

Mouths and Hearts

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Exodus: Redeemer and Redeemed / Exodus 6:10–30

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Moses's feeling of inadequacy before Pharaoh mirror our own hesitations in sharing the gospel? What does this teach us about God's strength in our weakness?
 2. In what ways does the pedigree of Moses and Aaron emphasize the importance of God's preparation and promise in our lives? How can we apply this understanding to our own spiritual journey?
 3. Reflect on the role of weaknesses in evangelism. How can embracing our limitations lead to a more authentic and powerful witness for Christ?
 4. Discuss the significance of God's commands to Moses (Go, Tell, See, Take/Testimony) in the context of evangelism. How can we incorporate these imperatives into our approach to sharing the gospel?
 5. Considering the universal condition of sin and the hardness of heart described in the sermon, how does this impact our strategy and mindset towards evangelism? How can we remain hopeful and persistent in our efforts to share the gospel?
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SERMON NOTES

How do you evangelize in a culture that no longer 1) believes that Jesus was real, historical person (which by the way no serious academic doubts) and 2) that God is an Almighty God. We live in a Pharaohic culture that regularly asks—Exodus 5:2 — “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice.”

Structure of Text

1. Moses and Aaron before God with their doubts.
2. Aaron's pedigree with a reiteration of Moses's and Aaron's calling. The pedigree shows that Moses is accompanied by a priest.
3. Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh with his doubts.

Exodus 6:10–30 ESV

¹⁰ So the LORD said to Moses, ¹¹ “Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land.” ¹² But Moses said to the LORD, “Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?” ¹³ But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge about the people of Israel and about Pharaoh king of Egypt: to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ These are the heads of their fathers' houses: the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these are the clans of Reuben. ¹⁵ The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the clans of Simeon. ¹⁶ These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the years of the life of Levi being 137

years. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their clans. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, the years of the life of Kohath being 133 years. ¹⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites according to their generations. ²⁰ Amram took as his wife Jochebed his father's sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being 137 years. ²¹ The sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. ²² The sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri. ²³ Aaron took as his wife Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and the sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ²⁴ The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph; these are the clans of the Korahites. ²⁵ Eleazar, Aaron's son, took as his wife one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites by their clans. ²⁶ These are the Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said: "Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their hosts." ²⁷ It was they who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the people of Israel from Egypt, this Moses and this Aaron. ²⁸ On the day when the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, ²⁹ the LORD said to Moses, "I am the LORD; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you." ³⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips. How will Pharaoh listen to me?"

I. We tend to overemphasize our abilities and misunderstand our weaknesses (Exodus 6:10-13)

Human Disobedience and Doubt

Moses' reluctance and the Israelites' despair reflect our own tendencies to doubt and disobey God in the face of trials.

And, I'd like to make clear: its not like the circumstances do not warrant Moses's discouragement. The people of Israel got their hopes ups when they saw the first round of signs, but neither Moses's leadership nor God's glory have seemed to pay their due yet.

But, this is a lack of faith. God has commanded Moses to go, and he has said pointed out his own limitations.

Overemphasizing our own abilities

Commentators debate the meaning of "uncircumcised lips." This is one of those passages that has probably led you to believe that Moses has a speech impediment—and he might have! The Septuagint translates the Hebrew as *alogos* (literally, without fluency). Later, in 6:30, the LXX carries the idea forward from Exodus 4:20 where Moses says he lacks speaking abilities.

It is certainly possible Moses had a speech impediment, textually, Moses is actually highlighting how he is not equipped to do the work.

In Hebrew concept of the self, the word "lips" had a much wider meaning than a physiological feature on our faces. Because speech is connected to rationality—that is, speech makes *homo sapiens* distinct—to talk about deficiencies in speech is to talk about a flawed nature.

This is exactly what is at the heart of Isaiah's protest that he is "a man of unclean lips (same Hebrew word)" among a "people of unclean lips."

Its not too far of a conceptual leap for any of us. If someone tells you to "spit it out," unless you're talking to a toddler, you want them to speak because they are reluctant! If someone "bites a head off," have they literally gone T-rex on an unfortunate soul? No! They've lost control of themselves.

Misunderstanding our Weaknesses

Moses believes that his weakness leaves him inadequate to do the task that God has called him to, but Moses fundamentally misunderstands the design of his weakness.

Let me remind you of what God told Moses the last time Moses said he couldn't talk well:

Exodus 4:11 ESV

¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

Hear how Paul talks about how thankful he was for his poor speech.

1 Corinthians 2:1–5 ESV

¹ And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Now, Paul is not saying here that responsible preparation is not necessary. Elsewhere he tells Timothy to study. Paul is simply emphasizing that the power of the gospel is located not in our crafty arguments or impressive presentation.

