Moses said to the LORD, “Since I speak with faltering lips, why would Pharaoh listen to me?”

You might think Moses was just really humble – or he was an introvert – or maybe he wasn’t that smart or that talented - maybe he was having a bad day – or he was down on himself because his fantasy football team wasn’t doing so well!

The real reason seems to be his willingness – not his ability, and I believe he was unwilling because he lacked confidence. He lost his mojo!

He had all the training and ability – due to his privileged status in the royal family of Egypt...

Acts 7:22

“Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.” (He was a Yale / Harvard Grad!!)

But after his first attempt at saving the Hebrews from their slavery was rejected (Ex. 2:14-15), and after spending 40 years as a nomadic shepherd (Acts 7:30) he eventually lost hope – lost his passion – and lost his confidence in doing anything of significance.

I think this is where many people in modern American churches are living. They are so busy with life – so beaten down by the culture’s tone and attitude toward

Christians that they have passed the point of frustration and have accepted a passive life where they don't accomplish...they don't even try to do great things for God! They have accepted the culture's desire for them to keep their faith to themselves, and simply take care of their family and remain in the shadows.

But God has called to more – to great things in His name!

Moses was used by God in great ways!

I don't have a specific verse for this point – but I have the entire history of:

Moses' confrontation of Pharaoh to free the Hebrew people...

The Exodus from Egypt...

His leadership as they witnessed God's protection and deliverance from Egypt's army at the Red Sea...

His spiritual growth as he became the mediator between God and the nation...

His governance over the nation...

His skill at selecting and mentoring Joshua...

The entire history of Israel is witness to the greatness of Moses.

His greatness is not in his own physical or mental abilities, but in the promises, provision and power of God.

Apply it...

Moses lacked confidence – you may empathize with him – you may lack confidence also.

Maybe something in your past makes you think God can't use you.

Maybe you've settled into a life without God's greater purpose.

Maybe you lack confidence because you don't believe you're talented enough to do something for the Kingdom of God.

Video: Jake Olson – USC Long-snapper (blind)

God encouraged Moses by 3 things:

God's *presence* would be with him

Ex. 3:12

And God said, "I will be with you."

Don't minimize how important this is!

God provides Moses a *partner* for the mission

His brother, Aaron – would be a partner – a mouthpiece for the mission.

Ex. 4:14-16

"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.”

God provides the power to accomplish the mission

Ex. 4:17

“But take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it.”

God tells Moses that He would perform many powerful signs / miracles on behalf of Moses and His people. God’s presence would be with Moses – He gave Moses a partner – and He gave Moses the power to do great signs and wonders!

These are the same 3 things God promises us today!
God calls us to fulfill the mission of His Church – to reach people for Christ and to help them grow in their faith.

God calls us to love one another – and to love your neighbors as we love ourselves.

God calls us to live a holy life – a life where we pursue righteousness – good works – and resist the temptations to sin and wickedness.

God calls us to live with a spirit of grace and truth.
And to help us obey these clear commands – God promises to:

- Never leave us or forsake us (Matt. 28:20) – we can never escape His presence in our lives! He is not only *omnipresent*, but His Holy Spirit indwells each believer in Jesus.
- He has designed the Church to be a community of believers – a place where we help one another obey the commands of God – We have many partners in the ministry of the Church!
- He has given us the power and ability to fill our role in the Body of Christ. The spiritual gifts given to every single Christian is the supernatural power and enabling of God in our life to fulfill the mission of the Church.

Close in prayer