

Here I am. Send me!
Fellowship Dallas
Sunday, June 4th, 2023

I volunteer as the Global Outreach Director here at Fellowship. That means I work with our missionaries and partners all over the world and I help organize the mission trips we take as a church.

I spent some of my childhood overseas as a missionary. In 1995 my father. Felt a stirring in his heart to drop everything: career, established life, comfort. And move our whole family to Far East of Russia, beyond Siberia. In response to that call my father prayed. "Lord, I'll go if you want me too." More on this story later.

This morning we are going to talk about 3 things.

- "How to respond to God's calling"
- "Update on what God is doing around the world and how Fellowship is participating."
- "I'm recruiting" Volunteers, helpers, goers and givers.

JOKE: I'm reminded of the story of a man who wanted a single verse from the Bible to guide his life- a "life verse." So he got himself a Bible with a good Flop Factor, a spaghetti spine. With his eyes closed he flopped it open, and pointed to pick. Opening his eyes he read: "He slipped out of his shirt and ran away naked." Gulp! Let's try 2 out of 3, something has gone wrong. Again he closed his eyes, let the Bible fall open and read: "Go now and do likewise" What?! Let's go 3 out of 5. And this time he reads: "And what you do, do quickly!"

This is a humorous look at the potential danger of letting the Bible guide your life. There is a right way and a wrong way. We are going to do it carefully today.

Let's compare and contrast two famous "calls" to men in the Old Testament. Their calls from God are separated in time by 800 years, and yet they are strikingly similar. We can learn from the similarities and differences.

It is also important to note that these callings are not normal, most people called by God are not called in this dramatic fashion. God has a calling for each of us, and while he can do it anyway He wants, he probably won't call you in the style He did in these two cases.

Let's start with a man in an identity crisis. He was adopted, leaving him confused about his belonging and family. Lonely-only one his age because the king had all the boys his age killed in the entire country. He's a fugitive, running from the consequences of committing murder.

He's a man without a clear home; separated from his people. *"Who even are his people?"* On top of this, He seems to have debilitating anxiety.

Please turn with me to **Exodus 3**.

This is the calling of Moses. And we are going to work through this conversation between God and Moses verse by verse. We'll see that Moses is a man with a low view of himself, and worse, a low understanding of who God is.

And we will see that: **When we don't know who God is, we have a flawed understanding of who we are and what we are supposed to do.**

Exodus 3:1 One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God. **2** There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. **3** "This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it."

4 When the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

"Here I am!" Moses replied.

When God calls to you, answering Him is a good start.

5 "Do not come any closer," the Lord warned. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on **holy** ground. **6 I am** the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

Moses recognizes and respects God's name and title. That's building on his good start. Now God is going to give him specific instructions. Notice how much God says "I" in this next part.

7 Then the Lord told him, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, **I am** aware of their suffering. **8 So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land.** It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. **9** Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached **me**, and **I** have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. **10 Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.**"

11 But Moses **protested** to God, “Who **am I** to appear before Pharaoh? Who **am I** to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?”

Uh oh! Moses has taken the wrong turn here.

Some translations might say “said” instead of “protested.” I like how this translation highlights what Moses is really doing.

God has been making statements about God’s own identity, but Moses is absorbed by distracting self focus. And he is worried about himself.

Some of you do this too. You are consumed by anxiety and self-doubt that hinders you from living out your God-given Purpose. I’ve been there.

Also, it isn’t a smart idea to protest God.

Recall that Moses is also wanted for murder in Egypt. And he has established a life where he is now, God’s call is going to mess that up.

Doing the comfortable thing isn’t always the God honoring thing.

12 God answered, “I will be with you.

Moses, you are focused on the wrong “*who*.”

And this is your sign that **I am** the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain.”

Isn’t that odd? God’s sign of encouragement and comfort to Moses; His sign that He is with Moses now in this moment is that something will happen in the future. God is asking Moses to trust in Him.

13 But Moses **protested**, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

God has already answered this right at the start in verse 6. Moses' anxiety is getting the best of Him. “*I get that you keep telling me who you are, but who are you?*”

14 God replied to Moses, “**I am who I am**. 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: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations.

Moses is pushing back. When Moses asks God: “Who are you?” God responds with the confusing “I am that I am.” There is a vast amount of deep theology in this answer. But for today, let’s simply note that the confusing answer is again an invitation to trust. We see a patient God continue to ask Moses to trust Him.

I’ll summarize the next section. In the following verses God repeats the call to Moses adding more detail. He even tells him exactly how it will all end. Remember, God knows the future.

Look with me at chapter 4.

4:1 But Moses protested again, “What if they won’t believe me or listen to me? What if they say, ‘The Lord never appeared to you’?”

