

It seems that so many of us live in fear about so many things. The situations in our lives and the things we have endured seem to have given us plenty of reasons to live in fear. And then, of course, there are the things we have seen others who are dear to us endure (which might actually be the biggest source of our fear).

I have found that so many people are even afraid of God and what God might do with their lives and what He does or does not have in store for their future. Most people struggle to believe what the Bible says in **Jeremiah 29:11**. They are not convinced that the Lord's plans are really for welfare and not for calamity. Instead, deep down inside, in places they don't like others to see, they think that God most definitely has harmful plans for their life. I know it sounds silly, but I also know that most of us in this room have not only thought this but have made way too many choices believing this to be true. We find ourselves reacting and panicking while all tied up in emotional knots.

The sad thing is that those choices which derive from our fear are all made on a hoax, a ruse, a made-up scheme of the enemy to cripple us. He wants to deceive us into thinking that we are crazy to trust God with the details of our lives. The sad thing is that even though we know that this is how the devil rolls, we often swallow the lie and instead of living as true ambassadors for Jesus Christ, we live as fearful slaves bound to our old master the devil.

If you think about it, this way of living makes absolutely no sense. Everything we have studied reveals to us that God is faithful and worthy of our trust. We don't need to fear. Let me say that again; we don't need to fear. We belong to the one who created the universe and according to **Psalms 25:10** "All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His

testimonies.” This means that everywhere that the Lord leads us we can be confident and we can rest no matter how scary it looks.

Tonight we are going to take a deeper look into the life of Moses, a man who once was strong and courageous but whose mind, in his later years, had become flooded with fear. Moses once thought he knew what God wanted; but when he stepped out to fulfill that plan nothing happened the way he had envisioned. It was a total disaster. As a result, fear took root in his soul; a fear that wrapped around every part of his being.

Moses wanted nothing to do with the plans of the Lord—he’s been there done that. He did not like the way the Lord seemed to work, or, in his case, not to work. In fact, when the Lord appeared to Moses, he looked for every possible out. He did not want to do what the Lord had called him to do.

But by faith and a lot of intervention from God, Moses overcame his fear and this time under the leading of the Spirit of God, and not his flesh, he accomplished amazing feats and literally became the promised one, the savior of Israel.

But first, Moses had to be prepared. He had to learn the beautiful humility of total dependence upon the Lord. He had to become convinced of his complete and utter inadequacy before he would learn how to depend upon the Lord for everything. This is the remaining saga of Moses’ journey to be a man of faith.

***Hebrews 11:27-28***

By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the

blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

Last week, we left off where Moses prematurely acted upon His faith, not waiting on God, and ended up a murderer who had to flee Egypt. Moses had hoped that the Jewish people would know that he was the promised deliverer; but they didn't. They were not ready for this Prince of Egypt to try and rescue them; and so they stayed and Moses fled. He went to the land of Midian where He stayed for 40 long years. It was there in this land that God first talked to Moses on Mount Sinai through the burning bush.

We are told that it was by faith that Moses left Egypt and was not afraid of the king. I don't want you to be confused. This does not refer to the time when Moses fled in fear because he was this renegade murderer and Pharaoh was looking for justice, but it is a reference to the time—40 years later—when Moses defied Pharaoh and confidently led the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Now the reason this is significant is because of what we find out about Moses' psychological and emotional state of mind after spending 40-years in the desert. Remember, he started off as a Prince, he had lived a privileged life, he had led the Egyptian army into great battles, and now He was old and afraid.

Let me quickly clarify something from last week. I mentioned that Moses' encounter with God and the burning bush was an encounter with Jesus. I think some of you were confused by this. It seems that whenever we read the Old Testament and it says "God" that we just assume it is referring to the Father and not to the Son. But that is not the case. If you remember the story, God

introduced Himself to Moses by the name “I Am.” So Moses knew God as the I Am and that was how Moses was instructed to introduce this unseen God to the Jews.

Then a little more than a thousand years later, in **John 8:58**, Jesus identified Himself in the very same way. When being confronted by the Pharisees, Jesus told them: “Truly, truly, before Abraham was, I Am.” Jesus actually took the sacred **Name** and in so doing declared that He was the one on the mountain top that talked to Moses—and to Abraham and Isaac before that. Jesus is the **I Am** and that is who Moses met. I wanted to quickly work through that as I know that some of you were scratching your head as I tried to explain this last week. Sorry for any confusion.

