

Exodus 4:1-31
 God Is A Warrior
 EX1605

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 Exodus

“Speaking for God”

INTRODUCTION: The late Chuck Colson was a leading voice of Evangelicalism for almost 36 years.

1. He was the “hatchet man” for President Richard Nixon, one of the architects of the Watergate Break-in, and the focus of the subsequent scandal and investigation. He was convicted of the obstruction of justice and spent 7 months in the Maxwell State Prison in Alabaman, in 1974.
2. In 1973, in the midst of the Watergate Investigation, God broke Colson and he was “born again.” His conversion radically changed his life, and he began the now international ministry of Prison Fellowship: a ministry to incarcerated men and women.
3. He went on to become a founding member and architect of two Christian ecumenical (and controversial) movements:
 - *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*
 - *The Manhattan Declaration*
4. His subsequent books led to a daily Christian radio program named *BreakPoint*. (Now carried on by Christian author *Eric Metaxas* and *John Stonestreet*)

“In an increasingly hostile, secular culture, Christians are faced with issues and choices we’ve never had to deal with before. BreakPoint is here to help believers of every denominational background develop a robust Christian worldview – seeing, understanding, and engaging the world from a biblical perspective.” – Chuck Colson

5. In one of those 3 minute broadcasts Colson spoke about “Who Speaks for God?”

A New York bishop, speaking to a gay rights demonstration a few months ago, announced unequivocally that “AIDS is not God’s judgment on the homosexual community.” The idea that God might punish for such “so-called sins,” he explained to his appreciative audience – and the grinding national television cameras – comes from “primitive, barbaric passages of the Old Testament.” The next day produced a predictable response from conservative church leaders. Indeed, God has spoken, they thundered with righteous fervor; AIDS is His judgment on homosexuals. My point here is not to address the question whether AIDS is a judgment of God. Frankly, I don’t know. Indeed, homosexuality is a clear biblical sin. But all sin is an offense against God; to me, the miracle is that He has not already brought judgment on us all for the apostasy of our times. But the debate raises a timely question. Who does speak for God? It’s timely because we live in an age when Christians glibly toss around clichés like “God told me” this or that. Some preachers, especially a few I’ve seen on television, sound like they’ve just hung up from a private phone session with Him immediately before going on the air. Our biblical forebears had no such casual view of God’s holy voice. When the children of Israel received the Ten Commandments, they fell on their faces. “We have heard His voice from the midst of the fire,” they said. “We have seen today that God speaks with men, yet he lives.” It is no frivolous matter to hear the voice of God; and certainly it is an awesome trust to deign to speak for Him.

6. You can imagine that Colson, Metaxas and Stonestreet and others often raise the hackles of people who listen to *Breakpoint*.
 - a) Case in point: The recent post of the Breakpoint website.
 - b) *The Election and the Judgment of God: “and God Gave the Over” (Romans 1:24, 26,28)*
 - c) Many will angrily say, “Who gave these men the right to interpret Trump/ Hillary as a judgment from God?”

7. Chuck Colson went on to clarify who *does* speak for God.

The only way we can ever speak with confidence is to speak from the Word. Jesus gives us the best example: He knew the Scriptures, drew His authority from them, and based his words upon them. Those who follow him must do the same.

That’s where the bishop fell off-track. In his compassion for homosexuals, he wrote off the Old Testament as “barbaric and primitive.” As a result of his empathy, the bishop not only condoned the sin, but did so in the name of a holy and righteous God. No wonder the world is turned off by “religion.”

Who speaks for God? He does quite nicely for Himself. Through His holy and infallible Word – and the quiet obedience of His servants.

8. *Who speaks for God* has always been an issue with human beings – especially those who are devoted to several or many gods and goddesses.
 - a) They want to hear from their gods and to know their will,
 - b) But they are suspect of both their gods and the revelation they receive from them.
 - c) They prefer to *manage* their gods, but they certainly don’t want to *obey* their voice!
9. Around 1450 BC God called Moses to be His spokesman before Pharaoh and all of Egypt. We pick up that storyline in Exodus 3 and 4 ...

Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. (Ex. 3:10)

Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” (Ex. 3:13)

Go 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, 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.”’ And 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.’ (Ex. 3:16-18)

10. Put yourself in the place of Moses!

- a) He had been run out of Egypt as a fugitive from justice.
- b) He had failed in his first attempt to deliver the Israelites from slavery.
- c) He had been a shepherd for 40 years – not the best preparation for a Deliverer.

d) His confidence in himself was gone, as will be obvious in chapter 4 of Exodus.

11. God says, *“Go speak to Pharaoh, convince Israel and lead my people – millions of them – out of Egypt.”*
And Moses asks, *“Me? Speak for God?”*

12. Moses does what many of us do when God calls us to do something for Him –

- a) Offer Excuses (4:1-17)
- b) Acts Inconsistently (4:18-26)
- c) Needs Encouragement (4:27-31)

I. EXCUSES FOR NOT RESPONDING TO GOD (Ex. 4:1-17)

❖ **Note:** Chapter 4 begins in a most illogical place. The dialogue between God and Moses, about going to Pharaoh, begins in chapter 3:7 ...

1. *Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. (Ex. 3:10)*
2. And Moses offers **four excuses** for why he is not qualified for the task.
3. **First:** I am an unknown person whom no one will follow ...
 - (a) *But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? (Ex. 3:11)*
 - (b) God’s answer: *I will be with you. (3:12)*
4. **Second:** I do not know God’s name ...
 - (a) *Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” (Ex. 3:13)*
 - (b) God tells Moses His name:

God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I am has sent me to you.’” (Ex. 3:14)
5. Chapter 4 ... excuses 3 and 4 ...

1. **Third:** *People simply won’t believe God called me or sent me to deliver them. (4:1-9)*

- a) *Then 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.’” The Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.” And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. But the Lord said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— “that 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.” Again, 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. Then 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. “If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. 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.”
(Ex. 4:1-9)

b) Gist: *Lord God, when people find out who I am they will not believe me or want to follow me.*

c) God’s answer is three wonderful signs: *Moses’ shepherd’s staff.*

(1) a supernatural power to turn the staff into a serpent.

(2) Egyptian magicians and sorcerers possessed staffs that had magical powers.

d) **Douglas K. Stuart:** *Exodus: NAC; p. 128-129.*

Although it is not specifically so stated, the presumption here is that this sign could be done over and over again, for various groups of Israelites as they were encountered, because Moses would routinely have had his staff with him. The ability to perform this miracle at will would function as a credential for Moses, giving his report of a theophanic commission by the God of the patriarchs’ credibility with the oppressed and wary Egyptian Israelites.

e) *Moses’ own hand: leprosy and healing*

(1) an incurable disease turned whole

(2) **John Currid:** *Exodus: EP Com: pp. 102-103*

It is likely that the skin disease that Moses was afflicted with was incurable. The fact that his hand was instantly restored by the mere act of placing it in his bosom signifies the miraculous, divine nature of the incident. The performance of this miracle certainly would be a grand testimony to the truth that God had appeared to Moses and that he had sent the prophet to deliver his people from Egypt. The sign was a physical witness that God was about to act through the man Moses.

f) *Turning the Nile to blood* – forecasting the first plague Moses would bring upon Egypt.

(1) *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.”* (Ex. 4:9)

(2) apparently performed in the presence of groups of Israelites

(3) in anticipation of awesome judgments upon Egypt.

g) **Please Note:** all three of these miraculous signs involved *change* –

(1) a rod into a snake, and back

(2) a clean hand into leprosy, and back

(3) water into blood, and back

(4) **So ...** *God would change people’s minds, men’s hearts and a Pharaoh’s will in order to redeem His people. Changing people is very difficult for us, but not for God!*

