

Exodus: New and Old

Week 3 - The Idea of Wandering and the Need for Faith

Read to the Group: Throughout history God has asked His people to trust Him. This trust can be displayed in many ways. It can be displayed by abstaining from foods, dressing and behaving in ways that are different from those who do not trust in God, or embarking on a journey without knowing where it leads or how God will get you there. Today we are going to look at the start of three of these journeys: the journey of Abraham to the promised land (Canaan), the journey of Moses and the people of Israel from Egypt through the wilderness, and the journey of Peter and Andrew to faith.

? Have you ever started out on a trip without knowing the destination? Why did you take the trip, and how did it feel?

Leader's Note: This could be a literal trip (like a road trip) or something less concrete, like choosing a major without a specific career in mind.

Abraham (Abram)

Leader's Note: Have someone from the group read the following passage out loud.

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

? God asked Abram to "Go from [his] country and [his] family." If God asked you to move, would it be easy or hard, and what factors would make it that way for you?

Leader's Note: This question is designed to get the group talking and to identify with Abraham. There are no right or wrong answers, so have fun!

? God asks Abram to trust Him, but He also promises to bless Abram. What are the blessings that God promised to Abram? How would you have reacted if you received these blessings from God?

Leader's Note: The intent of this question is to get the group to encounter God's promise to Abram from their own perspectives. God promised Abram five blessings in this passage:

- 1. God would make him a great nation.*
- 2. God would make his name great.*
- 3. This would be done in order to make Abram a blessing to others (stated twice vv. 2b and 3b).*

4. God would bless those who bless Abram.

5. God would curse those who curse Abram.

The reaction of your group to these blessings may be delight, doubt or something in-between. The important thing is that they look at God asking Abram to go with the understanding that Abram was a real person.

Moses

Read to the Group: We've already studied part of Moses's story before, where God looks on His people's suffering, decides to intervene, and asks Moses to speak on His behalf. God reveals Himself as "I AM" — "The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (Exodus 3:15, ESV). Let's pick up the story following that revelation and hear more of God's commands to Moses.

Leader's Note: Have someone from the group read the following passage out loud. It is a long passage, so you may want to break it up amongst several people.

Exodus 3:16-4:17 (ESV)

¹⁶Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt,"¹⁷ and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" ¹⁸And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. ²⁰So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. ²¹And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, ²²but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

¹Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'" ²The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." ³And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. ⁴But the LORD said to Moses, "Put out your hand and catch it by the tail"—⁵so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—⁶that 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." ⁶Again, the LORD said to him, "Put your hand inside your cloak." And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. ⁷Then God said, "Put your hand back inside your cloak." So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was

restored like the rest of his flesh. ⁸ “If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. ⁹ If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

¹⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” ¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” ¹³ But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” ¹⁴ Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. ¹⁵ You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. ¹⁶ He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. ¹⁷ And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.”

? While Abram didn't know where God was sending him, Moses did - first to Egypt and then to the promised land. Sometimes knowing is harder than not knowing. Would you rather have been in Abram's position (of not knowing) or in Moses' (of knowing) and why?

Leader's Note: This question is designed to get the group to interact with the passage. There are no right or wrong answers.

? Moses is not eager to go to Egypt. What excuses does he give to God for not going? Are they good excuses? How did God answer them?

Leader's Note: This question is designed to show Moses's reluctance to follow. The excuses may be valid from a human perspective, but they really show that Moses didn't want to do what God wanted him to do. Here is a list of the excuses, the key verse, and God's response:

1. *Who am I? (3:11) - God responds with "I will be with you"*
2. *Who are you that is sending me? (3:13) - God responds with I AM WHO I AM*
3. *What if they don't believe me? (4:1) - God responds with signs*
4. *I'm not eloquent (4:10) - God responds by telling Moses that He made man's mouth*
5. *Send someone else (4:13) - God got angry, added Aaron to the team and sent Moses anyway*

? What excuses do you tend to give God when He asks you to step out in faith?

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

Leader's Note: Have someone from the group read the following passage out loud.

Matthew 4:18-22 (ESV)

¹⁸ While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he [Jesus] saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

? Jesus asked Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him. This required them leaving their profession (fishing). What are some things that we might give up today to follow Jesus?
Possible Answers: Career choices, relationships, ambitions, and desires. The important part of this question is to get the group to look at their lives through the lens of following Christ.

? Jesus called these four fishermen to become "fishers of men." They were not only called from their profession but to ministry. How does God call each of us to engage in ministry today?
Possible Answers: Loving those around us, sharing Jesus with others, and serving those who are a part of the Body of Christ. There are lots of potential answers here - the point is to get your group to look at life as ministry.

For Discussion & Application

? How can you listen to God's call on your life and trust Him—even when He calls you to actions or places that you don't expect or maybe even want?

? What is our community application of this passage?