

## Have FAITH, Will Travel Exodus 2-4

Good morning! This morning, I'd like to share with you a message on how to travel far in life by faith. We're going to take a look at a person in the Bible who had been through much, someone who was a doubter, but by God's grace and mercy, became a believer, someone who was so faith-filled that he led an entire nation to take a journey from their place of captivity to a place of freedom.

This message actually is the first in a series of message that I'm going to share with you for the month of September. It's a part of a message series I'm calling, "Journey to the Center of God's Will". In this series, we're going to study the lives of a number of Bible characters, 5 of them maybe, and see what we can learn from them. These characters were appointed by God to do something specific for him. It was God's will that they do something for him. And they pursued it until God's will was fulfilled in their lives. In the end God was glorified and his purposes were accomplished. Note, however, that these characters were not perfect. They made mistakes just you and I.

But despite their shortcomings, God did not give up on them. Just like with each of you. God will not give up on you. He is not finished with you yet. Say to the person next to you, “God is not finished with you yet.” All you need is faith. Say that, “All you need is faith.”

In this message, we’re going to look at Moses. He was a nobody but in the end he became somebody. Was it because of his own doing? Nope. But because of God’s doing. In fact, if God did not intervene in his life, he could have become one of the miserable failures in history.

Now, Moses actually wanted to become extraordinary at the outset. He knew he was chosen by God to save his people. So he set out to do what God wanted him to do. But his timing was off. Worse, he wanted to do it on his own. As a result, he discovered that he was just ordinary like everybody else. He failed. Big time. And he became discouraged and he went away and he thought he would forever be just an ordinary person somewhere, doing ordinary things like shepherding a flock.

But we know he made a turn-around. We know that he traveled far, figuratively and literally. From being ordinary, he became extraordinary figuratively. And literally, from Egypt, he

went to Midian, then back to Egypt then to the Red Sea and into the wilderness as he led God's people to the boundary of the Promised Land.

This morning, I'm going to talk about how to travel far in your life's journey just like Moses. As the title of this message says, Have Faith, Will Travel. And so, if you want to travel far in life, you have to have faith. Faith is what is going to help you. But what is Faith?

I read the story of this lady, Mrs. Smith, who came to her pastor to tell him, "I'm so scared! Joe says he's going to kill me if I continue to come to your church."

"Yes, yes, my child," replied the pastor, more than a little tired of hearing this over and over. "I will continue to pray for you, Mrs. Smith. Have faith - the Lord will watch over you."

"Oh yes, he has kept me safe thus far, only....."

"Only what, my child?"

"Well, now he says if I keep coming to your church, he's going to kill YOU!"

"Well, now," said the pastor, "Perhaps it's time for you to check out that little church on the other side of town."

Looks like that pastor's faith is not the real thing.

What is real faith? You know, It seems if you put the word "real" in front of anything it sells more -- real coffee or real leather. We're interested in the genuine article. We want the real deal. This explains why there's an explosion of reality shows.

How would you define real faith then? Let's look at Hebrews 11:1 (NLT), *"Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see."*

In other words, faith is being sure that something will happen when it hasn't happened yet. Also, faith is believing the impossible. But, most of all, faith is putting your trust in God. Wholeheartedly. Completely. When you read the whole of Hebrews 11, you'll see how the people of God exercised faith in God in order to do things they normally wouldn't be able to do. That is why Hebrews 11 is sometimes called the Hall of Faith.

The question now is, How do you develop a faith like what these people in the Hall of Faith had? A faith that stands the test of time. A faith that will never sink and never run dry? Is there a formula? Do you take vitamins for it? Is it on Facebook?

This morning, let me give you five things you can do to develop a strong solid faith. Let's look at these things using the life of Moses as our background. The first thing you do is

## 1. FEAR NOT

I'm sure every one of us in this room is afraid of at least one thing. Some are afraid of the dark – we call that Lygophobia. Some are afraid of crowds – we call that Agoraphobia. Some of heights – we call that altophobia. Some are afraid of their wives. What do you call that?

The reason many of us have fear in our hearts is that we imagine things. Our minds play trick on us. Sometimes our fears are real, but most of the time they are not. Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his inaugural address, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." In short, don't be fearful.

But that's easier said than done. When your spouse is two-timing, when your best friend betrays you, when the doctor says you have a serious sickness, when your grades are failing, how can you not be fearful?

Why are we fearful? It's because it's in our make-up. We are fallen human beings. You see, when God created Adam and Eve, he created them as perfect human beings. As such, they had

command over all of God's creation on earth. God said to Adam and Eve, "Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground." (Gen. 1:28) In fact, they were not afraid of any animals including the serpent, a very big snake. How many of you would dare come close to a snake and talk to a snake? But that's what Eve did. She had this not-so-pleasant conversation with a very big snake and before she knew it, she fell in the trap of the snake. You see, the snake, who actually was Satan, told Eve that God lied to them when God told them they would die when they ate of the fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve listened to the serpent, she ate, Adam ate, and they committed the first sin. They disobeyed God. And what was the result? They became imperfect, and fear started to take hold of them.

