

Exodus 4:10–17

“Sustaining Grace Strips Excuses, Exposes Rebellion, and Sweetens Service”

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Why do Moses's responses kindle Yahweh's wrath against him? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Exodus 4:10–17 prepares us for the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these eight verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that the fact that we are weaklings who must be sustained by sovereign grace strips away our excuses against serving God, exposes our rebellion against serving God, and sweetens our service to God by dependence upon Him and fellowship with Him.

Wednesday, August 25, 2021 • Read Exodus 4:10–17

Questions from the Scripture text: What new objection does Moses raise in v10? What does he say hasn't made a difference(!)? With what question does Yahweh challenge him in response (v11)? What does He say will make the difference (v12)? Instead of raising objections, what tactic does Moses try in v13? Now what is Yahweh's disposition toward him (v14a)? Whom does Yahweh say is already on the way to help (v14b)? What difference will there be between Moses's current attitude and Aaron's? How will each relate to the other in the speaking process (v15–16)? What does Yahweh command him to take (v17)?

Accusing God. I hope that when you and I have complained about our circumstances or abilities, we have not realized that we were accusing God. Frighteningly, Moses cannot make that claim. In v10 he says “neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant.” His point is jarring: Your Word hasn't done anything to improve the situation.

Yahweh's answer is that He Himself is the solution. Moses's inabilities are in the Lord's intentional providence (v11) so that the Lord Himself will be Moses's ability (v12). This is a principle that holds for each of us: His grace is made perfect in weakness (cf. 2Cor 12:9), so that we will boast in Him alone (cf. 1Cor 1:26–31).

Refusing God. With his claim to having “an ability problem” shot down, Moses now exposes a much more sinister one in v13: a willingness problem. He now pleads that the Lord send literally anyone else. It turns out that he has not been unable so much as he has been unwilling.

Angering God. One of God's perfections is that, for the sake of the elect Whom He is saving, He is slow to anger; but, His wrath is a perfection, and He wills to display it (cf. Rom 9:22–24). While God's patience with Moses throughout this passage is very encouraging to those who turn to Him in repentance and faith, His anger in v14 is a warning to Moses, Egypt, Israel, even all of us.

This is the end of the conversation. The Lord tells Moses how it's going to go, even revealing that Aaron is already on his way out to meet him (v14). Not only Moses's weakness (which God would overcome) comes in the providence of God, but even Moses's wickedness (which God would overlook and atone for, cf. Rom 3:25–26) is accounted for in the marvelous providence of God.

God isn't asking Moses to be anything more than a mouth (just as Aaron is going to be his mouth, v15–16) and a stick (like the one in Moses's own hand, v17). The words are not from the mouth but from the person. The power for the signs is not in the stick. Just so, God Himself is all of the wisdom and the power, and Moses is none of it.

In the end, the fact that this isn't really a negotiation is marvelous grace, isn't it? It seems that if it were up to Moses, he would not be saved at all, not be used at all. But it's not up to him. Comparatively, in the Exodus, Moses is a mouth and a stick. God alone is the Savior.

How have you been accusing God in your situations? How have you been refusing God in not carrying out your calling? How has God been marvelously gracious in saving you, or in using you, despite your unwillingness?

Sample prayer: Lord, Yours is all of the glory. Yours is all of the wisdom and the power. To us belongs shame and confusion of face, for we use our weakness as an excuse rather than an opportunity to boast that You are strong. And we groan against what You have called us to do. But to You belongs marvelous grace. Save us by Your grace through the atoning blood of Christ. Sanctify us by Your grace in cleansing us from it. And use us by Your grace for Your merciful, wise, and powerful work in this world, which we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP32AB “What Blessedness” or TPH435 “Not What My Hands Have Done”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Exodus chapter 4. Verses 10 through 17. These are God's words. Then Moses said to Yahweh. Oh my Lord, I not eloquent. Neither before nor sense you have spoken to your servant. But I am slow speech and slow of time. So you always said to him who has made man's mouth or who makes the mute the death, the seeing, or the blind have not.

I always now therefore go and I will be with you with and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you? So say, but he said, oh my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else, you may send

So the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Moses and he said is not air in the Levite, your brother. I know that he can speak well and look he is also coming out to me when he sees you. He will be glad in his heart you know. You so 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 should do.