2. **Fourth:** *I am not eloquent, and I cannot speak well in public.*

- a) *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.” 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? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” 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. 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. He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.” (Exodus 4:10-17)*
- b) Notice that when Moses said this God became *angry* with him. Why?
- (1) *Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses (Ex. 4:14a)*
 - (2) Because Moses was **lying** to God; he was powerful in speech, and eloquent.
 - (3) *And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds. (Acts 7:22)*
 - (4) **“mighty in his WORDS and deeds”**
- c) Notice this – God had *already* sent Aaron on his way to help Moses –
- (1) to inform him that Pharaoh **Thutmose III** was dead
 - (2) to encourage him to come and help Israel
 - (3) to be Moses’ co-laborer.
- d) God **never** sends us to do His work alone. He always surrounds us with “brothers (sisters) in Christ.”
3. If we examine the “call narratives” of Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others in the OT, several similarities show forth with the call of Moses.
- a) God always initiates the call. It is His sovereign will that sets forth our callings.
 - b) All recipients of the call of God are initially jolted by the call, and often afraid and uncertain.
 - c) Almost all of those called are very common people leading mundane lives.
 - d) God promises the called one that His Presence will be with them – implicitly or explicitly
 - e) God assures them of success if they follow Him in faith: *salvation comes from the Lord.*
 - f) They are to operate in the strength and enabling of the Spirit of the Lord.
4. Moses’ response to God is typical – fear, reservation, great insecurity, making excuses. But God’s response to all these things is always the same, “*But I will be with you ...*” (3:12)
- a) *Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak. (Ex. 4:12)*
 - b) supernatural power, favor with people, words from God, others to help us, the name of the Lord.

5. **Our part?** We must walk in a holy manner ...

II. INCONSISTENCY IN FOLLOWING GOD (Ex. 4:18-26)

1. Moses agrees to follow God, but he still has his doubts, so he is less than honest with Jethro, his father-in-law.

Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." (Ex. 4:18)

2. Jethro was a spiritual man, who'd known the Unseen God ("He who has no name") longer than Moses had. But Moses does not yet trust his own calling.

3. Did Moses lie or did he do the tactful thing? Commentators are divided –

- a) He wanted Jethro's blessing.

- b) **J. Alec Motyer:** *The Message of Exodus: BST*; p. 88

This is all perfectly understandable as a coherent narrative, both historically and in domestic and psychological terms. Naturally, as an example to us of proper courtesy, Moses put his request to leave to the head of the family (18) and did so in a way that Jethro could most easily accept. To have announced that he had been called to bring Israel out of Egypt would surely have been a recipe for colossal family misunderstanding and even argument, possibly prompting Jethro's incredulity and certainly exciting his fears for his daughter and grandsons. Courteous discretion within the bounds of truth is an enviable grace.

- c) **John Calvin:** *Exodus: Commentaries; Vol. II*; p. 98

It is surprising that Moses should have suppressed the vision whereby the mind of his father-in-law might have been most inclined to let him go; for he speaks merely of human feelings, that he desired to revisit his brethren and relations. Yet it must have been disagreeable to his father-in-law to lose his services, and that diligence and industry by which he had largely profited; nor could it have been pleasant to send away his daughter and grandchildren to a foreign country. Whether he was forbidden to do so by God, or whether he was silent from fear and shame, is uncertain; but I incline rather to this supposition, that he dared not speak of his vocation, lest its incredibility should cause him to be suspected of falsehood and vanity.

- d) **Philip Graham Ryken:** *Exodus: Preaching the Word*; p. 127

The problem with what Moses said is that it was not entirely truthful. He failed to mention anything about his encounter with God at the burning bush, and what he did say about his mission was misleading. He was not going back to see if his relatives were still alive – God had told him they were – but to rescue them from slavery! Why didn't Moses tell the whole truth? More likely, Moses still wasn't entirely sure himself whether everything God said was true. Like many people, he was wavering somewhere between faith and unbelief. But at least he was still walking down the path of obedience! Even if he lacked the courage to state his intentions, he was doing what God told him to do.

4. I take the position of my friend, Phil Ryken: Moses was not 100% honest with his father-in-law because he was still full of doubt and fear –

- a) **Doubt:** What if God does not go with me?

- b) **Fear:** What if I fail? What will I say to Jethro if I come back – a second time – with my tail beneath my legs?