How do I know that? The Bible says that after they disobeyed God, God went looking for them. God called to Adam, "Where are you?" And Adam replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was AFRAID because I was naked." (Genesis 3:10) Adam was afraid. We, being the descendants of Adam, inherited this emotional disposition.

Moses, as we know, is a man of faith, and that is why he appears in the Hall of Faith. But there was a time he was fearful. When he was 40 years old, he killed an Egyptian after seeing the Egyptian beating a Hebrew. The Bible says, “The next day, when Moses went out to visit his people again, he saw two Hebrew men fighting. ‘Why are you beating up your friend?’ Moses said to the one who had started the fight. The man replied, ‘Who appointed you to be our prince and judge? Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?’ Then Moses was AFRAID, thinking, ‘Everyone knows what I did.’” (Exodus 2:13-14)

So, just like in the case of Moses, our fears can also be the result of something we did or something that happened to us. In short, it can be the result of a bad experience. In the case of Moses, because of his bad experience, he became a recluse, a runaway. He left Egypt and went to Midian, a distance of about 300 miles. He went as far as he could because he became afraid of people. He became insecure and lost his confidence. He didn’t want to mingle with people anymore. He forgot about his dreams of doing something significant. From being a prince in Egypt he became a lowly shepherd in Midian.

But God wasn't finished with Moses. In time, God appeared to him in a burning bush. God hadn't forgotten Moses. In the same way, he hasn't forgotten you. You may be afraid of something and I wish I can give you a formula or a magic word to vanish your fears away. But, what I can give you is much more than a formula or a magic word. I'll give you a verse from the Bible on which hinges your ability to live a life that is fear-free.

Isaiah 43:1, *"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine."*

God actually commands you, "DO NOT BE AFRAID!" Why? Because he hasn't forgotten you. He knows you by name. He is holding you secure in his hand! If you're a Christian, remember that God has redeemed you, meaning he has bought you with a price and the price is the blood of Jesus. That's why you're precious to him. You can claim his promise in Hebrews 13:5 (MSG), *"I'll never let you down, never walk off and leave you."* God will stick to you like a glue.

Fear not, that's the first thing you do if you want to develop a strong, solid faith. The second thing you do is to

## 2. AVOID EXCUSES

So, God appears to Moses in a burning bush in Mt. Sinai. God told him that he was the chosen one who would lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God promised that he would rescue his people and lead them to the Promised Land. But what was Moses' response? "Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11) He gave an excuse. Why? Because he didn't believe that he could do it. Of course, he couldn't do it by himself. He needed God. So, in the next verse God assures him, "I will be with you. 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." (Exodus 3:12)

That should have persuaded Moses, right? Wrong. Again, he offers an excuse, "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?" (Exodus 3:13) Moses is trying to shirk his responsibility. This back-and-forth between God and Moses went on for some time. God would assure him and Moses had a ready excuse like "What if they won't believe me or listen to me?" (Exodus 4:1) or "I'm not very good with words. I get tongue-tied, and my words get

tangled.” (Exodus 4:10) or “Lord, please! Send anyone else.”  
(Exodus 4:13)

All these excuses reveal that Moses didn't have enough faith in God. Well, I guess that's what happens after one has been out of the will of God for 40 years. You see, he spent 40 years of his life in Midian. He got married there and raised a family. Whatever confidence he had as a former Prince of Egypt was gone.

Of course, all the skills and knowledge were still there but he was just afraid to step out again after being rejected by his own people.

God may also be calling you to step out in faith. He may be wanting you to do something for him. Perhaps, he wants you to get more involved in church. To serve him. Like singing, playing an instrument, teaching, witnessing to others about Jesus, going on missions, and so on. But like Moses, you've been giving an excuse. “Lord, I'm too young.” “Lord, I'm too old” “Lord, I'm not a good speaker.” “I don't have enough money.” “I don't think I can't carry a tune.” “I'm busy with my studies.”

I myself offered an excuse when God called me to ministry. I remember it was in Australia when the Lord spoke to my heart. I was 30 years old then and working as a computer programmer. In church, the pastor's 18 year old son went to the front and talked about God's call in his life. He said he was entering seminary after graduating from high school. As he was speaking, I felt God was impressing on me the same thing. He wanted me to enter Bible school. I went home trying to make sense of it because I wasn't a good speaker. You won't believe it but I'm really the silent type. When I was young, people would comment how I wouldn't talk to someone if that someone didn't talk to me first. I wouldn't initiate a conversation with anyone. I was so poor in speaking that I had a hard time courting a girl. I was 29 years old when I first dated a girl. That was not my wife. I dated my wife when I was 39.

