Why Me?

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Exodus 4:10-17

But Moses said to the Lord, ‘O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.’ [11]Then the Lord said to him, ‘Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? [12]Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak.’ [13]But he said, ‘O my Lord, please send someone else.’ [14]Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, ‘What of your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak fluently; even now he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you his heart will be glad. [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 what you shall do. [16]He indeed shall speak for you to the people; he shall serve as a mouth for you, and you shall serve as God for him. [17]Take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs.’

1. Why Me?

A man bought a new car and was so excited about driving his car. He was speeding down the highway, feeling secure in a gaggle of cars all traveling at the same speed. But in a few minutes, he noticed a police car was following him. He pulled over and the policeman approached him and asked him for his driver’s license. The officer came back from his car with a ticket and gave it to him. When the policeman was about to walk away he said, "Officer, I know I was speeding, but I don't think it's fair. There were plenty of other cars around me going just as fast as I was. Then why did I get the ticket?” The policeman asked him, "Have you ever gone fishing?" "Umm, yeah..." he replied. The officer grinned and said, "Did you catch all the fish?" He couldn’t complain after that.

2. Moses’ Protest

In life, we may often find ourselves asking the question, “Why me?” Today’s scripture says that Moses asked the same question to God. When Moses is tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law in the Midian desert, he sees a burning bush and hears God’s voice. God tells Moses his intention to deliver Israel from Egypt and commissions Moses as an ambassador. But Moses isn’t happy about this situation. Moses finds reasons as to why he isn’t suitable for the position. Yet despite Moses objections, God remains resolute

in His plan. Although God tells Moses that he is critical in the mission, God doesn't force Moses to go before Pharaoh. Instead, God tries to encourage Moses. God promises Moses that He will be with Moses and that Moses will bring the people out of Egypt.

God tells Moses that He will fulfill His promise to Israel's forefathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that Moses is simply supposed to tell the elders of Israel what God says. God tells Moses to go to the king of Egypt with the elders and lets him know in advance that the king of Egypt would not listen to Moses. God would strike the Egyptians with all the plagues that God would perform among them. Finally, the Lord reminds Moses that the deliverance of Israel depends not on human strength but solely on the power of God. He assures Moses that, ultimately, Pharaoh would let them go.

Moses is not convinced by the Lord. He asks more questions. "*What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you'*?" Moses also tells God that he is not a good speaker. But God says, "*I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak*" (verse 13). Finally, Moses asks the Lord to simply send someone else. But instead of agreeing, God tells Moses that He will send Aaron, Moses' brother, along with him and that Moses would perform miraculous signs with the staff in his hand.

3. My Calling

What would you do if you were in the same situation as Moses? When I was young in Korea, I had a sense of call to go into ministry but knew that there were many obstacles that would get in my way. At the time, I was helping to support my five sisters and younger brother, who came to visit last week. When I felt God call me, I said to God, "I'm not ready to become a pastor." But just like Moses, I felt God was not going to accept my answer. One day I said, "Lord, if you really want me to be in ministry, please wait," because I wanted to take care of my siblings. About 10 years later, I went to seminary in the U.S. and became an ordained pastor. Just as God provided Aaron to Moses, God also made a way for my siblings to get financial support from my older brother and allowed me to come to the U.S. and go into ministry full time.

Two weeks ago, I celebrated my one year anniversary at our church. This week, I had another important milestone. It has been 30 years since I graduated seminary and began to serve in the UMC, back in 1987. When I look back my ministry journey, the 30 years were full of God's grace. I am

thankful for Christine, to my older brother who allowed me to come to the U.S., and to my siblings for understanding why I felt called to go to the U.S. I am grateful that God has used me for the past 30 years for His ministry. I am also grateful that God has sent me to our church, Swift Memorial, as another blessing in my life as a pastor. When I reflect on my time in our church, it has truly been a blessing to share God's grace, love and blessing with everyone.

4. Moses' Blessing

We don't know exactly why God chose Moses as His messenger, but we know that God's choice blessed all of God's people through Moses. For 40 years during the Exodus, Moses many times complained to the Lord. In Exodus 5:22-23, "*O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and you have not rescued your people at all*." Numbers 11:11-12 says, "*He [Moses] asked the LORD, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their forefathers*?" Although he may have experienced many troubles during this time, Deuteronomy 34:7 tells us that "*Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone*." At 120 years old, Moses was healthy and also had a purpose in life and had a clear mission. God's call of Moses was a blessing to him.

5. Why Does God Call Us?

Why does God call the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land? God does not call them only for themselves, but for the people living in the land. Isaiah 42:6-7 says, "*I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and* ***a light for the Gentiles****, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness*." As God promised Abraham to be a blessing, God wanted Abraham's descendants to be a blessing.

There was a woman who became a blessing to Korean women. Her name is Elizabeth Johanna Shepping who was born in Germany on Sep. 26, 1880. She immigrated to America when she was 9 years old and studied nursing. When she was 32 years old, she was commissioned by Southern Presbyterian Church in the U.S. to serve women, widows, orphans, leprosy

patients, and other marginalized people in Korea. Until her death in June 1934, Shepping tried to identify herself not as a friend of Koreans, but wanted to **be** Korean, sharing everything she had with other Koreans. She adopted 14 children as sons and daughters and took care of 38 widows living with them. She later opened a women's seminary to equip Korean women. When she passed away in 1934, so many people followed her coffin weeping and calling her "mom." Her life motto was: "Not success, but service."

6. Conclusion

We learn from the Exodus story that God calls Moses to use him to fulfill God's dream. God also called Elizabeth Shepping to save many Korean women and children. Although God can often do great things through people, God's dreams do not always need to be big. They can often be very small. And God uses many people to do his purpose.

In our church basement and in the Swift Activity Center we find many names who participated in making a difference in our church and in our community. They may be forgotten by the people, but God will never forget them at all. Because of them, we and many generations to come are blessed.

7. Application

When I visited Antigua, Guatemala in March this year, I saw many Jesus statues without hands. I've heard that there were big volcanoes and many statues of Jesus were damaged. Experts were able to repair most of the statues, but Jesus' hands had been damaged so severely that they could not be restored. Of course, they could hire experts to make new hands, but decided to leave them without hands. When the people of the city see the statues, they pray to be Jesus' hands in the world.

St. Theresa of Avila wrote a prayer, "Lord Christ, you have no body on earth but ours, no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours are the eyes through which your compassion must look out on the world. Ours are the feet by which you may still go about doing good. Ours are the hands with which you bless people now. Bless our minds and bodies, that we may be a blessing to others. Amen." Why me? Why not us? Thanks be to God who calls us and uses us for His people.