

Overwhelmed
I Can't Do This, God!
Exodus 3:11-14; 4:1-13

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Introduction to Text: Last week we began a series of messages on this one word: Overwhelmed. The lesson was simple: God loves you! Today, I want to show you a familiar Bible character who was overwhelmed. Don't you find comfort in knowing that great heroes of the Bible were sometimes overwhelmed? In fact, by the time that we are done today, I want you to be able to see that being overwhelmed is not all that bad of a place to be. Being overwhelmed, in a proper context, may be the exact place where God wants you to be. In that place of being overwhelmed, we hopefully will be totally dependent upon God.

As we begin today, I want you to understand that I am not going to say one single thing this morning that you do not already know. This is not going to be that message that you leave saying, "I've never heard that before now." You are not going to be awe-struck that you have learned some new principle for your life. Rather, hopefully, you will be reminded of some things you already know. Being reminded of these things once again, you will be able to say, "Yes, I can!"

The person we learn from today is Moses. God appeared to him in a burning bush and revealed to him the plan to use him to lead the people of Israel out of their slavery in Egypt. The problem is that Moses has been in hiding for the past 40 years. In a moment of rage, he had killed an Egyptian for beating a fellow Hebrew. Fearing for his life, he had been away for the past forty years. You can imagine why Moses was overwhelmed with this news of what God was asking him to do.

Text: ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this *shall be* a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." ¹³ Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What *is* His name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

¹ Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"

² So the LORD said to him, "What *is* that in your hand?"
He said, "A rod."

³ And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. ⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand

and take *it* by the tail” (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), ⁵ “that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”

⁶ Furthermore the LORD said to him, “Now put your hand in your bosom.” And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous, like snow. ⁷ And He said, “Put your hand in your bosom again.” So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his *other* flesh. ⁸

“Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. ⁹ And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour *it* on the dry *land*. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry *land*.”

¹⁰ Then Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

¹¹ So the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have* not I, the LORD? ¹² Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

¹³ But he said, “O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever *else* You may send.”

Introduction: I asked the question last week, “Have you ever been overwhelmed?” I’m taking that question a step farther this week. “Have you ever been overwhelmed by what God is asking you to do?” It may be something that we would call “of ministry”—teach a class, witness to a friend, go on a mission trip. That overwhelming stuff of life may just be the everyday stuff of life—be a mom, be a dad, confront a person with sin. But your response is that of Moses’: Is there somebody else? Or, as I have worded this message, “I Can’t Do This!”

If that’s you, this morning, you need to hear the promises of God. God gave Moses several promises and He gives us those same promises.

Promises from God when You Don’t Think You Can

1. God has a plan for your life. If God has a plan for your life, what He is asking you to do is part of that plan. Here was God’s plan. God would use Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. Nothing else mattered. When it is truly God’s plan, nothing else matters. Now, please understand, when we are outside the will of God, we have no guarantee of His blessing. However, when we are in the will of God, following His plan for our life, we ought to be encouraged that God is going to see that plan through in our lives.
2. God has prepared you for that plan. If God has a plan for your life, God also promises you that He will prepare you to carry out that plan. Moses, though he didn’t know it at the time, had been uniquely prepared to carry out the assignment God was now giving. Moses was born a Hebrew, but raised in Pharaoh’s

household. Moses had spent the last 40 years away from his home. In God's providence, Moses was just the man to spend the next 40 years wandering around in the wilderness with no home.

We have been prepared for the assignment God is giving us. Every failure and every triumph has prepared you. Every experience has shaped you. God does not waste even the most difficult experiences of your life. Instead of the pain, see the preparation. Looking back, you will know that God has prepared you.

Two personal experiences come quickly to my mind. When I was in High School and College, I spent most of spring and summer evenings umpiring youth baseball games. That is, I spent most of my spring and summer evenings hearing a variety of opinions. Over a period of time, the temptation is to begin to listen to those opinions rather than make decisions that you knew were right based on how you were seeing things. As a pastor, I have learned that there are always lots of opinions, and though we listen, we cannot be persuaded by those opinions.

Another experience that comes to mind is my oral examination for my Ph.D. What a joy that was! For two hours, a group of professors could theoretically ask me anything about the New Testament, and I was supposed to have an answer. The truth is they could have asked me a question in the first five minutes that I could not answer. I think about those two hours often when someone says, "Pastor, I want to ask you a question."

Every experience—the tragic and triumphant, the ordinary and the extraordinary all have a place in God's preparation. Our comfort is in knowing that God's preparation is perfect for the plan.

3. God promises His presence. A third promise is that God is going to always be with us. God revealing Himself as "I AM" is probably the most familiar part of this story to us. God had already said, "I will certainly be with you." But more than just a statement, He gives this thought as a name.

I remind you that I said in the beginning that I'm not going to say anything this morning that you do not already know. I see my job this morning as just reminding you of some things you already know. I want you to be reminded that one of the greatest truths that you can know when you are overwhelmed is that you are not alone.

A few weeks ago, my family was in the Memphis area when the tornadoes hit. I believe over 50 people were killed in about a 50 mile radius of us. Three people were killed less than a mile from us. Linett and I both agreed later that we never really were frightened. I would like to be able to tell you that it was some great faith and confidence in God. The reality is that we were with a hotel full of people. The hotel management told us what to do. We didn't have to make any decisions. We were not *alone*.

The truth is—we are never alone, in any circumstance of life. God promises His presence.

4. God promises His power. Here is another promise. God promises us great power. In chapter 4, not content with just God's presence, Moses says, "But suppose they will not believe me...." (4:1) At that excuse, God promises His power.

Two other promises of Scripture are important at this point. One I call "God's Answer for Every Problem." The Scripture is 2 Corinthians 12:9. "And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Paul was saying that the greater the problem the more God revealed His power.

The other Scripture is one quite frankly that I'm not sure we can get our hearts around this morning. If we could, there would not be one single worry in the world to us. The verses are part of a prayer that Paul makes for the Saints in Ephesus. He prays that they would know... "what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places* (Ephesians 1:19-20) What does that mean? The same power that raised Christ from the dead is being made available to us.

5. God's desire is to position you to be totally dependent upon Him. Finally, we learn this promise. God is trying to move us to be totally dependent upon Him. If you are overwhelmed, you might be just ready to say, "God, I can't do this." You know what? That is exactly what He wants you to say. But now, instead of giving up or throwing in the towel, you will say, "O.K. God, I'm ready for you to take control.

When you say that, then God can say, "I will touch your lips and give you something to say. I will touch the Sea and remove your greatest obstacle. I will touch the hearts of people and move them on to my plan."

When you think about it—here is the message of the cross. We come to that place where we are willing to say, "I can't, but He can!" That's the message of salvation.