So he shall be your spectrum to the people and he himself shall be as a mouth for you and you shall be to him as God. And you shall take this rod in your hand with which you shall do the science.

So far the breathing of God's inspired into their impact.

Moses responds to God is sadly for us very much like how we often respond to him, when we have made, some use of the means of his grace. And we have had some expectation of the amount of difference that it would make in us ourselves particularly in our abilities.

Moses says to you always verse 10. Oh my Lord, I am not eloquent. Neither before nor sins, you have spoken to your servant. But I am slow speech and slow. Come. There's a horrible response, phrenosis saying I'm not eloquent enough to go speak to Pharaoh, to his face. And so he's talking back to the Lord himself.

He even and accuses, the Lord, he said, even since you began talking to me ahead and gotten any better, I'm still not elklund. I still can't speak. Your word has made. No effect essentially is what he say and as horrible as that is to read and Exodus 4 verse 10.

Was somebody else doing it afraid? My dear children that we often do such things. We'll read our Bible or pray for a while. We'll sanctify the Lord's day. You'll sit under the preaching of the word will take the Lord. Supple supper will make use of all the means of his grace and then we'll say feels like it's not doing anything.

I'm not growing.

Well, the point of depending upon the Lord, in the means of his grace, isn't that? We will some somehow suddenly become amazing? Christians. Yes. We are looking for his grace to mortify sin, and grow in Christ and mature. And those are things that that we should see. But the main thing in waiting upon the Lord in his themes of his grace, is to wait upon the Lord.

Moses says, you're speaking to me, didn't make me an amazing speaker suddenly and the Lord's primary responses. No, my speaking to you means I'm with you, the Lord himself is the difference in the believers. Life, depending on upon him, instead of depending upon yourself is the difference in the believers life.

Y'all always says to him verse 11, who has made man's mouth, or who makes mute death seeing or blind. Okay, so, mute deficiency or blind, three of the four are handicapped, right? Mute. Deaf and blind. So there's two things going on here. One. Yeah I won't say dar because that's to a reverent to talk about something but the Lord is telling Moses.

Yeah, I know of course how bad you are speaking or how good, but just allowing for the moment that it's bad. I'm the one who made you like that, so that I would be with you so that I would be the difference. Look, he says who has made man's mouth, who makes them you death?

Seeing your blind. Have not, I your way. Now therefore, go and I will be with your mouth. So in all of your weaknesses, whatever weaknesses, they are whether its mental or physical abilities. Whether it's something you're having a hard time giving it getting over psychologically or emotionally and you know that you should do something but you're giving yourself the excuse of not living a certain way or not being faithful in a certain part of your life because you don't feel up to it does not the Lord come now in verses 11 and 12 of exes chapter 4 and say have not I made you that way.

I will be with you very similar to second Corinthians 12 when Paul had told the Lord about his thorn in the flesh which the apostle under inspiration, even calls a messenger from Satan. And the Lord says, my strength is made perfect and weakness. The Lord is the one who's given you your weaknesses and he doesn't give you them so that you can use them as an excuse for being sluggish towards your duty or even rebelling against him.

As Moses is about to do in this passage, it gives it to you so that you can record. First of all recognize this providence in a signing to you, the entire complex of who you are. Usually when people talk about that, they're like recognize the gifts that God has given you.

Well, exodus four verses 10 through 17 says, recognize the weaknesses that God has given you because it all comes in his providence and he is with you. And the weaknesses have that point of showing that he is the one who makes the difference. So let us be careful that we don't use our weaknesses as excuses.

And then let us be careful that we don't have expectations from the use of the means of grace to wipe out our weaknesses and somehow decrease, our need for defendants upon God. When part of the whole point of the means of grace is that we would be dependent upon God.

Notice as you go through the, the passage, by the time we get towards the end in verse 15, he says, I will be with your mouth. The Lord says to Moses, I will be with your mouth. And with his mouth, I will teach you say getting instruction from the Lord isn't a one-time thing at the bush and you're fixed.

