

Exodus 4:10-12 Comforted: Disabilities Fit In the Church #1 Falls Church
AM 10/3/21

Moses had a disability! For that reason, should Moses decline to serve as a prophet for God?

Moses was a great philosopher, a great leader, and the model for all prophets in the Bible, and yet Moses was apparently not a good speaker. Moses had a clear head, a great mind, and made solid decisions, but it seems that Moses did not have a smooth tongue. Moses must not have had a ready verbalization or an articulate way of communicating. We don't know exactly the problem, but Moses had some disability of speech.

The book of Exodus is about Moses leading the people to leave slavery. The word Exodus means leave. The big exit. No more slavery. God's people leaving a bad situation in a foreign country, and coming home to their own land. It was Moses who received the Ten Commandments, it was Moses who led the nation in building the place where God would dwell with His people, called a tabernacle. There, the people made sacrifices for sin. It was under the leadership of Moses that God fulfilled His promise to Abraham by multiplying Abraham's descendants into a great nation, and bringing them out of slavery in Egypt and into the promised land.

But Moses himself was not so sure that he was the right man for the job, because of his speech disability. God's answer to Moses is where we are focusing today, with profound lessons to start off our series that people with disabilities belong in the church. We can resonate with Moses on the lack of confidence, because we all feel our weaknesses. We start off recognizing our need for God's comfort.

After God comforts us with His sovereignty, we know that we all fit in the church, even with our disabilities and weaknesses.

1. Our disabilities can cause the painful and wrong conclusion: namely, that we cannot serve God. (v.10). That is false!

Even Moses doubted his place in serving God. Moses thought of himself as unqualified to speak before the great people of Egypt about the great governmental matter of letting God's people go. Would the Egyptians just mock Moses for his speech disability?

When God appeared in the famous burning bush and first called Moses to lead, Moses presented 3 objections. Moses was trying hard to show God that Moses was not the right choice to do God's work.

Chapter 3:11-12, Moses asked, Who am I, that I could bring people out of a bad situation in a foreign country? and God responded, "I am with you."

Chapter 3:13-15, Moses asked God, "What is your name?" God answered, I am who I am" in other words, I am so pure, high, and powerful, that you can count on Me.

Chapter 4:1-5, Moses argued, "They will not believe me, that I speak for you." God gave Moses the sign for the rod that turns into a snake. That rod became for Moses the proof of authenticity.

Today we are studying the fourth objection from Moses. This objection, Moses considered to be a convincing argument for him to present to God. Moses thought that this objection would prove that Moses was not qualified to serve the Lord.

Here it is in our passage in Exodus 4:10, "*But Moses said to the Lord, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue."*

Basically, Moses said the clinching argument is that I don't speak well.

Did Moses have a disabling speech impediment? Perhaps.

Whatever Moses had or did not have in terms of ability or disability, and whatever Moses perceived that he had in terms of ability or disability, the answer of God to Moses was very clear and unambiguous. No matter the situation, or what Moses thought was the situation, God had an explicit answer.

For that answer, we move on to our second point.

2. God comforts us by revealing that He sovereignly created our disabilities. (v.11).

Verse 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"*

God is basically saying, I created your mouth with its disabilities, and I am with you and I am with your mouth.

Consider what God is saying here, and what it means for Moses, what it means for Christ, and what it means for all of us.

This is startling. Some people think that God does not like disabilities – such as blindness, deafness, or muteness, the inability to talk well. But God forms mouths such as the mouth of Moses, and there was apparently something imperfect about the mouth of Moses. God took credit for that, when God asked Who has

made man's mouth? God did not stop there. God added situations that were well beyond the scope of God's discussion with Moses at that moment, when God said, "Who makes [man] mute or deaf or seeing or blind?" God makes people deaf or able to hear. God makes people blind, or gives them the ability to see.

God makes people with abilities, and God makes people with disabilities.

Here is the key point to the whole passage. Since the LORD God is the one who made Moses with whatever disability Moses had with his speaking, God was able to call Moses to do what God was calling Moses to do – with the disability.

Too often in the church, we believe that it is the able person, and only the able person, who is called by God to serve God. To put it bluntly, too often in the church, we believe incorrectly that the person with disabilities is not called by God to serve God.

Too often the church sidelines people with disabilities.

God says no. God says this very Moses, the Moses with a disability, THAT Moses, is being called by God to speak for God.

Some people think that the only way God would call a blind person to serve God is if God miraculously healed the blind person. Or that the only way God would call a deaf person to serve God is if God miraculously cured the deaf person, so that he or she became a person with the ability to hear. No. Some people think that the only way God would call a person with a lack of fluidity in his speech, is if God miraculously provided fluidity of speech to that speaker. No.

God not only can create talkers, or create inability to talk, but then cure the inability, but there is a third category that God is opening up for us here. That third category is God creating people with the inability to talk fluidly, and leaving that person in their speech disability, and then calling that person to serve God while remaining in the speech disability.

God not only can create sight, or create blindness and then cure the blindness, but there is a third category that God is opening up for us here. That third category is God creating blindness, and leaving the person in the blindness, and calling that person to serve God while remaining in the blindness.

God not only can create people with the ability to hear, or create people without the ability to hear, and then grant them the ability to hear, but there is a third category that God is opening up for us here. That third category is God creating people with the inability to hear, and leaving the person in the inability to hear well, and then calling that person to serve God while remaining in the disability of being unable to hear well.

God not only can create people with abilities, and create people with disabilities, and then grant those with disabilities to gain the same abilities that others have, but there is a third category that God is opening up for us here. That third category is God creating people with disabilities, and leaving the person in their disability, and then calling that person to serve God, while remaining in their disability.

