

Series: Life of Moses

WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND

EXODUS 4

Text: Exodus 4:1-5

Exodus 4:1-5

¹ And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. ² And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. ³ And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. ⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: ⁵ That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

Introduction:

Moses following God's call offers excuse after excuse as to why he couldn't perform the task that God had called him to do.

God then asks Moses a question.

Note:

Exodus 4:2

² And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

Notice

1. MOSES HELD HIS PERSONALITY IN HIS HAND (VS. 2)

Exodus 4:2

² And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

That rod identified Moses as a shepherd. When people saw that rod in his hand, they would immediately know who he was!

That rod also represented all that Moses possessed. He did not even own the sheep that he kept. They belonged to his father-in-law Jethro. All Moses possessed was the rod. It represented his life, his identity and his livelihood.

That rod was a constant reminder that he had never reached his fullest potential in the Lord. Forty years earlier God had moved on his heart to deliver Israel from Egypt.

Back then, Moses ran ahead of God and took matters into his own hand. Because he did, he felt like he had wasted his only opportunity to serve the Lord.

That stick told Moses, “You are nothing but a shepherd keeping another man’s flock!”

Like Moses, we also hold some things in our hands today. Some of those things are good things and others are evil.

- The Past
- Hard Feelings toward Someone
- Un-forgiveness
- Sorrows
- Talent or Ability
- Accomplishments

All of these things, whether they are good or bad, identify us and control our lives. We come to depend on the things we hold in our hands and we may even think we can’t live without them. They become an integral part of our lives. Like a shepherd leans on his staff, we lean on the things that we hold in our hands.

We lean on the things we hold in our hands. Things like our past, our problems, our grudges, our abilities and our talents. We live for those things and we allow them to define our personality and control our spiritual destiny.

We look at some of the things we hold in our hands and believe that those things are all we will ever be. God will use Moses to teach us that we can rise above the things that we hold in our hands. We will see that what we hold does not have to hold us!

Note not only did “Moses Hold His Personality In His Hand” but also:

2. MOSES HELD HIS PROBLEM IN HIS HAND

Exodus 4:2

² And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

When Moses heard the Lord’s question, it must have stabbed his heart. “What is that in thine hand?” is the question. “A rod” is the answer. Moses must have remembered a time when his hands held a scepter instead. Surely his mind went back to those days in the palace in Egypt when he was being trained and educated to be a Pharaoh. He may have remembered a time when he held the world in his hand, now he has nothing but a dry, dead stick.

God knew what Moses had in his hand. God was not asking for information. God was asking for instruction. God was asking Moses to carefully consider the thing he held in his hand. In Moses' life, the thing he held also held him!

That rod identified Moses and that rod also represented all the problems in his life!

That rod reminded him that he used to be a prince.

That rod reminded him that he was just a servant.

That rod reminded him that he was poor and owned nothing.

That rod reminded Moses that his life was filled with vast potential at one time, but that now, he was merely a has been, a washed up nobody on the back side of the desert.

All the things I mentioned before have the ability to define us. Our sins, our past, our hurts, our negatives feelings about others, all impact who we are and how we relate to those around us. They even determine how we serve the Lord. If I allow the negative aspects of my life to control me, then I will stand in the way of the Lord and of His will being done in my life. Even the positive aspects of our lives, like our talents and

abilities, become liabilities when we depend on them instead of the Lord.

I would remind you that we are to be controlled by nothing and no one but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:18

¹⁸ *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Romans 12:1-2

¹ *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

What do you live for? Whatever it is, it reveals your personality. Whatever it is, it controls your life!

Note not only did “Moses Hold His Personality and Problem In His Hand” but also:

3. MOSES HELD HIS POTENTIAL IN HIS HAND

Exodus 4:3-5

³ And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. ⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: ⁵ That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

When Moses objects to God's call on his life, God uses a series of miracles to teach Moses the truth that God will go with him into Egypt and that God will work through him.

First, the rod becomes a serpent and then it becomes a rod again, v. 3-4.

Second, Moses' hand becomes leprous and then clean again, v. 6-8.

Third, God tells Moses that he will be able to turn water to blood, v. 9. All these miracles are designed to comfort Moses and teach Israel that Moses is indeed a man sent from the Lord.

When that stick was given over to the Lord, it became a living thing. It became a thing of power that God used to defeat Israel's enemies and to glorify God. God took that insignificant stick and worked wonders with it.

- It was used to confront the Egyptian soothsayers – 7:12.
- It was used to turn the waters of Egypt to blood – 7:17-20.
- It was used to bring forth the plague of frogs – 8:5.
- It was used to bring forth the plague of lice – 8:16.
- It was used to bring forth the plague of thunder and hail – 9:23.
- It was used to call and east wind that blew in the plague of locusts – 10:13.
- It was used to part the Red Sea – 14:16.
- It was used to cause the Red Sea to come together again, drowning Pharaoh and his army – 14:27.

- It was used to bring water from a rock in the desert – 17:5.
- It was used to bring victory over the Amalekites – 17:9

Close:

Moses climbed that mountain that day with a dead stick. He has been carrying around that dead stick for forty years. In all that time, he has used that stick, but that stick had also used Moses.

That stick identified him. That stick controlled his life. That stick was a problem for Moses and he didn't even realize it. He believed that it was an indispensable part of his life and work. Moses never knew, until he yielded that stick to God, that the stick he held in his hand was the key to God's power in his life.

Moses yielded the stick he carried that day to the Lord. When he did, he was released from its power. When he did, it ceased to define him. When he did, it became the power of God in his life.

“What is that in thine hand?” what do you carry today? What defines you? What are you holding on to that holds you back and keeps you from being everything God saved you to be?