Now, as far as we know, Moses spent most of his 40 years in Midian being a shepherd. If you can imagine, this great Prince of Egypt, this great savior of Israel, was thoroughly humbled and for many years his only subjects were smelly stubborn sheep. But then one day everything changed.

Moses noticed that there was a mountain that looked as if it was on fire and Moses was drawn to it. As Moses ascended the mountain he saw a bush that was on fire yet it was not being consumed by the fire. **Acts 7:30-31** says that an angel appeared to Moses from in the midst of the burning bush, but as he approached the bush to examine it more thoroughly he heard the voice of the Lord call to him from out of the bush.

From the midst of that fire, God talked to Moses and told him that the time had come and that he would be the deliverer of the Jewish people. You can imagine that since Moses had fled Egypt in fear for his life and since he had been completely rejected by the Jewish people who refused to believe that he was

their savior, that this was probably not the best of news for Moses. He was legitimately and understandably afraid. Left to himself, he would have never had the courage to return to Egypt much less try and lead this great deliverance of the Jews. You can imagine him thinking, “Are you out of your mind, don’t you remember what happened way back then? There is no way I am going back to Egypt—no way!”

The part of the story is covered in **Exodus 3-4**. When you read that text you will find that Moses was afraid to appear before Pharaoh and he was afraid that if he returned to Egypt the Jews would once again not believe that he was sent by God but think that he was still trying to “be the man.”

God said: “Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt” (**Exodus 3:10-11**)?

Then God went on to explain how Moses would pull off this great deliverance and Moses said to Him, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you’” (**Exodus 4:1**).

God then explained that Moses would perform many miracles to convince the people and Pharaoh that Moses had been sent by God. 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” (**Exodus 4:10**).

Wow, this is quite a shift. If you remember, we were told in **Acts 7:22** that “Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.” But now he is cowering and in fear claiming to be completely incapable of doing this deed, claiming to be slow of speech and of

tongue. It seems Moses was just a shadow of the man who rushed out to kill the Egyptian expecting all of Israel to follow him to freedom. Now he second guesses everything. He went from being a Prince to tending sheep and right about now he is thinking how he loves those little lambs and really hates Egypt.

### ***Exodus 4:11-17***

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? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." But he said, "**Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.**"

Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs."

It kind of sounds like Moses was more than a little afraid; he is terrified. He begs God to send someone else and he was looking for any excuse to get out of this assignment. The 40 years in the desert had accomplished its purposes in Moses life. Moses was no longer the arrogant Prince, the savior of Israel. He was now a humble man who knew that he had nothing in and of himself to offer to God or to the Jews. Moses knew that if this was going to work it was going to

have to be all God. It is in this place of humility, this place of total need, this place of fear and trepidation, that Moses starts his journey to Egypt—staff in hand.

Before he left, God told Moses that all those who sought his life were dead (**Exodus 4:19**). It seems that this might have been around the time when the Egyptians retook control of their country and the Hyskos rulers were chased out of Egypt back to Canaan. This was good news for Moses. With the death and departure of the Hyskos rulers, so to died the memory of Moses and his murderous ways. If you don't remember who the Hyskos were and how they rose to power, you should go back and listen to **Hebrews 11:23** where we covered in detail that very interesting piece of history.

Upon arriving in Egypt, Moses and Aaron met with all the leaders of Israel and showed them the miraculous signs that God has commanded and the Israelites humbled themselves and believed (**Exodus 4:29-31**). After all these years, they were finally ready to follow Moses. Now there was just one huge problem: Pharaoh and the entire nation of Egypt that depended upon Israel as their primary source of labor and production. In fact, their whole economy depended upon the slaves. Moses knew this was not going to be an easy task; yet he went forward.

I want to make this point very clear. Living by faith does not mean that we are going to be entirely without fear; it does not mean that we won't freak out, have our moments, and cower at the things God asks of us. It simply means that we will still choose to go forward and do what God asks; trusting ourselves to Him regardless of either the impossibility of the task or our inadequacy to carry out the task.

How many of you have been afraid to step out into what you know God has called you to do? How many of you have cowered at the Lord's call—or even His possible call—over your life? How many of you have looked at the obstacles and said that it is simply impossible and then out of fear did nothing?

Consider the obstacles placed in front of Moses. He had to walk up to the ruler of the then known world and unabashedly tell him to, in effect, bankrupt his economy, cripple his country, and to just let the people of God go. I could imagine Pharaoh just breaking out in laughter thinking that Moses was insane. It is hard to even imagine why Pharaoh would have even given him time in his court to make such an audacious request.

