

Signs for Moses

(Exodus 4:1-20)

Introduction

Ask: What are some hard things God expects you to do?
He wants you to:

- Forgive others, even someone who has wronged you.
- Love our enemies, even when they are mean to you.
- Share why you love Jesus, even to a complete stranger.

God expects us to be kind, responsible, generous, and obedient, but you can't do these things without the power of the Holy Spirit.

God gives us the power we need to do these hard things, but if we forget we have the Holy Spirit, we can feel insecure and unable to do what we know He wants us to do.

Our lesson today is about a time that Moses forgot to trust God for the power he needed to do an impossible task.

Opening Prayer

Father, open our hearts to the things You want to speak to us this morning. We don't want to miss the lessons You have for us from this part of the Bible. When we go home after church this morning we want to be stronger in our faith in You. In Jesus' name, we pray.

Memory Verse

He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. (Isaiah 40:29).

Lesson

We've been learning about the life of Moses.

Let's review some of the major points in his life:

- As a baby, Pharaoh ordered all the boy babies to be killed, but what happened? (His mother hid him and then floated him down a river, trusting that God would take care of him.)

- As a boy, Moses was brought up in a palace by a princess living the life of luxury.
- As a young man, he saw how the Pharaoh mistreated the Israelites. One day, as he watched a Hebrew man get beaten by one of the cruel Egyptian slave masters, he got angry. What happened? (Moses killed the Egyptian.)
- At the age of 40, instead of being able to help his people, Moses was in danger himself. Where did he go? (He fled to the land of Midian and became a shepherd. What a humbling experience!)
- At the age of 80, God spoke to Moses from an unexpected place. Where? (From a burning bush.) God called Moses to do a huge task. What was it?

Last week we learned that God asked Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. But Moses didn't think he could do it. God assured Moses that He would provide all he needed.

Ask: Do you remember what God told Moses His name is? I AM. He was telling Moses that He is everything you need. He is your wisdom, your peace, your strength, and your courage to do what He asks you to do. [Review the verse for today.]

Today we will continue the story in Exodus chapter 4 where God is speaking to Moses from the burning bush and Moses is still arguing with God.

Exodus 4:1

But Moses protested again, "What if they won't believe me or listen to me? What if they say, 'The LORD never appeared to you'?"

Even though God had just told Moses that He was the great I AM and would provide everything that Moses needed to lead the people out of Egypt, Moses continued to argue with God.

Moses still didn't think he could do what God was asking him to do. So, God gave Moses four miracles to prove that nothing is too hard for God.

Moses, being a shepherd, carried a staff. A shepherd's staff was commonly a three- to six-foot wooden stick with a curved hook at the top. The shepherd used it for guiding his sheep.

God asked Moses to throw his staff on the ground.

Exodus 4:2-3

Then the LORD asked him, "What is that in your hand?" "A shepherd's staff," Moses replied. "Throw it down on the ground," the LORD told him. So Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back.

Next God asked Moses to pick up the snake. Moses must have been scared, but he obeyed God's command...

Exodus 4:4

Then the LORD told him, "Reach out and grab its tail." So Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd's staff in his hand.

Moses' staff was just an ordinary stick; not a magic wand. But God used it to teach Moses an important lesson.

Exodus 4:5

"Perform this sign," the LORD told him. "Then they will believe that the LORD, the God of their ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—really has appeared to you."

God was saying, "Do these miracles and the people will finally believe that the you have spoken to God almighty."

Next, He told Moses to put his hand inside his robe.

Exodus 4:6

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out again, his hand was white as snow with a severe skin disease.

Leprosy was one of the most feared diseases of Moses' time. There was no cure and it caused a great deal of pain and suffering before death. This must have really scared Moses to see leprosy on his own hand.

Exodus 4:7

"Now put your hand back into your cloak," the LORD said. So Moses put his hand back in, and when he took it out again, it was as healthy as the rest of his body.

God wanted Moses to prove that He had all power and was not limited in what He could do.

Exodus 4:8-9

The LORD said to Moses, "If they do not believe you and are not convinced by the first miraculous sign, they will be convinced by the second sign. And if they don't believe you or listen to you even after these two signs, then take some water from the Nile River and pour it out on the dry ground. When you do, the water from the Nile will turn to blood on the ground."

Still Moses wasn't completely convinced. He gave God yet another excuse.

Exodus 4:10

But Moses pleaded with the LORD, "O Lord, I'm not very good with words. I never have been, and I'm not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled."

Moses was saying he wasn't good at speaking in front of people.

Exodus 4:11

Then the LORD asked Moses, "Who makes a person's mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD?"

