

We sometimes sing the song, “Here Am I Send Me” but there are times when many should be singing “Here Am I but Not Me Lord.” It seems that when asked to do something we don’t want to do or feel inadequate in doing that we try to justify reasons for not doing it. I suppose that has been in the character of man since the beginning of time. For our thought today I want us to consider three examples of people basically saying, “Not Me Lord.”

**THE FIRST IS MOSES.** Moses was raised in the palace of Pharaoh until age forty and then moved to the rural area of Median and became a shepherd for forty years. Toward the end of this forty year segment, Moses encounter the Lord in the burning bush. He was in the Mt Sinai area caring for sheep when he saw a bush burning and as he approached the Lord spoke to him from the bush. In *Exodus 3:7-10 ... I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; ... (10) Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.* When Moses heard that he was to go back to Pharaoh to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, he is essence said, “Not me Lord.” He made several excuses as to why he was not the right man for the job.

**Excuse 1: I’m not good enough.** *Exodus 3:11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?* Moses was content with his shepherd life in Midian. So content that perhaps most days he did not remember the sin that drove him to this wilderness (Exodus 2:12). God now calls for him to go back to the place where he had to flea for his life, but God assured him that he would be with him during the sojourn. God didn’t accept Moses’ first excuse, because it is the same excuse anyone could use.

**Excuse 2: I don’t have all the answers.** *Exodus 3:13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?*

As a boy Moses was raised in Pharaoh's household. He had every advantage to learn and cultivate his intellect. He must have been a well read, well educated man, and yet he questioned his abilities. But, he missed the point. This call wasn't about him—it was about God. God was asking him to be His vessel; to be His voice to save the Israelites from the tyranny of Egyptian leadership, and to fulfill His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This excuse didn't fly. Moses didn't need to know all the answers because it was never about him in the first place.

**Excuse 3: People won't believe me.** Then he said, the people want believe that he was a messenger from God, but again God refuted his concerns by saying, *Exodus 3:14-15 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (15) And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.* But Moses was not satisfied with this answer. *Exodus 4:1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.* This excuse is a natural human instinct. Being vulnerable is scary—especially to a potentially hostile group. God didn't let Moses hide behind this natural human fear. He gave him two miraculous tools to give him the confidence he needed. A rod that could turn into a serpent, and the ability to turn his hand leprous, and then make it whole again by simply placing it inside his cloak. God did not dismiss this excuse. He equipped Moses to overcome it.

**Excuse 4: I'm a terrible speaker.** Finally he said I am not capable to do the job. My communication skills are not up to par. *Exodus 4:10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.* Perhaps Moses didn't feel adequate but his communication skills were certainly adequate for the task. But this was not a problem with God as he said that he would send his brother Aaron with him and

Aaron could become his spokesman.

**Excuse 5: I'm not qualified.** *Exodus 4:13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.* 'Moses' final excuse is desperate. "Please, anyone but me!" Verse 14 tells us that this angered the Lord after which the excuses stop and God calls Aaron to serve alongside his brother. A man with the abilities Moses felt he lacked.

When the aged shepherd finishes rehearsing his excuses, he shows amazing single-mindedness and accepted the appointed work. The Moses of Exodus chapters 3 and 4 is the same man that shows remarkable courage, obedience, and strength a few chapters later.

**THE SECOND CHARACTER IS GIDEON.** After both Moses and Joshua had died, God chose judges to lead the people. One such judge was Gideon. The Israelites were being oppressed by the Midianites so much so that they were having to live in deep caves and thick forests in an attempt to hide. They had tunnel systems in these caves. Because they were in hiding, it forced them to work even harder to do everyday tasks. In Joshua 6 Gideon is here hiding while threshing wheat to make bread, and the Lord shows up. *(14) And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?* It is in verse 15 that we see the excuses and mindset of "Not Me Lord." *(15) And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. (16) And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*

**EXCUSE #1: THE LORD ISN'T WITH ME.** *(15) And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel?* To get the significance of this excuse, you need to go back to verse 13. *(13) And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.*

Gideon said why has all of this befallen us? Why are we in these terrible circumstances and situations? If the Lord was with us, wouldn't He put us in a better position to live life? If we are His chosen people, then why doesn't He give us a better life? How can I serve you when I'm not sure you are with us? In fact he says I've heard of all these miracles that God has done for us, but I haven't seen any. If the Lord was really with us, then why doesn't He do miracles for us like everyone says He does? I'm not the man for the job because I'm not sure the Lord is with me.

