

Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: May 13th 2018

Speaker: Paul Ferguson

Title: Ordinary me.

Introduction: This talk explores how we respond to God's call on our lives and what might be the hinderances to us responding to it.

Review: Invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review.

Read: Exodus 4: 1 - 17

Reflect:

- Moses had been given by God a 'good news' message for Israel. Read Ex 3: 16 - 20.
 - Reflect on the message that Moses was to take to Israel and draw out some of the key themes.
- He was to take the message first to the elders of Israel and then to stand before Pharaoh.
- This was too daunting for Moses to go through with as he was faced with his own shortcomings.
 - Consider why Moses was so reticent to go before his own people (3: 16). Why can it seem difficult for us to talk to those nearest to us about our faith?
- Moses' first concern seemed to be how he would be received 4: 1 "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you?'"
 - Moses had been raised in the Egyptian court, but he was Hebrew although it would seem he wasn't necessarily accepted by his own people. Ex 2: 14
 - Consider why Moses concern with other people's thoughts about him were such an obstacle for him sharing the good news?
 - In a general sense being overly concerned with the opinions others might have towards us (be they real or perceptions) is stifling. Reflect on why this can be our experience?
 - When it comes to sharing our faith consider how an over appreciation of what others might think of us can hinder us?
- God via the staff in Moses hand revealed how ordinary things take on a new dimension. Whatever people thought of Moses, good or bad, or however gifted he may have been, or not in fact, this wasn't the issue. What counted

Leaders: feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes. **Don't feel you have to use all of the material**, but do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect – Respond and **DO make room for the 'And Finally' questions!**

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was God's power and determination to rescue Israel. When our view of human competence out strips our view of God's ability our confidence is undermined.

- Consider how you have discover God's power and help even when you feel ill equipped.
- Read judges chapter 6 and reflect on human competence verse God's power and determination.
- Moses also struggled with his own perceived lack of talent. He considered himself not to have the tools for the job at hand. 4: 10 Moses said to the Lord, "Pardon your servant, 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."
 - In essence this conversation between God and Moses becomes a battle of the "I's". There is a word-play going on in the text that is not immediately noticeable in our English translations. The word 'I' is the same word in Hebrew whether God is using it of himself or Moses.

This translation makes it clearer, 4: 10 Moses says, "*I am slow of speech and tongue*" - YAHWEH responds:

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? Now go and I will help you speak and will teach you want to say.

Moses feels his "I" is inadequate for the task; Yahweh responds by saying that it is his "I" that is to be reckoned with.

- The prime-mover in the whole Exodus story is God himself, it will be because of his purpose and power that Israel will be delivered and Moses is called to join in what he is doing.
- Why do we (as Christians) find it hard to look to God's power and purpose? Why do we readily look to our I before God's?
- Has the group got any stories about God coming through even when we've been a bit faithless?

And finally:

As you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?

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