And then you just go and do whatever. The Lord is giving you to do getting instruction from the Lord is something that that's constant. That's one of the reasons why we have to develop the habit of meditating of one scripture and always having it in our mind. And one of the reasons why we ask the spirit to always be increasing our understanding of the scripture that we know and bringing to our minds, the, the appropriate scripture at the appropriate time and giving us skill and selecting, and understanding, what passages applied to what situations because we need to constantly be depending upon God and instructed.

By him, you'll go to church on the Lord's day, get fixed for the week and then go out and live. That's not how it works. Okay. So one refusing to accuse God accepting our weakness as in his providence seeing that, it's his presence constant presence and our dependence upon in, that makes the difference when Moses realizes his excuses are wiped out.

He just turns to open rebellion, in verse 13, but he said, oh my Lord, please send by the hand. And who of whom ever, you may send the word else is not in the Hebrew, but it's obviously the implication. So now he says anyone in all of creation or even creates someone new anyone but me

The bottom line is you just says, I don't want to is actually kind of refreshing that after all the back and forth. After all the raising, the objections, we find out that Moses, really didn't have an ability problem or an opportunity problem. He had a willingness problem was very refreshing.

When we can have all of our very carefully constructed objections stripped away. And discover that our biggest problem is resistance to, the will of God forgetfulness that. He is the creator and we are the creature and therefore, whatever he whatever place he has put us in, whatever, command he has given us.

That is the role that we have. That is the charge that we have. This isn't a one-time thing in our lives. I think we repeatedly discover that in situations where we thought other other things were the problem. Really? We were just rebelling against him. One of the greatest things that we need from.

God is an increasingly and increasingly consistently soft heart towards him that he would make our hearts softer towards him and that he would make our hearts more consistent in being soft towards him. So that we would have the habit of being in a situation and just knowing what we ought to do and depending upon him and rejoicing, that he's the one in fellowship with him, we get to do it rather than introducing this useless calculation of whether or not, we feel like doing it.

Hopefully you are not as humiliated as I am. When you think of over the course of how you make your decisions in life and realize, how many of the decisions of what to do. In a particular moment, are being made, not by this as what your creator and redeemer has given you to do in fellowship in.

But rather, we're making decisions by. What do I feel like doing now? You have something that's an obvious duty and you have something that's a less obvious duty or a less needful duty and you know well I feel more like that one. So, I'm gonna do that.

This is one of the benefits of going through the Bible together. We discover that we need repentance Lord help us. Well this final flat out refusal after all the excuses of and stripped away. Unsurprisingly verse 14 begins. So the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Moses, it's actually much more vivid in the Hebrew.

The hotness of you always nostrils are the fire of you always nostrils. Liz Kindled against was the Lord doesn't have nostrils, right? But he speaks in such a way so that we will know what the perfection of God's justice and holiness looks like in response to our rebellion. So that we will learn to hate our rebellion and oppose it with all that we are just as God and his holiness and his justice hates our rebellion and opposes it with all he is, that's what is rapids?

His wrath is opposing sin and wickedness with all the, he is. That's why second Thessalonians. 1 says that the hell that the wicked who obey, not the gospel and up in, is the presence of the Lord and his glory and that destruction continuously comes from the presence of the Lord, that destruction continuously comes from the glory of the Lord in hell.

Those who go to hell. Don't get to be without God. They get to be in the presence of the infinite. God, who is continuously opposing them with all the years pouring. It is rap. So the fire of Yahweh's nostrils is kindled against Moses. Now, the miracle here is that as angry as Yahweh is against Moses.

The rest of the passage is his provision. I mean we know how but when Romans 3 talks about Jesus being displayed as the propitiation the one who has absorbed and endured the fullness of the wrath of God for all our sins. It, you know, part of the marvel of what Jesus has done is that that God in former time was had passed over the sins, previously committed, and now we can see how because Jesus is the one who's gonna absorb all the wrath.

And so, God is just and the justifier, God is righteous and the one who makes to be righteous. The one who has faith in Jesus Christ, that's what this is. Is it the fire of you always nostrils is burning against Moses but Moses doesn't get burned up. It's just like the books.

There's the flame in the middle of the bush, but the bush doesn't get burned up. Why? Because God is dealing with Moses. According to the worthiness of Christ even here in Exodus chapter 4. So you and I when we realized that our resistance toward God is rebellion. And that what this actually deserves is for God to oppose us with all that he is and the horror of what that would be in when we are learning that we should oppose our own sinful rebellion, with all that we are just like God does with all the he is and we realize the horror of our disobedience that we also realize because we are not consumed that God is dealing with us.