God reminded Moses that He had created Moses' mouth! He knew Moses' abilities and He would help him know what to say.

If God asks us to do something He will help us get the job done. We can trust God to provide the right words to say and give us the strength, courage, and ability we need.

Exodus 4:12

Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say."

But Moses still tried to wiggle out of doing God's will...

Exodus 4:13

But Moses again pleaded, "Lord, please! Send anyone else."

Moses was begging God not to choose him to lead the people out of Egypt. Moses asked God to send someone else!

At this point God gets angry with Moses...

Exodus 4:14-16

Then the LORD became angry with Moses. "All right," he said. "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he speaks well. And look! He is on his way to meet you now. He will be delighted to see you. Talk to him and put the words in his mouth. I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will instruct you both in what to do. Aaron will be your spokesman to the people. He will be your mouthpiece, and you will stand in the place of God for him, telling him what to say."

God chose Aaron, Moses' brother, to go with Moses as a spokesman.

Then God tells Moses to take his staff with him so he can perform miracles.

Exodus 4:17

And take your shepherd's staff with you, and use it to perform the miraculous signs I have shown you.

Finally, Moses realized that God would provide the power he needed to carry out the job God had given him to do, and he decided to go. So, he said *good bye* to Jethro, left the land of the Midianites, and headed for Egypt.

Exodus 4:20

So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey, and headed back to the land of Egypt. In his hand he carried the staff of God.

God had a plan for Moses' life and He's got a plan for yours, too. He wants you to trust Him to give you the power to do what He has called you to do. You need to ask God to help you to trust His power. We also need to obey Him.

Closing Prayer

Lord, Moses forgot that it is You that gives us the power to do what You ask us to do. Help us to learn to trust You and to rely on You for the wisdom and the confidence to do what we know is right, no matter what others say or think. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Game Center

Pictionary or Pantomime

Using scenes from the last few lessons, such as:

- Moses' mother putting baby Moses in a basket.
- Princess finding Moses.
- Moses killed an Egyptian taskmaster.
- Moses removing his shoes and hiding his face in front of the burning bush.
- Moses throwing down his staff and it turning into a snake.
- Moses putting his hand inside his cloak when he took it out again, it was leprous.
- Moses before Pharaoh.
- Israelites making bricks.
- Taskmasters whipping the slaves.
- Pharaoh's magicians throwing their staffs down and becoming snakes and then Aaron's staff swallowing them up.

Four Corners Review Game

Game Setup

Label each corner of the room as: **Baby, Boy, Age 40, Age 80.**

Make up several questions (or statements) where the answer to the question is one of the labels of the corners. For example,

Baby

- Pharaoh ordered all boy babies killed.
- Moses was hidden in a basket.
- Moses was found by a princess.

Boy

- Moses lived a life of luxury in a palace.
- Moses had servants.
- Moses was the prince of Egypt.

Age 40

- Moses watched a Hebrew man get beaten.
- Moses killed an Egyptian taskmaster.
- Moses became a shepherd.

Age 80

- God spoke to Moses from a burning bush.
- God called Moses to do a huge task.
- Moses told God he couldn't obey him.

How to Play

One student comes to the middle of the room and counts to ten. While that student counts to ten, the other students go to one of the four corners of the room.

After getting to ten, the child in the middle chooses a question to read out loud, and whoever happens to be in the corner that is the right answer for that question must sit down. For example, if the student in the middle calls out "Boy", all the children in that corner now have to sit against the wall, they are out of the game.

Then the game continues and another child comes to the middle and counts again.

Note: When you get down to only a 3-4 people, have them all go to separate corners.

Last child standing is the winner.

Or, use the following review questions in another game:

1. Why did Moses almost die as a baby? (Pharaoh ordered all the boy babies killed.)
2. Where did Moses grow up? (He was raised by a princess in a Palace.)
3. What did Moses do when he saw a Hebrew man get beaten by one of the cruel Egyptian slave masters? (He killed the Egyptian.)
4. From what unusual place did God speak to Moses? (A burning bush.)
5. What were the four miracles God gave Moses to perform to show that he was God's representative? (The staff turned into a snake, the snake turned back to a stick, and, the hand turned leprous and back to normal.)
6. Still Moses wasn't convinced that he could do the job. What was Moses' next excuse for not doing God's will? (He said he wasn't good at speaking.)
7. Who did God send alongside of Moses to be his spokesman? (Aaron, his brother.)
8. What did you learn today that God wants you to do? (Trust and obey.)
9. What is today's memory verse? (*He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.* Isaiah 40:29).

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