Pharaoh responded as you might expect. He increased the burden on the Israelites and required them to not only manufacture the same number of bricks each day but to go out and gather their own straw instead of having the Egyptians provide it to them (**Exodus 5:1-21**). The Israelites became angry for this increased burden and started to turn on Moses, which I am sure brought up the memories of the last time they turned on him. Moses started to freak and he thinks it is all going to go down just as it did before. Here is what he said to the Lord:

***Exodus 5:22-23***

... "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all."



Do you sense just a little bit of panic. God then told Moses to go back and once again make his appeal to Pharaoh, "But Moses said to the Lord, "Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips" (**Exodus 6:12-13**)? Moses is definitely losing it. But God continued to assure Him and by faith—pushing through his fear—Moses went back to Pharaoh 9 times saying exactly what the Lord had commanded. With each visit Moses performed some amazing miracles unleashing plague after plague upon Pharaoh and his land.

This leads us to the final and dramatic finish. Previously, when Moses had stepped out in his flesh to deliver Israel he had all his glory and fame stripped from him; all that he had left was his pride. But this time, as he stepped out in faith, the Lord added back all the glory and honor and then some.

***Exodus 11:1-3***

The Lord said to Moses, "Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry." And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

As we studied last week, Moses willingly gave up his position and stature in Egypt as this great Prince and chose to take on the reproach of Christ. The Lord

did not forget this great act of faith; but He chose to reward Moses and reward him lavishly. The first time around when Moses tried to possess the promise through acts of the flesh, it was a disaster. But this time, when he trusted himself to the Lord, the Lord not only used him in an amazing way, but honored his faith and exalted Moses before Pharaoh, before the Egyptians, and before all Israel.

Remember, that is the way it always is with God. **All the promises of God are experienced through faith and not through any of our pursuits in the flesh.** God is faithful and He will always remember and honor our acts of great faith.

After Moses asked all the Egyptians for their silver and gold, Pharaoh threatened Moses and told him to leave saying that if he ever saw Moses face again that he would die. Moses confidently told Pharaoh that he would no longer see his face and then he unleashed the final and 10<sup>th</sup> plague. Moses turned to Pharaoh and said:

***Exodus 11:4-9***

... "Thus says the Lord: About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, you and all the people who follow you.' And after that I

will go out." And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt

So by the time of this 10<sup>th</sup> plague it seems that Moses was fully convicted in his faith and had overcome his fears. He spoke these words of terror and then went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. This is a changed man; he is no longer afraid.

God previously instructed Moses to take the blood of an unblemished lamb or goat and put the blood on the two door posts and lintel of the houses in which they were to eat the lamb. Then when the Angel of Death would approach and see the blood he would pass over their house and the firstborn of Israel would live whereas the firstborn in Egypt would die. This final plague would spread throughout the entire land of Egypt and come against both man and beast, and [interestingly enough] upon all the "gods" of Egypt (***Exodus 12:12***).

**By faith** Moses and the children of Israel took hyssop (symbolic for the cross) and dipped it in the blood of the lamb (symbolic for the blood of Christ) and marked the door posts and the overhead beam of the house (symbolic for our lives) and they kept the Passover and the destroyer did not touch them. That one night of destruction was enough to finally break the stubborn neck of Pharaoh as even his own son who sat on his throne were struck by this plague of death.

***Exodus 12:31-33, 36***

Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from

among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!" The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." ... And the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

Without hesitation Moses, Aaron, and the people of Israel—600,000 men plus women and children (approximately 2 million people)—**by faith** left the land of Egypt. We are told that they were literally thrust out of Egypt and had no time to prepare any provisions; in fact, they had to eat unleavened bread because they left in such a hurry the dough had no time to rise (***Exodus 12:37, 39***).

***Exodus 13:17-22***

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. ... And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

The Lord was not finished in terms of building the faith of the Israelites. He knew that they were still a very weak people so instead of taking them up into Canaan where the well trained Philistine militia might attempt to block their way, He led them down the Sinai peninsula and right up to the edge of the red sea, or what we know as the Gulf of Aqaba. Now I am sure they were thinking that Moses was crazy; after all, what in the world were they to do backed up to a huge water way. And then came what seemed as possibly their worst nightmare.

***Exodus 14:5-9***

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

Pharaoh realized that he would be responsible for the destruction of his country and the total collapse of their economy, so he changed his mind and went out after them in fury. He brought everything they had, the army the chariots, the

horsemen—all of it. God had to have hardened his heart because after what the Lord did with the 10 plagues he had to know that this was a suicide mission and that his army was nothing when pit against the Lord of the universe.