After listening to the complaint of Gideon, the Lord told him go and save the people (v14). It was here that Gideon basically said, "Not me Lord."

**EXCUSE #2: MY FAMILY IS POOR.** (v 15) *Judges 6:15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. "Not me Lord because I don't have the means. My family is poor and to make matters worse we are in bondage with no way to make things better."* What Gideon failed to realize is that financial worth does not equate to worthiness. A person's value to God has nothing to do with how much money he has in the bank.

In addition, Gideon had no leadership experience not did he have any tools necessary to save his people. You see doing what God is asking Gideon to do was going to force him to get out of his comfort zone and to do something that he felt inadequate in doing. At times we think the same way right. I'm not qualified to do this God.

**Excuse #3: I'm too young.** He is said in v15 to be the least in his father's house. Age has nothing to do with serving God. We have examples of other young people. Joseph was a young ruler of Egypt, Esther was a young princess who saved the Jews, Samuel was a young prophet, David was a young man when he killed Goliath, Mary was a young woman when she became the mother of Jesus, Titus and Timothy were young men who became preachers. God loves to use young people to accomplish His will.

**THE THIRD IS ANANIAS.** Ananias, a disciple who lived in Damascus located in the southeastern part of Syria about 150 miles northeast of Jerusalem. It is one of the oldest cities in the world. It was the capital of Syria, and had a population of 1,600,000 people. ***Acts 9:10-14 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.*** Here we have the “Here am I, Lord send me” attitude, ***(11) And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, (12) And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.*** Given the instruction to go and meet with Saul, his attitude changed to “Not me Lord.”

There are a couple of noteworthy points in vs 11-12. For one, Saul is praying and the Lord knew that he was praying. Let’s back up and notice what happen prior to Saul’s arrival to Damascus. He was on the road outside of Damascus when he encountered a bright light. ***Acts 9:4-6 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (5) And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: .... (6a) And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*** From these verses we learn that Saul had a spiritual experience. We learn to that he had a pennant heart and became a believer; he even addressed Jesus as Lord. QUESTION; In spite of this experience and acceptance of change, was he saved? When Saul asked the question “*What will you have me to do?*” in v6, this would have been the perfect time for Jesus to have said, “*Saul you don’t have to do anything. You have already accepted me as your personal savior by acknowledging me as Lord. That’s all that you need to do. I know that you are sincere because of your trembling.*” This is what many would expect the Lord to say, but that’s not what he said. ***(6b) And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou MUST do.*** Saul was blinded by the light so he was led into the city where the Lord acknowledged that he was praying. Here we have a sinner’s prayer but did this prayer save him? Many today would say yes it did, but the Lord said that he would send Ananias to tell him what he MUST do. If Saul was saved by this

prayer or acknowledging Jesus out there on the road, then why should Ananias go to him?

When told to go to Saul, Ananias said **(13) Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: (14) And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.** He didn't want to go and had Ananias not gone, biblical history would have certainly been altered.

So Ananias went and told Saul what he needed to do. This conversation is found in Acts 22 as told by Paul himself. He said that **(12) Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews came unto me and said, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight." And the same hour I looked up upon him. (14) And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. (15) For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.** Verses 14-15 Ananias gave Saul his commission followed by telling him what he must do. **(16) And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**

Saul had a sin problem that his experience on the road could not eradicate. His pennant heart or his sinner's prayer could not remove his sins. And certainly accepting Jesus as a savior did not deal with his sin problem. Saul was told to go to the city to be told what to do and he was told to be baptized to have his sins washed away.

Revelation 1:5 tells us that it is the blood of Christ that washed away our sins. The blood is what washes them away. Baptism is when that blood washes them away. So Saul was told to **arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**

The Lord is inviting you to obey the gospel and be saved. We offer the same message.

Invitation