5. Surprisingly (to Moses, but not to the reader) Jethro blesses him and sends him on his way: “*Go in peace.*”

6. God coaches Moses as he heads back to Egypt.

a) *And the Lord said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.” So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand. And the Lord said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’” (Ex. 4:19-23)*

b) All opposition to you is dead.

c) Don’t forget to work the three miracles I gave you.

d) Don’t be unsettled by Pharaoh **Amenhotep II**’s resistance.

e) Give to him this message – repeatedly ...

Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’” (Ex. 4:22-23)

7. We often step out to follow God *half-heartedly*. But God is faithful to us, even though we may be manipulative with others.

8. On the way, an **encounter with God** takes place, almost costing Moses his life!

a) *At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!” So he let him alone. It was then that she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” because of the circumcision. (Ex. 4:24-26)*

b) **R. Alan Cole:** *Exodus: TOTC*; p. 78

This is an obscure passage, even to early Jewish commentators, yet its very obscurity and the problems that it raises show it to be a genuine piece of Mosaic tradition.

c) “At a lodging place” – a **caravansary**; an oasis or camp where caravans stopped for the night.

d) God confronts Moses with intentions to kill Gershom.

e) Why? Because he had not *circumcised* his sons: Gershom and Eliezer, in violation of the Covenant with Abraham.

And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of

your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” (Genesis 17:7-14)

- f) **Note:** God had just told Moses He’d kill the first born Egyptians, and he He starts with Moses’ firstborn!

9. Here’s what happened: *Moses had either been circumcised as a child, or received the Egyptian practice of a partial circumcision, which he would have turned into full circumcision in order to marry a Midianite woman (Zipporah). But he never circumcised his two sons.*

- a) *Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” (Genesis 17:14)*
- b) The Hebrew text **never** mentions Moses’ name!
- c) God came down to kill **Gershom**, the first born, because Moses’ negligence had turned the boy into a “Covenant Breaker”
- d) **Remember:** Gershom may have been in his 30’s!
- e) Zipporah takes a flint knife, circumcises her two sons, and presents the foreskins at her sons’ feet.
- f) Not in anger, but as part of the ritual of Midianite circumcision, she calls **Gershom** “*a relative of blood*”
- g) i.e., a fellow-member of the Covenant community.
- h) Thus she saves her sons’ lives (and points to Moses’ failure to lead his family properly).
- i) God *passes over* Gershom and Eliezer and spares their lives because of “the blood of circumcision.”

10. **Douglas K. Stuart:** *Exodus: NAC; p. 130.*

For all its laconic style and seemingly dramatic mood, this story is actually fully consistent with other evidence for Moses’ tendency to resist the call of God to such a daunting assignment as delivering the Israelites from Egypt against Pharaoh’s wishes, a tendency that began in 4:13 with his attempt to refuse the call. Even as he headed toward Egypt, he still did not have all aspects of his life (in this case his family life) in order.

III. ENCOURAGEMENT IN FOLLOWING GOD (Ex. 4:27-31)

The Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped. (Ex. 4:27-31)

1. As Moses moves toward Egypt, Zipporah and the two boys will return to Jethro’s home to ...
 - a) heal from their circumcision
 - b) wait for Moses to meet up with them again
 - c) *Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home, along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land”), and the name of the other, Eliezer (for he said, “The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh”). Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. And when he sent word to Moses, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her,” (Ex. 18:1-6)*
2. Aaron, Moses’ older brother (middle child: Miriam, Aaron, Moses), comes to meet Moses on the way to Egypt.
 - a) *God sent him to Moses ...*
The Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. (Ex. 4:27)
 - b) At Sinai: “*The Mountain of God*”
 - c) Moses fills Aaron in on everything – the message, the mission, the miracles.
And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. (Ex. 4:28)
3. Aaron, who has contacts among the Hebrews in Egypt, calls groups of them together to hear Moses and witness His supernaturally given powers.
 - a) *Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. (Ex. 4:29-30)*
 - b) **Note:** Aaron does the speaking.
 - c) Aaron uses the rod of God to do miracles.
4. And the people respond positively ...
And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped. (Ex. 4:31)

5. God granted to Moses **two sources** of great encouragement:

- a) a like-minded and beloved *co-laborer*. Moses was not in this alone.
- b) a receptive response from the *people of God*: they
 - (1) believed Moses and Aaron
 - (2) Worshipped God.