Anyway, that was my excuse. "Lord, I don't know how to speak. I get nervous before people." But God wouldn't take 'No' for an answer and he made sure I knew he was guiding me. I remember one time in the same church in Australia, I mustered enough courage to play the guitar and sing.

I was so nervous I felt I bombed. (Let me sing a song...)

Although a friend of mine in the church encouraged me I felt discouraged and I said to God, “Lord, are you really calling me to the ministry? I couldn’t even sing a song well.” And I added, “If you really are calling me, give me an opportunity to speak before a crowd.” I figured that was close to impossible. The next day, in the office, a friend of mine called me on the phone and said, “Rolly, this Saturday, our Filipino group is having a fellowship at Punchbowl Church in Sydney. Can you come? And can you emcee the program?” Well, I realized then that God really called me to the ministry.

Folks, what I’m saying is, don’t make your lack of abilities, your lack of money, your lack of good looks, your lack of intelligence, an excuse to not obey God. God will work through you. You see, God is looking for your availability, not your ability. He’s got everything under control. As the saying goes, “He’s got this.”

So, fear not. Avoid excuses.

The third thing you must do to develop a strong, solid faith is to

### **3. IMBIBE LESSONS FROM GOD**

In the course of your life's journey, God teaches you lessons. Lessons about his character. For example, his faithfulness, his love, his kindness, and his power. God wants you to learn all these and receive these and let them sink deep into your hearts and minds. That way, you can go back to them time and again especially when you're in a tight spot.

When Moses encountered God in the mountain, he was a fearful man. He was insecure. He didn't believe in himself. Worse, he didn't believe in what God can do. But God understood his situation, had patience with him, and so showed Moses who he was by teaching him lessons about his character.

First, he gave his name to Moses as "I am who I am," a translation of a Hebrew name which is synonymous to Yahweh because they come from the same Hebrew root word. This name of God means that he is the one who has always existed, the source of all energy, and the one who never changes.

Then, God also showed Moses that he is a loving and compassionate God. In Exodus 3:16-17, God says to Moses, "Now go and call together all the elders of Israel. Tell them, 'Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—has appeared to me. He told me, 'I have been

watching closely, and I see how the Egyptians are treating you. I have promised to rescue you from your oppression in Egypt. I will lead you to a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.”

Finally, God performed miracles in front of Moses. Like turning Moses’ staff into a snake and back into a staff again. God wanted to show Moses that he was powerful and can do the impossible.

Did Moses learn from these lessons? Well, no. Either he was a slow learner or he just didn’t want to learn. I suspect it’s the latter. He was so afraid he wasn’t thinking straight.

Now, the great thing about God is he never looked down on Moses. He didn’t dismiss him and say, “You will never amount to anything. I can’t use you. Sorry.” Look, despite Moses’ fears and excuses, God did not leave Moses. Why, because, first of all, God is a loving, merciful, and faithful God. **2 Timothy 2:13 (NIV)** says, “If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” God is faithful, that is his nature. And so, even if you have all these fears and all those excuses, God will never leave you nor forsake you. **Phil. 1:6** says, “And I am

certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”

Are you afraid, are you nervous, are you feeling like God can't use you? He can, only if you would learn the lessons he is teaching you. You can learn from his Word, first of all, the Bible. It's filled with stories of how God used ordinary people in the past. You can also learn lessons about the way that God has shown himself faithful to you in the past. And you can use these lessons to guide you in the future.

Now, because God chose Moses and wanted to use him, he even provided help for Moses. That's how good God is. God used Aaron, Moses' brother, to become his spokesman. Moses then began to learn gradually. His fears began to slowly fade away. He didn't offer excuses anymore. His confidence came back. And he started to speak on his own.

Which brings us to our fourth point.

#### 4. Trust God. Always.

God is in the business of transforming people, changing them to become the persons he wants them to be. Moses had fallen so greatly. From prince to pauper, so to speak. But God

lifted him up, and raised him up again, to do mighty things for him.

When Moses realized that God was really serious in helping him to recover from his past, he began to put his trust in God. Now, he trusted God's promise to bring the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and lead them to a place that is flowing with milk and honey. Suddenly, he didn't feel alone anymore. With his new-found faith, he began to feel more confident and decided to allow God to use him.

You see, trust is the key. You just need to trust God when it seems confusing now and you're afraid. The Bible says in Proverbs 3:5 and I'm quoting from the Message version because I like what it says, "Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own."

Don't try to figure out everything on your own. That was Moses' problem. Years ago, he thought that by rescuing a Hebrew from an Egyptian, he would gain the respect of the other Hebrews and he would be hailed as their savior. It turned out otherwise. He should have waited for God's timing and instructions. God had already figured it out.

