

## BGBC evotional

### Moses: Faith on the frontline

Exodus 4:1-17 “What is in your hand?”

The problem we have when we think of Moses is that we picture Charlton Heston. The biblical account of Moses paints a picture of a very different man.



In Exodus 3 and 4 we see a man who is lacking in self-confidence. Here is someone who has failed before; he’s on the run from Egypt for murder. So why would he willingly return? At this point in his life he’s only a shepherd; he’s left the palaces of Egypt behind him and is living a quiet, simple life.

We also see a man who doubts God. Moses argues with God and God seems to be trying hard to persuade Moses.

Moses is full of excuses. What if they do not believe me? What if they do not listen to me? To which God replies, *‘If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first sign (the staff), they may believe the second (the hand). But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground.’*

So Moses tries a different approach: Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent. I am slow of speech and tongue! Many scholars believe that Moses had a speech impediment, a mark of shame in Egyptian culture. Again God replies, *‘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.’*

God doesn’t wait for us to be perfect in confidence, faith or ability before calling us to join him. Instead, He says step out and I will join you, I will be with you (3v12), I will help and teach you along the way (4v12).

Of course it is possible that Moses had simply become too comfortable and he didn’t want God to change anything. He’s middle aged, he’s settled down, has a steady job, wife and kids. Pardon your servant, Lord, but please send someone else!

It is at this point that God becomes angry and tries one last argument: I will send your brother Aaron to go with you. In fact he’s already on his way to you. You don’t have to go alone. Paul has Timothy, Batman has Robin, Danger Mouse has Penfold. Moses, I will send you Aaron.

Besides you already have all you need – what is in your hand?

American Pastor Rick Warren uses this passage in a talk to the TED community

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=640BQNxB5mc>

He makes the following observations.

God never does a miracle to show off, every miracle is a parable designed to teach us something.

God never asks you a question for his benefit; he knows the answer. He is asking because he wants YOU to know the answer.

So, Moses, what is in your hand?

Moses is carrying his shepherd's staff.

- The shepherd's staff is a symbol of his identity – the mark of a shepherd.
- The shepherd's staff is a symbol of his income – then, people didn't put their money in the bank; wealth was tied up in livestock. All Moses' wealth is in his sheep.
- The shepherd's staff is a symbol of his influence – he uses it to move sheep from here to there, by hook or by crook.



With all this in mind, God asks Moses to throw the stick down and watch it come alive. Pick it back up again and it dies.

The miracle is not in the stick, as if God has given Moses a magic stick to do tricks with. The miracle is in the surrender, the throwing down of identity, of income and of influence.

So, what is in your hand?

- What is your identity?
- What is your income/status symbol?
- Where is your influence?



Throw it down and watch it come alive!

God has gifted you. He has put gifts and talents in your hand. What are you wired to do? Paint, sing, write, listen, make people laugh, run? Then use those gifts for God (throw them down before him).

That doesn't mean give them up. Rather, use what you have been given for God. God delights, like a parent over a child, when we fulfil the potential he has placed within each one of us.

Why not spend some time reflecting on your gifts, what God has given you, what is in your hand?

Throw it down, use it for God's glory and watch it come alive!

## 5 Reflection Questions

1. Do you feel ready yet? In which area do you feel lacking, in confidence, faith or ability?
2. What do you make of Moses' conversation with God? Could Moses have said no to God? Did God have a plan B?
3. What is in your hand? What is your primary identity? Do you have influence? What do you do for God with your income?
4. What are your passions, talents and gifts? How could you use these for God? (If you find it difficult to identify these in yourself, go around the room and write down the talents and gifts you see in others, then share it with them?)
5. Could you use your passion to start a POD?



The painting above was painted by Neil Durling during the service as an expression of worship – what was in his hand – paint brushes!