God seems to chastise Moses for having a faulty view of people with disabilities. What did God do about it? God comforted Moses, and that brings us to our third point.

3. God comforts us by His presence and power. (v.12).

God did not dismiss Moses, any more than God dismissed Jonah from bringing the message, just because Jonah did not want to carry the message. God called Moses to speak, so Moses was going to speak. But God corrected Moses and created a team of Moses and another person, and God promised to bless both people on the team.

To complete the story, we observe that in verses 13-17, Moses protested one last time, Send someone else. God had unlimited power to give to Moses whatever was needed, which revealed the true problem with Moses – he did not want to serve God. God had a solution for that also. God’s power to forgive the sin of Moses and to change the heart of Moses, and to train Moses to serve God. It all started when God became righteously angry and sent the assistant of Moses instead, with an amazing statement of steadfast blessing, “I am with your mouth and with his mouth.” It continues when God send the prophet like Moses, even the Son of God Himself, to take upon Himself the sin of Moses. God did not forsake Moses, because God promised to forsake Jesus in order not to forsake Moses. God could promise to continue to be with the sassy mouth of Moses, because God put to death His own son for the sassy mouth of Moses. God did not give up on Moses and send Him away, but rather God comforted Moses by God’s presence and God’s power. God continued to work out His plan for the life of Moses.

Eventually, can read in the New Testament how it all worked out in Hebrews 2:17, where we read that Jesus, *“had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. 3:1, “Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.”*

It was Jesus who helped Moses to stay in his calling despite his unwilling heart, and his disabled speech. It was Jesus who covered Moses' sin of being unwilling to do what God called Moses to do. It was Jesus who was made like us in every respect, and yet without sin. It was Jesus who became a merciful and faithful high priest for us. It was Jesus who made propitiation (a covering) for the sins of us, God's people. It was Jesus who is able to help us when we are tempted to have a bad attitude or tempted to quit. It is Jesus who fulfilled his heavenly calling, because he was spiritually perfect. It is Jesus who helps us to fulfill our heavenly calling, because we are made perfect by faith in Him, despite our disabilities and weaknesses. Just as Jesus helped Moses to be faithful, it is Jesus who helps us to be faithful.

Too often, we want a hallmark story, not a Biblical story. We want God to bring an end to all suffering, but God won't do that – yet. God delays bringing an end to suffering. God delays bringing an end to disabilities. God postpones giving us all new bodies until heaven. For here and now, in the service of God in the church, God uses people with disabilities to bring the gospel.

If God removed all disease and all disability today, God would have to remove all sin, which means the destruction of people who are still in their sins. The general cause of all disease and disability is sin. But God is greater than sin. God is greater than disease. God is greater than disability. God is filled with mercy, which is why God has delayed judgment.

God is building His kingdom, and gathering new sinners into it.

Lamentations 3:32-33, *“though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.”*

God is sovereign. That means God gets to raise the dead. God gets to take a crooked stick, and draw a straight line. God gets to build His kingdom, using people with disabilities.

Conclusion:

This sermon series is called Disabilities Fit in Church, and that means that People with disabilities fit in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. No one can tell a person with disabilities to leave. We are comforted by God's sovereignty, meaning that God has set up His church this way. This is how it is supposed to be. We don't have to keep on grieving that some people suffer with disabilities. God has conquered all. The disabilities will be undone, and it will be shown that all things were done by God and done well. Even those with great abilities, were utterly relying on God the whole time.

God chooses to allow disabilities in the church for many reasons. One of those reasons is to mold Christian character in all of us. God uses one form of evil, that is sickness or disability, to help remove another form of evil – our personal sin of selfishness. It is called caregivers. But that is another sermon.

Three applications

- 1) To those who are caregivers. Please know that the work you are doing to care for a person with a disability is noble work for God. God cares for us, whether it is a disability of speech, of eyesight, of hearing, of a body part, a disease, a medical diagnosis, or simply aging. What you do unto the least of these, you do unto Me, says Christ Jesus.
- 2) To those who are people with disabilities. Be comforted by God's sovereignty. God made you just as you are, for His purposes. God is delaying healing you, until we all get to heaven, and we all get new bodies. God sees you. God has you in His Kingdom and in His Church by His sovereign right and His master plan. God is able to heal you, and out of His great love for you, has decided to delay that healing until we see Him face to face. Trust in the sovereign God. You are not left out. You are not left behind. You fit here. You belong in the church of Jesus Christ, and may God have mercy on anyone who says otherwise. WE love you, and we are glad that you are here. This is a church of Jesus Christ, which means you fit in this church. You belong in this church.
- 3) All of us. We must not judge people by their disabilities. The New Testament does not speak of the disability of Moses, but rather says in Acts 7:22, "*Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.*" That is the final answer on how we should view Moses. WE don't view Moses through his speech disability, but rather we view Moses through God's calling, God's power, God's presence, and God assistance to Moses, which means that Moses was MIGHTY IN HIS WORDS! If you were there, you would say that Moses was not eloquent. Yet you would say it was strong and on point. Moses Himself wrote later about his own speaking in Deuteronomy 32:1-3, "*Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb. For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to*

our God!” Apparently, Moses was given such courage from God that he did not shy away from speaking to the whole earth and even to the heavens. We must not judge ourselves wrongly in our disabilities and weaknesses. We must not judge others wrongly in their disabilities and weaknesses. Moses did not have the kind of elegance and ease that you might assume that he had. But the Bible says he was mighty in Word. Do you remember what they said about the Apostle Paul’s preaching? 2 Corinthians 10:10, “*For they say, ‘His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech is of no account.’*” There was nothing about the delivery of Paul’s messages that was powerful. The power was in the content of Paul’s sermons.