According to the righteousness of Jesus, the product is dealing with us, according to the sacrifice of Jesus. And what this looks like for Moses is errands already on his way out. God, who makes deaf and mute and blind. Also knows, and accommodates and plans for your spiritual weakness. And so he sends a errand and did I say Moses is already on his way out?

I can't remember now Aaron, he sends Aaron and Aaron's already on his way out. And Aaron is our is going to be a rebuke to Moses because when Aaron sees Moses he's going to he's not going to be like oh Moses, it's awful. We have to go to Pharaoh, Lord tells us that Aaron's gonna be happy that Moses.

Let's go tell Pharaoh the Lord and we don't get an account of whatever that interview or however the Lord communicated it to Aaron. That was what he says. Look, he is also coming at me. You when he sees you, he will be glad in his art. And then he, he gives Moses two different illustrations, one and how he speaks to Aaron and Aaron speaks to Pharaoh.

The errand is kind of Moses' mouth, so the buck still stops ultimately with Moses, but it doesn't stop ultimately with messes. Why? Because Moses is God's smell, and that's what he means. And he says, he shall be as a mouth for you and you should be to him as God.

Well, that's because God to Moses is his mouth. And that's when he says I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and I will teach you what you shall do. So that's one illustration. He says your job isn't to be super skilled. Your job is when I say, open your mouth.

When I say open, you open, when I put words in, you speak them and then the other illustration is the rod. Moses is saying, I'm not skilled enough to be useful in your service and the last line of the of the passage is even a stick, is skilled enough to be useful in God's service that you shall.

Take this rod in your hand with which you shall do the signs, the power isn't in the instrument. The power is in the one who wields it, the God who made you a child right now in 2021. And so you're office is to submit to an obey. What your parents tell you, do whatever chores you have in the house.

Study your school, the ability isn't in the instrument. It's in him. Who wields a tee? Gave you the role that you have and you depend upon him and you don't complain and make excuses by means from your inability, but your choice that his strength is made perfect and weakness and that you get to do this and fellowship with him.

Isn't this the way God designed to use? Moses so much better than if like the experience at the bush had had the effect that Moses is complaining in verse 10 that it didn't have that. God speaking to him, kind of supercharged, his ability to speak and made him super able in himself.

And then he just goes on goes away and the power and strength and supernatural, ability, that that moment gave him and does it by himself. It's not much sweeter and better that because he's still weak, he gets to do this whole thing in fellowship with the Lord. Well whenever you feel weak, whenever you feel, you're not up to it physically, emotionally psychologically, spiritually, whatever.

Remember again that the point is that the Lord is with you, that he's the strain, but also enjoy the fact that his design means that all that he has called you to do. He's called you to do in fellowship with himself and your weakness actually fosters that fellowship and so rejoice in the goodness of the Lord.

And let us not come with those excuses and refusals, to him, that living, according to how we feel instead of living. According to what he is given us to do and what he's commanded us, those things that really

deserve his wrath and that we should be opposed to with all that we are instead spray.

Our father in heaven. Thank you for this part of your word. Thank you for your patience with what you don't with Moses. Thank you for your son and our Lord Jesus. Who is endured the wrath that rebellious sinners deserve? Thank you. That these things are all for us that you deal with as patiently that you've poured out your wrath against our sin upon Christ as well, that you strip away our excuses and expose our rebellions.

So that we will pay to that. You give us to love you and serve you and obey. You in fellowship with you and dependence upon you, we pray that you would help us to meditate on your word day and night to lift up our hearts to you in prayer, continually to feel that continual dependence upon you that by your spirit.

We might rejoice having continual fellowship with you. We can pass the because we haven't lived this way. We are often living with discouragement that we did not have to bear, but that we are inflicting upon ourselves. Grant to us instead to live in that dependence upon you and walking with you and obedience to you.

That is a means by which we have continual rejoicing and enjoyment of you and fellowship with you. So we pray for your spirits ongoing work and pray that you would bring the scripture off into mind and help us to turn it over. And remember, all the things that we have seen in it, that you show us, even more of what you say in it, we ask these things in Christ's name, amen.