

INTRODUCTION: Exodus 4

Exodus 4:10–13 (NKJV)

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.”

PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BRING REVELATION***Moses is often characterized as the reluctant leader***

- But Moses didn’t start out that way... in fact, Moses was someone who couldn’t let injustice go unnoticed... he had to do something about it
- But something happened that took away his zeal, his passion for justice
- You know the story... Moses grew up the son of Pharaoh’s daughter
- His mother hid him after Pharaoh made a decree to drown every Hebrew male child born
- It’s the first holocaust in Jewish history
- Pharaoh’s daughter finds him and after he is weaned from his mother, she adopts him
- Thus Moses grows up with a dual identity
- Through his birth mother he is aware of his Hebrew roots
- Through his adopted mother he is schooled as an Egyptian prince
- When Moses became a mature adult, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew brother
- He looks this way and that way and when he saw no one he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand so no one would find him
- The next day he goes out and sees 2 Hebrews fighting and he confronts them
- Why are you beating each other
- They said to Moses... who made you a prince and a judge over us?
- Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?

Then comes an important insight...

Exodus 2:14 (NKJV):

¹⁴ So Moses feared and said, “Surely this thing is known!”

- **NOTICE:** It says Moses feared and when Pharaoh heard what Moses had done he sought to kill Moses

What did Moses do?

Exodus 2:15 (NKJV):

15 But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian

- This was a life and death situation... Moses was afraid for his life
- It takes around 3 ½ months to walk from Egypt to Midian
- That's a lot of fear and on a human level it was a rational fear
- Pharaoh really could kill him
- But on a spiritual level it was irrational, because God had already spared Moses' life once before when he was a baby
- And you would think if God saved Moses from Pharaoh as a baby, God could save Moses from Pharaoh as an adult... but Moses feared
- And this is the beginning of a stronghold

The word used for fear is a powerful word

- It's the kind of fear that demoralizes, terrorizes and paralyzes you
- It's the kind of fear you have when you experience a sense of dread, like you're about to die
- That's the fear that gripped Moses' heart

Now fear is not a bad thing

- Built into every person is a fear response that kicks in when you're in danger... it's called the flight or fight response
- Your heart starts pumping, your digestion slows, your blood vessels constrict, the body releases your stored energy in fat cells
- The danger can be real or it can be perceived or imagined
- Whatever the case it's real to you and your body automatically prepares you to fight for your life or run from danger
- But when fear is combined with a wrong belief or a lie it can form what the Bible refers to as a stronghold
- A stronghold is a fortified place that we build in our mind for the purpose of self-protection from a perceived life-threatening danger
- A stronghold is not demonic, it is natural
- It is part of a sophisticated way of dealing with traumatic events, near death experiences, a violation of our will or a severe loss

- Strongholds are powerful because they fulfill a purpose to protect us from danger, but they are destructive because they are built on a lie
- It could be a lie that we believe about God, those in authority over us or about ourselves
- Because strongholds are built on unbelief demonic powers will take advantage of the unbelief to oppress and depress God's people and to put them into bondage
- AND because strongholds are built on lies, the person who has a stronghold does not accurately perceive reality... they become self-deceived into thinking that the lie they believe is actually truth

We see evidence of a stronghold in the life of Moses

Exodus 4:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰Then 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."

- Moses tells the LORD, I am not an eloquent speaker and I've never been an eloquent speaker... but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue
- Some believe this refers to Moses having a speech impediment
- Others believe this refers to Moses not being fluent in Egyptian... even though Moses grew up in Pharaoh's house
- No where do we read that Moses had a speech impediment and no where do we read that Moses had a problem speaking Egyptian
- What is clear is this... Moses doesn't see himself accurately
- This is a clear sign of a stronghold

So powerful is this stronghold in Moses' life that when God says...

Exodus 4:12 (NKJV): 12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."

Moses says...

Exodus 4:13 (NKJV): 13 But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send."

Lord, please send someone else

- In vs. 14 we read the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses
- Here's what I wonder... was the LORD's anger directed towards Moses?
- Or was the LORD's anger directed towards the fear that gripped Moses?
- I think it's the latter because of how God responds to Moses

- He doesn't replace Moses, but he gives Moses what he thinks he needs

Exodus 4:14–17 (NKJV):

14 The Lord said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. 16 So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. 17 And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs."