So what is the purpose of poverty of talent in evangelism? Weakness guarantees that faith is built on the revelation of God and not our own really well-crafted sales pitches.

Does this mean we should not make arguments? No! Hear Paul again:

2 Corinthians 10:4–6 ESV

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

So what's the relationship between weakness in evangelism and boldness in prophetic speech? Here are some principles from Scripture.

- When we boast in our weaknesses, we elevate God's glory. So, it doesn't have to be faux humble.
- When we simplify our message, we can emphasize on the cross. So, it doesn't have to only words when necessary.
- And when we care for people to obey Christ—which is their best good—we will surgically demolish any idea that is harmful, destructive, or false not to score points in an online debate but to save a soul. So it doesn't have to be timid if its looking for someone's best.

Our weaknesses, simplicity, and care can seem like liabilities in debates, discussions or even evangelism. But, the Bible could not be clear: they are the design of God to ensure the faith of those with whom we share don't trust in us but in God.

Hear Paul again:

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 ESV

⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

One of our greatest barriers to evangelism is that we cannot distinguish between the effect rather than announcement delivered. Our faithfulness in evangelism is *not* bringing about the effect of evangelism. Who alone can raise the dead? Our faithfulness in evangelism is only related to how widely we spread the news that there is one who can raise the dead!

The Universality of Sin and Hardness of Heart

But Moses knows that Pharaoh won't listen. Pharaoh's hardened heart is emblematic of humanity's universal condition in sin and rebellion against God.

All people everywhere are born in a natural state of sin. We are born thinking with Pharaohic hearts that asks—Exodus 5:2 — “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?”

And if in your heart you think: “They would never listen.” That's okay. Our call to evangelism is not to resurrect them. Its only to tell them that there is one who can raise them from the dead.

The word for evangelism—like most of the “church” words we think about—have their origin in the secular Greek culture. So, Aristophanes could talk about a herald coming to evangelize them about the king's victory on the battlefield. We don't have to think very hard for why the NT writers—under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—thought this was the perfect word to describe their act of telling others about Jesus!

Evangelism itself can take a variety of forms: well-crafted arguments; simple presentations; open-air crusades; one-on-one bible reading meetings at a coffeeshop. All of them require one simple act: opening our mouths.

II. God Himself prepares our abilities and leverages our weakness (Exodus 6:14-30)

God's Assurance to Moses

Commentator Victor Hamilton summarized the significance of this genealogy with seven reasons.

1. The genealogy traces six generations, even two past Aaron and Moses, telling us about Phinehas, the priest who will impale a couple for defiling the camp in the book of Numbers. This is one more reason to think about Genesis-Deuteronomy as a single book!
2. Unlike most genealogies in the ANE, this genealogy includes women.

3. This genealogy puts Aaron before Moses. Bloodlines qualify priests. You must be born to do the work of a priest—no one can be called into it. That, by the way, is the reason Peter talks about Christians being a holy priesthood in context of our election and transfer into God's kingdom.
4. Jesus descends from a line where the blood of a priestly line and a kingly line mingle. Aaron does not marry a woman from the tribe of Levi, but he marries a descendant of Judah, Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab who we see in both Matthew and Luke's genealogies. We also have real reason to believe this genealogy because it includes details of egregious immorality in the lines of Moses and Aaron. Mythological narratives try to minimize scandal. The Bible tells the truth as it really happened.
5. The relief between Aaron's priesthood and Melchizedek are made plain: Aaron's mother and father and genealogy are named. Melchizedek is without these.
6. Despite the failure of the sons of Levi, Phinehas being the only faithful Levitical priest, the work of God moves forward.
7. In this genealogy we see God's promise kept. In [Genesis 15:16](#) God told "And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." With Rueben, Simeon, and Levi, they entered the land.

This genealogy is here to show God's faithfulness that even though Moses feels inadequate, he is the result of four-generation of preparatory work to get him ready for this task.

You see, Aaron and Moses were quite literally born for this, even if he felt like there was something inadequate with him.

And the assurance that God adds at the end of v. 26 clarifies that God will not let his people leave as slaves but march as a nation: [Exodus 6:26](#) "26 These are the Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said: "Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their hosts." "By their hosts" means akin to a military organization. They will parade out of Egypt.

God's Commands to Moses

Throughout the narrative, God gives Moses four imperatives which carry frame the other aspects of the account, and these are quite helpful verbs when we think about evangelism.

- Go (6:10)
- Tell (6:29) "Sometime"
- See (7:1)
- Take/Testimony (7:9)

CHALLENGE: I WILL BY WHEN.