Why can you trust God? For the simple reason that he is in control. And you are not. Some people think they are. Like these airline personnel. They boasted about this modern airplane that their company was flying for the first time. When all passengers were seated, a voice came over the PA and announced, “Ladies and gentlemen, it may interest you to know that you are traveling in the world’s first completely automated and computerized plane. Now just sit back and relax because nothing can go wrong...wrong...wrong...”

Something ultimately goes wrong when you try to take control of your situation. You are imperfect and, therefore, you are bound to make mistakes. You ought to turn over the controls to God who never goes wrong. He is perfect. He knows what is best for you. If you are confused or just plain indecisive, give it over to God, won’t you?

You are ordinary. He is extraordinary. But if you trust him, you too become extraordinary. That’s what Moses learned.

Finally, to develop a strong, solid faith, you must

## **5. HEED GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS**

To heed is to pay attention to. An old definition is to listen and follow. In short, it connotes the idea of taking action after

paying attention to something. Thus, to heed God's instructions is to pay attention to what God says and then, obey him.

So, Moses, once he began to trust in God, he then listened to God's instructions and obeyed him.

He went back to Egypt with Aaron his brother and started to confront Pharaoh and do battle with his magicians. Suddenly, he had become a person with extraordinary powers because he performed one miracle after another. Let's be clear though that real power came from God and not from Moses. God used Moses because Moses made himself available to God.

Like trust, obedience is also another key to experience the power of God in our lives. Trust and obey, there's no other way, as an old Christian song goes. If you'll notice in Hebrews 11, mention is made of God's ordinary people who became extraordinary because they obeyed. Verse 7, "It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He OBEYED God." Verse 8, "It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance." And as you go down the list, you'll find that all of them had faith, which is equivalent

to unwavering trust, and they put that faith into action by obedience to God.

Now, I'd like to share a story about **Billy Graham**. Probably this is the nth time I've shared it. But it is a powerful example of how obedience reaps rewards in your life. When Billy Graham was young, in his early 30's, a quite unknown evangelist at the time, he received some sort of a jeer from one of his close friends. Chuck Templeton used to be his co-evangelist at Youth for Christ. Then, Chuck went away for some time to enroll in Bible school and when he returned he confronted Billy Graham about what he thought were inconsistencies in the Bible. They were in a hotel in California.

In two weeks, Billy Graham was scheduled to hold his first evangelistic rally in LA. He had no answers to the questions of his friend. He went away feeling confused. He walked up on a hill in the back of the hotel, then opened his Bible and put it on top of a tree stump and knelt down.

He prayed, "Lord, I don't understand everything that's written on your Word and I don't have the answers to Chuck's questions. But, by faith, I trust your Word and I know that it's true." He went away leaving everything in God's hands. And

you know what, God honored that because God blessed Billy's crusade in LA so much so that what was just one week originally turned to three months. It was that crusade that launched his career as an evangelist. If Billy Graham did not obey, if he doubted God's Word, then he would have gone down to oblivion, just like Chuck Templeton.

Folks, it's not your job to understand. It is your job to obey. And it doesn't matter whether you feel like it or not. Don't think you're a hypocrite if you obey when you don't feel like it. As a matter of fact, sometimes you prove your love even more by mastering your feelings and just simply obeying the Lord. For feelings come and feelings go and feelings are deceiving. My warrant is the Word of God and nothing else is worth believing. Don't be shackled by feelings. Feelings are fickle. Don't try to understand everything God says. Live by faith whether it makes sense or not. Romans 1:17 says, "The righteous will live by faith."

Let me ask you, Are you living by faith, Or are you living in fear? If you're afraid, you need not to because Jesus is in you. And he said, "In this world, you'll have trouble. But don't be afraid, I have overcome the world." Now, if you can admit to

yourself that Jesus is not yet inside of you, let me tell you that Jesus loves you and he wants to become a part of your life. He wants to give you the courage and faith to face whatever comes your way.

He's knocking at the door of your heart and is asking you to let him in so he can make changes in your life, and make you strong, and make you do things you're afraid to do. How do you let him in? Put your faith in him. Believe in what he did for you. You see, he died for you on the cross so you may have life. He offered himself as a sacrifice because you cannot save yourself. Save from what? Save from your sins. The Bible says we are all sinners. Remember what I said earlier that Adam and Eve sinned when they disobeyed God? We inherited that sin and that's why we're fearful, and insecure, and do bad things. God wants to rescue you from those things and make you new again. **2 Cor. 5:17** says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come." Now, Jesus did not only die for you, he rose from the grave for you. By this, he has conquered sin and death forever. If you put your trust in Jesus, you too will conquer sin and death forever. **John 3:16** says, "For

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”