

February 2, 2020
Experiencing God (5)
Joining God Leads to Crisis
Exodus 4:1-17
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During this “Experiencing God” sermon series, we have been saying that God is faithful and God is at work in the world. And God wants to be known and to have an intimate relationship with us. In Exodus 3:10, God said to Moses, *“So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”* But Moses responded to God, saying *“Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”* (Exodus 3:11) God was asking him to do something impossible. It is like God is saying, “I am going to send you inside of Wuhan in central China to heal those who are infected with the Corona virus or send you inside the Middle East to liberate all the refugees.” Moses’ first response was “I don’t think so.”

Today’s text is quite a big conversation between God and Moses. In this conversation we can see the central issue of what’s going on as a crisis of faith for Moses. The first thing that Moses said was that this task was too big for him. God convinced him, saying “I am going with you. You are not going alone.” God said, “Yes it’s too big for you, but I am going with you. In today’s text Moses said that no one was going to respond to his leadership. “No one is going to respond to this. No one is going to believe it’s really You leading us.” God responded to him by saying, “You go with my authority.” God gave several signs of that authority.

In 4:10 Moses said, *“Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”* And God said, *“Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”* (4:11-12) In verse 13 Moses said, *“Oh Lord, please send someone else.”* He was afraid. “God, I am a good shepherd. I’ve got a good thing going here. I don’t want to leave here. Send somebody else.” Do you ever feel that way when God gives you a call? Anybody who has stepped into a new ministry, anybody who has ever gone to the mission field, anybody who has ever started a new project, and anybody who has taken any risk because of their faith in Jesus Christ has faced this kind of fear. We say, “God, this is a big deal. Nobody is going to respond to my leadership if I do this. I am not good at this and I don’t want to make the sacrifice.” It’s a common experience. At some time or another we all are going to face this kind of choice. We will face the crisis of faith in our life’s tough

journey. When we are asked by God to experience something like this, we need to step out. Are we going to respond in fear or in faith?

God challenges us with something and our first response is, “Whoa, I am not sure about this.” At this point we can have two radically different choices. If we allow our feelings and fears to control us, we say no to God and continue to live in fear. God gives us a challenge. It stretches us out of the comfort zone. It demands something new of us. If we say no and stay inside the comfort zone, we stay inside the fear zone as well.

God surprises us with some kind of demand. We can have a different choice if we believe that we are given authority and power. We already have a relationship with God who pours out His blessings. Therefore, we can believe that we are chosen; we are adopted; we are holy; we are blameless; we are free; and we are accepted. We are empowered. When we choose to believe that we are chosen, given authority of power, and gifted for this specific task, something radically different happens. We can respond with faith, trust and courage.

Whatever happens, we are going to face a choice – whether we are going to respond in fear or in faith. Once we are convinced that God is nudging us, we have to make a choice. Are we going to take the risk or not? If we take one step forward toward that risk in faith, we will get to know God. If we actually take the risk, we will know that God has been working ahead of us. We need to take a risk when we are in a situation where we don’t have enough resources to do what God has called us to do.

From time to time God says, “Take this risk with me.” The crisis is saying, “Is God big enough or not?” Are you going to choose fear or faith? If we choose to let fear rule, we say, “It’s too big. It won’t work. I am not suited.” We stay inside the comfort zone and we cycle tighter and tighter around ourselves. If we say yes to God and let faith win, we believe ourselves that we are chosen, we are equipped, and we are gifted. We realize that we are sent to do something significant for God. Moses faced it. Moses made his choice to follow. That choice made all the difference in the world to Moses’ experience with God.

God has given us the choice. The good news is that God forgives us in Jesus Christ and He is willing to pick us up, dust us off, set us up again, and says “Are you ready?” When we are ready, He is going to give us another challenge. God is going to come in some kind of burning bush and ask us to make a choice, saying “Trust me and take a risk because I am big enough.” When we face crisis and challenges in life, we can make the right choice if we have faith and walk with God.