

Sermon for Feb. 16th 2020. Kay Morison
Vocation Sunday *Exodus 4.1-17*

Words I'll never forget.....

“I don't care if it is God's will, I don't want to go!”

“O Lord please send someone else to do it!”

The first plea was an apprehensive outburst from our 12 year old son, when we told him we believed God was calling us to leave our own country, England, to serve Him in another country South Africa – and that at the height of Apartheid!

You can understand why those words of our son have been seared into our memories for all these years! It was **so** hard for our family to do God's will. We were apprehensive too! Christianity is not comfortable.....

The second plea was: **“O Lord please send someone else to do it!”** We have heard read just now - It was Moses' final reaction to God's call. God's command for Moses to lead God's People from Egypt. Egypt, the country where they had been living and then enslaved for so long, and travel to a new country - the Promised Land.

And Humans do not change much over the centuries!

Moses made endless excuses for not answering God's call. Anything and every excuse to get out of a challenging task. Often things do not seem all that different with us today!

However the fact is, that God has already called you and me to follow him – we wouldn't be here otherwise! Let's see how Moses tries to evade responsibility and compare our excuses to his

Here at All SS, today has been called “Vocations Sunday” So there is a special emphasis on what God may be calling YOU to do for him. To challenge each one of us to stop making excuses to the Lord, for our inaction

This will be this very short introductory talk. Then two people are going to speak about the work they do here for the Lord...and the vital need for more helpers in many roles.

First of all a very quick look at Moses and his excuses. Each excuse begins with the letter “I”: I owe these alliterative headings to the commentary on Exodus written by Alec Motyer. I have just added one more, the fifth point.

The first two excuses were read and preached about in last week's sermon

1. Inadequacy. Chapter 3 v 11

“Who am I.....”?

2. Inability Chapter 3. V. 13

“What shall I tell them....?”

Today we will be looking at the next two so-called excuses:

3. Ineffectiveness 4 v. 1

4. Incompetence. 4. 10

And finally, Moses'

5. Ill will Agreement. 4. V. 10

These excuse began in chapter 3 which Eva spoke about last week. So just to recap briefly. Do look up what I have written on the news sheet.

1. Moses felt **inadequate**. Chapter 3. V.11 He said "Who am I...to go to Pharaoh" Maybe quite a wise comment! But if we ever feel we are totally adequate, sort of God's special gift to a particular situation, we may be on wobbly ground.

2. Moses' **inability. 3. v, 13** Moses said: Suppose I tell my fellow countrymen that I have been sent to rescue them. **"What shall I tell them?" What am I going to say?"**

We may all feel v. conscious of our inability. . But at All SS there are always people to guide us, walk with us as we step out to do something new for God.

Those two excuses were from last week's reading and sermon on Moses and the Burning bush.

So now today to move on to Moses' next two excuses. Exodus 4. 1-17.

3. **Ineffectiveness**. Chapter 4. v.1 This time round Moses says he will not be any good at the task. **"What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say The Lord did not appear to you?"**

God is kind and gracious and patient with Moses. He is with us too, when we try, often for years to put off doing something straight forward for him because we feel people will not listen to us, and doubt we have a link to the Lord.

The answer God gives Moses to his excuse "they won't believe me" is three very dramatic signs to "perform" in front of the Israelites – miracles that Moses can perform to persuade his fellow Israelites that God has sent him. We probably haven't experienced such miraculous encouragements. More likely today we are encouraged by something we read, a Bible passage, words someone says to us, a Word from the Lord, a dream... How do you sense God prompting you to do something for him?

4. **Incompetence. Chapter 4.v. 1** Moses and his next excuse. Moses pleads that he is not equipped to do what God wants him to do.

However as Charlie commented in the first sermon on Exodus, Moses had all the wealth, education and privilege of being brought up in Pharaoh's court. He had not been out in the fields with his own people, eking out a hard and difficult life, probably with little education. In those days everyone had to work very hard under almost slave like conditions

So when Moses said **"I am slow of speech and tongue"**. He could possibly be saying he had something wrong with his voice or he is plainly, making an excuse.

If we as speakers, preachers, teachers, house group, leaders, chairpersons like the sound of our own voice too much, “**be very aware.....**” pride comes before a fall!
After 45 years of preaching, as a Lay Minister, I am still **very** nervous when I climb the pulpit steps and begin to preach.

We can see again God is gracious to Moses. After a real dig at Moses trying to say he can't speak, God says, “**Who gave man his mouth?**” And then God kindly adds: “**I will help you speak, will teach you what to say**”

But even that is not enough for Moses and his many excuses,

Finally and my last point beginning with the letter “I” which I added to those Alec Motyer listed.

5. **Ill will** Grudging Acceptance. Chapter 4 v 10
“**O Lord please send someone else to do it**”

By that stage in this excuse bargaining, we are told “The Lord's anger burned against Moses”. Yet, he still answered Moses desperate final plea and proposed that Aaron, Moses' brother, shall be his mouthpiece. And Moses none too willing, or content, finally grudgingly agrees!

At last Moses has overcome his four excuses, and with **ill will** he sets off on the next stages of his task for God.

What about you? What task is God asking you to do?
Something large like the 3 year training to be a Lay Minister?
Or being a Lay Pastoral Assistant.

Or something, like making the coffee after the 9.30 service.
Or being a welcomer at the porch door for the 11 am.
Service. Or giving the Chalice to people at the communion rail.

There's so much to think about! The outline of this sermon with the excuses Moses made, both in last week's reading and today's, are listed on your news sheet. Take it home, read it and say to the Lord “what do you want me to do?” and then don't forget to follow his reply!

Prayer