

What makes something worth your while? When buying a home, perhaps you receive assistance in determining if the building has sound qualities or not. But when it comes to ourselves, we often downplay our own worthiness. We diminish our own qualities, or highlight our shortcomings, and question whether or not we are worthy of something.

We find someone with this mindset in Exodus 4. Moses objects again and again to being the prophet of the LORD to Israel in Egypt. He raises a number of objections, frequently centered around his own lack of qualities. Yet over and against Moses' objections, the LORD answers. He does not discount Moses' objections, but demonstrates his own love and grace and power and sovereignty. And it's in what God does, in who he is, that we find what is truly worthwhile, not in the shortcomings of man.

The dialogue between Moses and the LORD is a beautiful display of who God is. This exchange between the Creator and his creature testifies to God's power, to his glory, to his patience, and to his grace. We cannot focus here upon Moses in his shortcomings, except through the lens of who God is, the one who is to use this unworthy man to bring his noteworthy message.

But Moses is unwilling to go. He constantly brings up reasons for him not to be sent to Egypt. In fact, Moses objects no less than five times to the Lord. He was so reluctant to go that he tried to say no to God five times! That's not acting in a manner worthy of a follower of God. That's not acting in faith.

In this we see an awesome display of God's grace and patience. Even as he appeared to Moses there in the burning bush, he was patient with Moses. He was willing to answer Moses on each of his objections. He answers his objections, he gives him signs, and he reassures him.

But even after appearing to him in the burning bush, even after revealing himself as the Great I AM, even with equipping him with signs that would testify to his calling, Moses still sought out ways to avoid his calling. We see in this that Moses did not have the capacity to display who God is. Moses was unwilling to display God's love, his power, his authority. His worthiness to display such miracles would not come from him, but from God.

This is true for us today. We might read such a passage and wonder at Moses. How could he be so foolish? How could he not go, having seen the burning bush, having heard God talk to him, having received such wonderful miracles to display? If we could turn sticks into snakes, wouldn't that be something else? But do we not have something far greater to display?

The signs God gave to Moses were mere symbols of his power, unnoteworthy in themselves. In fact, the Egyptian magicians would do similar things in Pharaoh's court. Such a display did not win over Pharaoh, and similar tricks today will not win over anyone either. Those signs are not worthwhile when we compare them to the sign of the cross.

In Christ, we have the greatest sign of all to display. That a staff can be turned into a snake is something indeed, but for a man to come back to life, and life eternal at that, is something else entirely. That a man's hand can become leprous and clean at the twist of an arm is noteworthy, but for people dead in their trespasses to begin living with a new nature is far greater. That water poured out could be turned to blood might be cause for alarm, but that one man's blood poured out could turn salvation for countless souls is a sign worthy of proclamation.

We, who are just as unworthy in ourselves as Moses was, have a far more noteworthy sign to display in our Lord and Saviour. Should we think that we have nothing to display to the world? Should we think of our shortcomings and consider that others ought to demonstrate God's love? Or is the sign that God would redeem even someone like myself not be testimony enough to God's glorious gospel of salvation?

This is God highlighting to Moses again just who it is that makes him worthy. He had shown to Moses that he was a faithful God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had shown himself through the burning bush, a holy God before an unholy man and did not consume him. He had reassured Moses that it was his plan that was being carried out. He had given to Moses signs through the staff and the cloak. And now he reminds Moses that he is completely Sovereign. Not only over his staff or his hand, but over everything. I am the God who has created heaven and earth.

That is both a terrifying and comforting thought. Here is a God who is absolutely in control, and he reminds Moses of that, also over language. Here is the God who used his word to create heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them in six days. Here is the God who saw mankind reject his sovereign authority, and confounded their words at Babel. Here is the God who would put true words into his servant's mouth.

God's Word is more powerful, more moving, more compelling than anyone's word. He does not need the fancy oratory skills of the best speakers of mankind. He does not need compelling and elaborate arguments to present his case. His word is spoken, and it is realized. God's Word goes forth, and it does not return to him empty.

Moses, as unworthy as his speech capacity was, would be a worthy speaker because of the words God would give him. This worthiness does not come from him, but from the noteworthy message he could bring. Noteworthy not in how he presented it, but noteworthy in that it was the message of God. A message of salvation for the people of God.

When we consider the Word of God, as the qualifier for worthiness, then our objections fade away. We may know that God's Word will accomplish its purpose. We may know that the God who made our mouths, who gifted us with language, and whose Spirit dwells in our hearts, is a God who makes us worthy to bear witness to the truths of salvation. And that makes the followers of God worthy to be sent.

The issue with Moses was always on the self. He was so focused upon his own shortcomings that he was unwilling and unable to focus upon God's power, God's capacity, God's plan. He was so focused upon the daunting task in front of him and his inability to carry that task out that he lost sight on the only one who could guarantee that task would be completed.

Moses kindled the anger of the LORD because he failed to acknowledge who God was. Even as the LORD answered his every objection with further displays of his sovereign power and divine purpose, still Moses refused to trust him. Is that not a great insult against the Lord? That we would fail to trust in him?

The LORD wasn't sending Moses on his own strength. That was not what made Moses worthy. In himself, Moses was not worthy to be sent. But in the strength of God, he was worthy to be sent. Moses would need to cling to God's promises by faith, and carry out the plan of God in the strength of his God, not in his own strength. In this way alone could Moses be considered worthy to be sent. This is where the perspective that Paul had by the power of the Spirit is needed. We need to have the same attitude he did when it comes to doing the will of the Lord. Listen to what Paul wrote the Corinthians, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

It is true that we are not worthy, not any more than Moses was. We were by nature children of wrath. But by the grace of God, his power is made perfect in our weakness. Our weaknesses do not diminish our worthiness in the hands of God any more than our strengths contribute to our worthiness. Just as we are worthy to display and speak of God's glory because of Christ, so we are worthy to be sent because of Christ. Thanks for listening