

Evangelistic Excuses

By Doug Hamilton

Years ago, the school system in Tillamook County, Oregon released the top 15 excuses that were actually turned in by parents. They are as follows:

1. Dear school: Please ackuse John for bring absent on Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.
2. Chris has an acre in his side.
3. Mary could not come to school because she is bothered by very close veins.
4. John has been absent because he had two teeth taken off his face.
5. I kept Billie Home because he had to go Christmas shopping because I didn't know what size she wear.
6. Please excuse Gloria. She has been sick and under the doctor.
7. My son is under the doctors care and should not take P.E. Please execute him.
8. Lillie was absent from school yesterday as she had a groing over.
9. Please excuse Ray Friday. He has lose vowels.
10. Please excuse Joyce from P.E. for a few days. Yesterday she fell out of a tree and misplaced her hip.
11. Please excuse Blanche from jim today. She is administrating.
12. Carlos was absent yesterday because he was playing football. He was hurt in his growing part.
13. My daughter was absent yesterday, because she was tired. She spent the weekend with the Marines.
14. Please excuse Dianne from being absent yesterday. She was in bed with gramps.
15. Please excuse Jimmy for being. It was his father's fault.

Sometimes it might be better to stop with the excuses and just do what is expected. This is the case for this morning's lesson.

Exodus 3:1-4:17 -Stop Making Excuses Concerning Evangelism

3:1-9 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."⁵ "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."⁶ Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.⁷ The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

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Moses was called to bring the message of deliverance.

No sooner would the commission to go proclaim that message to Pharaoh be given that Moses would offer a series of excuses to not do so. It is in these objections that we can see a better glimpse of some of the obstacles that stand in the way of us sharing the Gospel with others.

Excuse #1: Who am I?

^{3:11} But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

- Moses was an eighty year old shepherd when the LORD called him from the burning bush. Forty years prior, he had fled Egypt as a wanted criminal, traitor and coward. He was not exactly a man with a high self-esteem. Naturally the thought of appearing before Pharaoh would have been intimidating.

God's Reply: I will be with you.

¹² And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

Application: God saved us with the intention of us sharing the gospel with others.

- 1 Peter 2:9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
- Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;¹⁵ nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.¹⁶ “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Excuse #2: Who is God?

^{3:13} Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

Reply: I AM WHO I AM.

^{3:14-15} God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

- The phrase that God is using communicates that He stands outside of time. He is independent of all else in the universe. It comes from the name, *YHWH*, rendered *LORD*, which is derived from the verb *HAYAH, to be*. He is always Jehovah!

In order to be evangelistic like God wants us to be, we must view Him as the great I AM.

- The One who sends us stands outside of time:
 - Revelation 22:13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”
 - Isaiah 44:6 “...‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.’”

Evangelistic Excuses

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- The One who sends us is absolutely consistent:
 - Mal 3:6 “For I, the LORD, do not change...”
 - Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever.
 - James 1:17 “...the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.
- The One who sends us is faithful to the end:
 - Ex 3:17 And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—a land flowing with milk and honey.’
 - Ex 3:21 “And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed.
 - Deuteronomy 32:4 *He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.

Application: We must know the One that sends us.

- *John 8:56-59 “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”*⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple. The Jews sought to kill Jesus because they refused to view Him with the intrinsic qualities of Jehovah.

Excuse #3 What if they don't listen?

Ex 4:1 Moses answered, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you’?”

Reply: Prove it!

Ex 4:2-9 Then the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” “A staff,” he replied.³ The LORD said, “Throw it on the ground.” Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it.⁴ Then the LORD said to him, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.” So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand.⁵ “This,” said the LORD, “is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you.”⁶ Then the LORD said, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous, like snow.⁷ “Now put it back into your cloak,” he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.⁸ Then the LORD said, “If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second.⁹ 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.”

- With the miraculous workings of God, Moses possessed the ability to defy the physical world. One was the staff in his hand and the other was his hand. He would have all the proof that should be needed as presented through the Ten Plagues of Egypt.

Evangelistic Excuses

By Doug Hamilton

Application: What is in your hand? The Bible!

- Though we do not have the miraculous powers that validated the writings of the Bible, we must know well the tool of the Bible that God has placed into our hand. That writing was validated with miracles.
 - Mark 16:20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.
 - 1 Thessalonians 1:5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction..."
 - Hebrews 2:4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.
- We must be ready and willing to use that Bible in our hands.
 - 2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.
 - 2 Timothy 4:1-2 I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ² Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Excuse #4 What if I am not a good speaker?

Ex 4:10 Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

- It is doubtful over the forty years of shepherding that Moses was not refining his speaking skills. For him to say that he was not a good enough speaker would have seemed justifiable for Moses, but he was missing the point.

Reply: The power is in the message, not the messenger!

Ex 4:11-12 The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

- God made the mouth of Moses and God knows what Moses is capable of, not so much because of the power of the speaker, but the strength of the message and the One who sent him.
- Paul the apostle apparently was not a good public speaker. He writes concerning himself in 2 Corinthians 10:10 *For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible." Even with that in mind, Paul was probably the greatest evangelists in history.*

Application: Trust the gospel message that God has provided.

- 2 Timothy 1:8 "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God..."
- Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Evangelistic Excuses

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- 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
- 1 Corinthians 9:16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.

Excuse #5: Can you send someone else?

Ex 4:13 But Moses said, “O Lord, please send someone else to do it.”

- Even after all that God has covered with Moses, there is still timidity on his behalf. After all, to stand before the most powerful man in all Egypt and proclaim the deliverance of Israel would not be an easy job. This still does not eliminate his responsibility in the matter.

Reply: Team Up!

Ex 4:14-16 Then the LORD’s anger burned against Moses and he said, “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you.¹⁵ You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do.¹⁶ He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him.

- Aaron, the older brother of Moses would be the partner for this mission. He would be the one to pick up the slack from the lack of speaking ability.

Application: We must be willing to be part of a team, not a lone evangelist.

- Luke 10:1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.
- Mark 6:7 And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits;
- Ecc 4:12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.
- Prov 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.

Closing thoughts:

Luke 14:18 Jesus said they all started to make excuses to the king.¹⁸ *“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’¹⁹ Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’²⁰ Another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’*

Stop making excuses for the spreading of God’s Kingdom!