I’m not sure how I feel about Moses right now. It’s a mix. I’m confused. “*There’s a voice from a burning bush that you recognized early as God, and now you are unsure if you should trust Him?*”

I’m sympathetic. “*Oh bless your heart, Moses! I feel for ya man.*”

Am I mad at him some, too? Maybe.

But God, in the next set of verse, meets Moses where he is. He gives Moses the power of three miracles. God is gracious, to Moses. God is being so patient with Moses. He is patient with us too.

After the miracles we pick up v. 10.

10 But Moses pleaded with the Lord, “O Lord, I’m not very good with words. I never have been, and I’m not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.”

Have you ever felt inadequate to the task God has for you?

The US military will mark someone unfit to serve if they have certain ailments. Classification 4F. If you’ve seen the movie Captain America, you’ll recall Steve Rogers being disappointed when he is given a 4F classification preventing him from enlisting in WWII as a soldier.

This is how our world works, qualified and unqualified. It is not how God’s Kingdom works.

How does God respond?

11 Then the Lord asked Moses, “Who makes a person’s mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the Lord? **12** Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say.”

If you’ve felt inadequate, take heart that God is always enough. God isn’t limited by our inabilities. **Moses’ perceived inadequacy does not disqualify him from God’s call.**

When we trust God there is no longer anything that disqualifies us from serving God. Because God uses us as we are and makes us into who he needs us to be.

13 But Moses again pleaded, “Lord, please! Send anyone else.”

Yikes! This is a bad response to God. Direct refusal. Some of you have been there, maybe you are there right now, refusing to do something God has asked of you.

Also, I wonder if we ever refuse God indirectly. *“Oh, someone else will do that.” “I’ll leave it to the professional Christians”* While God’s plans will succeed with or without you, no one else can live out your God-given Purpose for you.

Moses is so afraid. It is normal to be fearful, but that’s not an excuse.

When I have lead mission trips with young people on them, do you know the number one question I get from their mom’s? That’s right, *“Is it safe?”* My answer is usually not what mom expects: I say, “If God has told them to go, it is safe to make them stay.”

14 Then the Lord became angry with Moses.

This took God a lot longer than it took me. God is so patient with Moses. And even in his anger, he provides the following solution.

“All right,” he said. “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he speaks well. And look! He is on his way to meet you now. He will be delighted to see you. **15** Talk to him, and put the words in his mouth. I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will instruct you both in what to do. **16** Aaron will be your spokesman to the people. He will be your mouthpiece, and you will stand in the place of God for him, telling him what to say. **17** And take your shepherd’s staff with you, and use it to perform the miraculous signs I have shown you.”

A big lesson we see here is that: **Serving God requires that we trust God.**

Serving God in a way that pleases Him requires us to trust Him. You may recall these two verses.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews 11:6

“...to obey is better than sacrifice...” 1 Samuel 15:22

In preparation for this sermon I looked up studies on the state of trust in America. It is down, a lot. Americans are less trusting than we used to be. Kids don't stay out until the street lights come on. We distrust the government, schools, the police, politicians (even if they are our specific flavor), churches, banks, AND Americans ARE LESS TRUSTING OF EACH OTHER.

I wonder if living in a culture of increasing distrust will make it harder for us to trust God because we are out of practice and don't see it as important or safe. Even so, God is infinitely trustworthy. Those other institutions may not merit your trust, but God does!

Let's leave Moses for now and jump forward 800 years. Again Israel is displaced and needs a voice to guide them to God.

Isaiah 6

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **2** Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. **3** And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

I love this part of Scripture! It is one of the few places we get a glimpse into heaven. Isaiah says he saw God, but then only describes the things around God. His robe, the building, the angels. And all of them are so deeply awesome. How much grander must God be?

Verse 5

5 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”

Yeah, that seems like an appropriate reaction.

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. **7** With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips;

your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

This whole scene reminds me of the call of Moses. We’ve got fire. There’s a holy space. An action of purification: removing sandals & burning coal. And then there’s a call to step into a God-given purpose.

But here is the difference:

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “**Here am I. Send me!**”

Isaiah is instantly all in! He commits right away. He doesn’t even know yet what God wants Him to do.

When we trust God and know who He is, we aren’t hesitant to serve Him. The more we know God the more we are sure of God’s call in our life.

Let’s recap these two conversations with God.

Summary Photo

Moses	Isaiah
Here I am.	Here I am.
Who am I to do this?	Send me!
Who are you?	
What if they don’t accept me?	
I don’t speak well.	
Send someone else!	

Both callings demonstrate God's sovereignty and His willingness to use flawed human beings to accomplish His purposes.