- Here's what I wonder... if Moses had this stronghold of fear controlling his life why didn't God deliver Moses on the spot?
- Why did God appoint Aaron to be a spokesman?
- **NOW**... The scripture isn't clear on this but I have a couple theories

First, I believe God gave Moses what he had faith to receive

- He didn't have faith to trust the LORD completely, but he did have faith for God to use Aaron as his spokesman
- This area of unbelief would prove to be costly for Moses and it's true for us as well
- Here's the principle... God will give us what we have faith to receive

Jesus said...

Matthew 9:29 (NKJV):

29 "According to your faith let it be to you."

When Jesus ministered in his home town Matthew reports

Matthew 13:57–58 (NKJV):

58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

- What you believe about God is the single most important factor in what God does in your life
- If you don't believe that God will do what He says He will do
- Then you will receive what you have faith to receive

Second, I believe God was building faith in Moses through experience

- This takes time and there are those who are kinesthetic learners

- They learn through experience
- What I love about God is He loves us enough to meet us where we are
- Why? Because God is building a solid foundation of faith in our lives and He is not in a hurry...
- He's not rushing to get something done by a certain time
- His work is built to last for eternity

I think of Thomas... the doubter

- The disciples are gathered together and the resurrected Jesus appears to them, but Thomas isn't there

John 20:25–29 (NKJV):

25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he (Thomas) said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." 26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Notice... Jesus didn't kick Thomas out because of his unbelief

- Jesus made a believer out of Thomas and how did He do it?
- He showed Thomas proof of His resurrection power!
- He appeared to Thomas and Thomas saw first hand that Jesus conquered sin and death
- God doesn't disqualify Moses because of his unbelief, God is making a believer out of Moses and we're going to see how He does it

First... God demonstrates to Moses that His way works

Exodus 4:29–31 (NKJV):

29 Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. 30 And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the

children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

Wow God, this is really working

- But then Moses' leadership is tested
- He goes to Pharaoh, demands to let the people go to worship the Lord but Pharaoh says no
- This should not have surprised Moses... God said Pharaoh would say no
- But what Moses wasn't prepared for was Pharaoh's response
- Pharaoh punished the people and the people blamed Moses
- We were fine until you came into our lives and now we are suffering and it's all your fault
- Guess what happens... Moses has a flashback
- I tried to deliver them from an Egyptian that was beating them and they attacked me for doing it
- Here I am again... God sent me to lead them out of Egypt and they are attacking me and blaming me for their problems

Look how Moses responds...

Exodus 6:10–12 (NKJV):

10 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 11 "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land." 12 And Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?"

- God I know you want me to lead Israel out of Egypt, but I'm not the guy
- I am of uncircumcised lips (that is how Moses felt about himself)
- That's not God speaking, that's the stronghold speaking
- Moses, it's time to flee, it's time to get away, you're the problem, you've always been the problem... run before it's too late
- But God doesn't let Moses off the hook so easily
- It's been said that God loves us the way we are, but He loves us too much to leave us the way we are
- What I want to look at in our time together is how God tears down this stronghold of fear in the life of Moses

Exodus 7:1–6 (NKJV):

7 So the Lord said to Moses: "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. 2 You shall speak all that I

command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. 3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them." 6 Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the Lord commanded them, so they did.

First God confronts the lie the stronghold is built on

- He says I have made you as God to Pharaoh... that is your identity
- Moses, you're not slow of tongue and slow of speech
- You are not defined by your weakness, your failures or the lies that feed your stronghold... I am your identity

Second God confronts the power of the stronghold which is unbelief

- God confronts this by commanding Moses to speak
- The very thing that Moses believes he is weakest at is the very thing that God tells Moses to do and this brings Moses to a point of decision
- Am I going to trust God and believe what God says or am I going to remain trapped by this stronghold, trapped by a lie
- The Bible says you will know the truth and the truth will make you free

Third God tears down the stronghold by His mighty power

- Listen, you're afraid of Pharaoh... Moses, I'm going to multiply signs and wonders, I'm going to lay My hand on Egypt
- And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord
- But you know who else will know? Moses will know and by doing this God makes a believer out of Moses

Fourth God commanded Moses to act by faith

- Vs 6 we read Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded them
- Simple obedience is one of the ordinary means of defeating evil
- When I obey the power of God is released in my life and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom
- What strongholds are in your life? God wants to set you free...