I really believe that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart for the people. God wanted to strip away the fear from their hearts in the same way He removed the fear from the heart of Moses. He wanted the Israelites to look into the face of their fiercest enemy and, **by faith**, still choose to follow the Lord.

***Exodus 14:10-12***

When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

As can be expected of people who are consumed with fear, they instantly turn on the messenger. God had just brought them out from Egypt with incredible signs and wonders and they even plundered the Egyptians' wealth, and still they instantly freak-out at the first sign of trouble and danger. Can you imagine that they actually had the nerve to say: "Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians," thinking it is better to be a slave than to die?

This is exactly what I have seen happen in this body over and over again. God proves Himself to you, He talks to you, He reveals to you the way He sees you and He even shows you some of the plans He has for your life. He makes promises to you and over the entire time that you have been a part of this Fellowship He has worked hard at removing all your deep seeded areas of wrong belief and unbelief. He has given you an amazing network of friends who are on the same journey and has placed you in a very safe community. He has also been teaching you how to deal with your emotions and how to live in the truth instead of denial.

Yet, as soon as He starts to test your faith to allow you an opportunity to see His power and His majesty, you flip. Fear consumes you and you think He is going to do something horrible to you. You start whining about your life and how difficult it is and how you wished it all could be different. The drama just effuses from your body on to everyone around you. This has to stop. There is no going back to Egypt my friends—none! I don't care what your Egypt has been, friends, family, boyfriends, girlfriends, spouses, jobs, careers, or whatever. God is moving you to a new land, a land that is possessed by faith, and there is no going back.

During these times when you sense that the Lord is going to test your faith (or more appropriately strengthen your faith), it is good to take inventory of yourself and realize that He just desires to purify your heart and draw you near to Him. He just wants to crush the fear in your soul and replace it with a raw, radical, and unbridled faith. He just wants to show you how He will be to you every bit the God that He says and has promised that He will be. There is no reason to fear, there is no reason to freak, He loves you; He really does.

***Hebrews 11:29***

By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

Let's continue with the story.

***Exodus 14:13-18***

And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

I am sure that went over well. Um, excuse me, everyone, attention please, calm down. The Lord said to go forward. What are you talking about Moses are you crazy. I know, I know, but that is what He said; we are to go forward. Don't worry. I will just lift up my staff and the sea will divide and we will just be able to walk



through on dry land. What! Now we all know you are certifiably crazy; Pharaoh is coming and he is massively ticked off and he will swat us down like flies.

***Exodus 14:19-20***

Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

Just as the fear began to swell amongst the people, the Lord Jesus began to move and He—the angel of the Lord—took His position as their defense.

***Exodus 14:21-31***

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that

they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared.

And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

**By faith**; that is what it took. The Egyptians had no faith in the Lord (even though they had plenty of reasons to believe—10 of them I think) and so they died. The Israelites, however, believed God and his servant Moses and they lived. What a fantastic sight that must have been. There were Millions of people and animals crossing this huge water way with walls of water extending up on each side.

I always like to think about that night imagining the pillar of fire as it moved to the rear keeping Pharaoh and his army at bay (which must have totally frightened

the Egyptians), then feeling the wind start to blow and even though there was darkness everywhere, I am sure the people could hear the water move and separate. I doubt anyone slept a wink. Then to find that the land was dry would have been an amazing discovery. Yet, when the Egyptians tried to cross, the Lord completely messed with them. Their chariot wheels got clogged and it slowed them down and sent them into a panic. What a sight as the Lord brought judgment on the enemies of His people.

I want you to take note of the spiritual implication of the Red Sea crossing. This was their baptism, so to speak, and symbolized their leaving the world and leaving behind all that the world had to offer and embracing their identity as the children of the living God. It was their salvation experience. And therefore it is symbolic of how we come to Jesus and by faith receive our great deliverance from the world, from sin, from the devil and from ourselves. It is all by faith. The Red Sea was the pathway of faith as that is the only way we can come unto the Lord and receive all that He has promised for our lives.

But we have to be willing to look through our fear, we have to be willing to stomp on our doubt, we have to be willing to reject the voice of the enemy telling us that we cannot trust God, we have to reject the idea that God's plans for our lives are all about His stealing away from us everything that is good, we have to be willing to look at all the good things that God has done so far and let that be for us a pillar of fire that leads us through our times of darkness. All it takes is a faith that is active; hence, a faith (like Moses') that is unwilling to yield to fear.

Let's Pray.