Remember my father's prayer? "I'll go to Russia if you want me too." That was a pious-sounding, but ultimately untrusting prayer. My father changed his prayer. Together our whole family prayed instead, "Lord, We'll go unless You stop us." And that made all the difference. Perceived barriers vaporized, funds were donated in excess, doors were opened in astounding ways.

Today is "Serve Your World" Sunday at Fellowship. I'm going to mention some of the ways Fellowship is currently serving around the world, and invite you to consider how you can serve. But let me be clear, my invitation to you isn't that same as God's calling. I'll let you and the Holy Spirit decide how you should respond together. Not everyone is called to go, but we are all called to serve in some way.

Fellowship is mostly focused on pastor training and leader development. And much of our actions are in the developing world. We have 4 deep strategic partnerships, and support about 20 individual missionaries.

This is not all Fellowship is up to, just a few highlights. Here's some ways you can help.




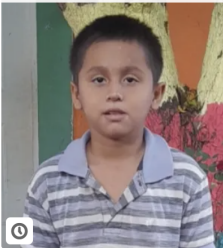


Pray & Encourage:

- Pre/post slide each week, or you can see them on the Serve wall on the concourse.
- Pre/post sample slide
- Life groups: Would you bundle and send a care package to a missionary?

Give:

- Sponsor a child in Somotillo, Nicaragua through Compassion International. 60 kids in need. \$43 per month. Compassion ALL the Kids, 129, Are currently sponsored by you-Fellowship Dallas. However, new kids have been born or moved to the area and are now in need of sponsorship.

COMPASSION PHOTO

 <p>María</p> <p>Nicaragua</p> <p>2/28/2014</p> <p>CHOOSE ME</p> <p>Learn More</p>	 <p>Lender</p> <p>Nicaragua</p> <p>3/15/2014</p> <p>CHOOSE ME</p> <p>Learn More</p>	 <p>Katherine</p> <p>Nicaragua</p> <p>1/19/2014</p> <p>CHOOSE ME</p> <p>Learn More</p>
<p>WAITING 448 DAYS</p>  <p>Heyner</p> <p>Nicaragua</p> <p>12/23/2013</p> <p>CHOOSE ME</p>	 <p>Geyling</p> <p>Nicaragua</p> <p>11/23/2015</p> <p>CHOOSE ME</p>	<p>WAITING 434 DAYS</p>  <p>Fernando</p> <p>Nicaragua</p> <p>5/27/2015</p> <p>CHOOSE ME</p>

- Donate specifically to our missions fund. LINK:
<https://pushpay.com/g/fellowshipdallas?fnd=gBcnJVHkJUjrdOdp685SQ&fndv=Lock&a=50&r=Yes&lang=en&src=pcgl>
 Online Donation Option

Fellowship Dallas Español Your Account

Give

\$ 100,000.00

Gift type

Give one time Set up recurring

Frequency

Every week Every 2 weeks Every month 1st & 15th monthly

Starting

Apr 24, 2023 (Today)

Fellowship General Fund

Missions

Care Fund

Next

- Help build the 3rd floor of the school in India! 13 staff, 250 kids in school this year! A special, safe place to house & train pastors year round. The need is big to complete the construction. Over and above your regular giving, a special extra gift. They are 100% dependent on us.

India Students



Go:

- Nicaragua: Would you like to help train pastors and church leaders that have no access to formal training? Our partnership with IBAC means I'm looking for people willing to go and teach. No seminary required. No Spanish Required, just a bonus.

- YA: Panama. November 8-13. Rural Panama, to help underserved people group. No Spanish Required, just a bonus.
- Women: Costa Rica. October 7 -13. No Spanish Required. Do you speak Spanish? It isn't required, but if you do, that instant means you can be of great purpose here.
- And Other trips too.

Take courage: As my father says, "90% of missions is just showing up."

Let's take a moment to each reflect on God's call and if you are being called to Pray, or Give, or Go. I'll be back with a final word in a moment.

MUSIC

As a close: Hebrews 11.

I've been a bit hard on Moses this morning. On one hand, I really think he deserves it. But here is the miraculous thing. In Hebrews chapter 11, we find the "Hall of Faith". It is a list of God's mightiest heroes.

It lists Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, & Joseph. Who by faith did amazing things for Christ. And then we come to verse 24.

24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.

Moses was mightily used by God. Because even though he was reluctant and anxious, he chose to trust and serve God.

As you leave, today there are arrows on the ground leading you to the Serve Wall on the concourse. There's more information about some of the options I mentioned today, and I'll be over there. If God is stirring your heart for one of these actions, I'd like to talk with you about it. **OR SERVE CARD**

Let's pray: "Lord, please make us a people who know you and trust you so that we say. "Here I am. Send me!" Amen.

Join me at the serve wall, or if you are new here don't forget about Discover. You are dismissed.