

02-03-02-Talking Back to God

faith, obedience, listening, guidance

Exod 3:10-4:11

God faithfully counters our arguments to get us to do His will.

INTRODUCTION: (Scripture Reading: Exod 3:7-12)

–God uses *imperfect leaders, like me... and like Moses*. In Exod 3 & 4, when God gave Moses the task of leading Israel out of Egypt, he made excuses... he talked back to God... I’ve done that, too, giving God my sound reasons against what He was telling me to do. But He *reiterates His point*, and I usually submit, as Moses did. Fortunately, **HOM.idea**. –In exploring these exchanges between God and Moses, *I’ll confess a few of my own*. [On a Touched by an Angel episode, the angel Monica wondered why people who pray to God are considered okay but *those who hear God talking* are thought crazy.] If He says to do something, and *we talk back*, He doesn’t quit the conversation. *He persists* and it’s often *to help us overcome...*

- I. A Sense of Inadequacy– Exod 3:10-12**, “*So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.*” *But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”* *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.”*
- A. **If Moses asked**, “*What kind of sign is that? It can’t even happen until I’ve already done what You’re asking!*” **God would have replied**, “*Exactly.*”]
- B. **Human nature looks before leaping**. (We want visible signs, solid indications that the instructions we receive can be believed.)
- C. But all a truly *confident faith* needs is God’s promise, “*I will be with you.*” *God’s reply says the confirmation will follow the obedience.*)

TRANS: [One night in L&D, a pastor’s wife asked me to be her nurse again for her 2nd baby. I thought, “*Sure... easy job! She’s already 3 cm. She’ll deliver by shift change!*” But at 6:30 AM, she was only 8 cm. I left the room discouraged and prayed, “*God, I’ve tried everything! She’s still not delivered.*” I distinctly heard, “*Push with her.*” “*But God, I can’t have her push at 8 cm.*” “*Well, you asked me.*” So, going back in, I did so and in a few minutes had call for a doc.] *Aren’t you glad God persists when we resist?* **God faithfully counters our arguments to get us to do His will.** Moses’ next problem was...

II. An Identity Crisis

- A. In Exod 3:13-14, 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?” God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM**. ... say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” (Moses was still uncommitted. He knew Israel’s loss of hope after years of slavery to a nation of gods with many names and no news from their God.)
- B. [Names are symbols standing for either *realities* or *fantasies*.] No *symbolic name* can fully represent the Creator, but what He told Moses was an ultimate representation of His *Eternal Personal Being*: “**I AM**.”
- C. Bypassing symbolism in a *profound Self-description*, God said to both Moses and Israel, “**Trust that I AM WHO I AM, and obey the words I give you that represent my will for you and Israel**.”

TRANS: [“Machpelah” is a poem I wrote after seeing some *parallels* between the *purchase* of a burial cave for Sarah by Abraham and the *purchase* of an empty tomb by Christ. I prayed to God for a title, and the cave’s name came to me: “Machpelah.” “No one would know that name?” But when trying other names, I heard an emphatic, “Its title is ‘Machpelah.’” This got me curious, so I looked the name up in a Hebrew lexicon. It said, “Machpelah = ‘double’ or ‘portion.’” This amazed me, because the poem had a ‘double’ meaning and, in two places, I used the concept of “a portion” tie the parallels together.] **God’s reasons beat ours! He faithfully counters our arguments to get us to do His will. Moses also was afraid of...**

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- A. Moses held a shepherd’s staff for livestock; but God, wanting him to shepherd Israel’s multitudes, asked him, “What is that in your hand?” (God was saying, “You’ve already got what you need!”)
- B. When “it became a snake,” Moses “ran from it” in fear, God said to go ahead and pick it up. (His familiar “staff” was *nothing to fear!*)

TRANS: [My RN job porn-proofed me. Female nudity in L&D never gave me any bad thoughts, and I didn’t know why. So, after extensive research on views of nudity in history, other cultures and the early church, I concluded that a *prudish view of the body is a pornographic one, leading to a pornified culture*. When I shared my studies online, some pastors, recently delivered from porn by the same findings, asked me to

help create a website to fight pornography. I *felt* it right, but I knew our views were in conflict with traditional church opinions. When telling God, “I might get defrocked!” I clearly heard His reply, “Why do you think I put you in L&D to learn this? Now, get it on!” So, I obeyed. Since mychainsaregone.org was launched, many porn-addicted people have been helped by our message, and I’m still an ordained minister.] **God faithfully counters our arguments to get us to do His will. Finally, Moses did what we often do: excusing ourselves because of...**

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- A. Did Moses forget about the oratory he learned in Pharaoh’s courts as a young adopted prince? (God’s picture is *always bigger than our perceived deficits in public speech or leadership ability*.)
- B. By saying “Is it not I, the LORD [who fashioned you]?” God tells us that He knows us better than we know ourselves.

CONCLUSION:

— [On moving to Sacramento and looking for a place to worship, we heard about a Wesleyan church. After attending 2 services, I wanted to keep searching. But running late one night in that search, we tried one more service. When my wife left to change a diaper, I heard a soft, “This is your home.” I replied, “But I want a more charismatic service. These are Methodist-types.” Then, came a *loud emphatic voice* in my mind, “THIS IS YOUR HOME!” Having never heard God so clearly, I began weeping, just as Rosemary came back. “What’s wrong?” “God says we have to stay here.” After I obeyed, I found it *was* my *doctrinal home* and later became *one of its ministers*.]

—Adequacy in service comes from His presence with us. His identity as Creator calls for our trusting obedience. Our own credibility in serving Him comes by His work in our lives. God’s loving plans are best for us, because *He knows us much better than we know ourselves*.

—I repeat it *one last time*: **God faithfully counters our arguments to get us to do His will**. When He’s spoken His mind, and *we talk back* with our reasoning, His *persistence against our resistance deflates our human excuses*. His love for us wants the best for us, not just as *unique individuals* but as *large and small groups* of people. *Our best move* is to give in to His voice, as we trust His wisdom and obey His will.