Conclusion: *All of us are called to “speak for God” ...*

1. And this story serves us well, to both help *interpret* that calling and *instruct* us in that call.
2. Back in 1978, the Lord began to call me away from a career at **International Harvester Company** and toward the Gospel ministry.
 - a) All that happened to Moses happened to me...
 - (1) I felt very inadequate: “*Who am I that I should speak for God?*” I’d been a born-again Christian for only two years and married less than 6 months!
 - (2) I didn’t know enough Bible and theology; I didn’t know God well enough. “*Who shall I say sent me?*”
 - (3) No one would take me seriously. I mean, me; a preacher? “*Behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you!’*.” And people did say things like that!
 - (4) I was not a good public speaker. “*Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you converted your servant!*” And I wasn’t. I hated to speak before groups.
 - (5) **Fr. Robert Schuller’s** advice to me as a Senior in H.S.
 - b) My life was not in total order: New Christian, very “rough around the edges,” very little savings, a new little wife, and a lot of growing to do.
 - c) I had lots of fears: *Going to seminary. Supporting my family. Expecting an unplanned baby into the world etc... etc... etc...*
3. **But** God was with me. In amazing ways:
 - a) **Wiley Patterson**, my “Jethro,” encouraged and coached me.
 - b) My boss at work, the ass’t plant manager and the unconverted Plant Manager all supported me and helped me in the transition (**Bob Sorrell** left when I did for seminary)
 - c) Jane – my Zipporah – had more faith and more courage to strike out toward ministry than I did.
 - d) **Joanna**, our first child, was born the day I started seminary; she was *baptized* 8 weeks later!
 - e) God provided for me financially; surrounded me with many Aarons, gave me favor with churches, and eventually steered me away from missionary work in Italy into the pastorate in the PCA.

- f) In the process I learned about God, grew stronger in His Word, developed as a husband and father, and found that I could speak before groups ...
- g) ... and **speak for God!**
- h) I learned these marvelous lessons:

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:13)

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Phil. 4:19-20)

4. Jesus said to us – “*You must all speak for God!*”

- a) *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*
- b) *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Eph. 4:29)*
- c) *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. (1 Peter 3:15-16)*

5. How do we do this? The same way Moses and Mike did!

- a) **First:** We must surrender our lives to Jesus Christ. We live to serve His cause.
- b) **Second:** We must listen to the voice of God in His Word and Spirit. We need to learn the Bible.
- c) **Third:** We need to tell God, in prayer, all the things that bother us. All our fears, doubts and insecurities.
- d) **Fourth:** We need to share our sense of calling with older men and godly brothers, and receive coaching from them.
- e) **Fifth:** We need to step out and speak to people about the Good News – what God has done in our lives – trusting that God will
 - (1) Enable us by His grace
 - (2) Give us a hearing by the people
 - (3) Surround us with divine encouragement.

6. **Listen to me:** *40 years ago today – August 14, 1976 – Jesus personally called me to follow Him. I became a Christian that evening, in Memphis Tennessee. I didn’t know where God would take me, how the Spirit would change me, or how Christ would use me. But I knew this: I had an encounter with the Living God, and I was going to follow Him, even to the ends of the world and certainly to the end of myself.*

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt. 28:18-20)

7. I found out later that in following Jesus Christ I was following one who'd gone through exactly what Moses and I had struggled through!

a) Jesus was called out of Egypt, just as Moses was –

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." (Matt. 2:13-15)

b) He was *circumcised* on the 8th day of His life...

c) ... then *baptized* prior to His public ministry.

d) He was *sent* by God to lead mankind out of bondage to sin and into eternal life.

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

e) His closet relatives and friends had a difficult time accepting His message at first

And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself.' What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well." And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. (Luke 4:22-24)

f) But God Gave Him power in both Word and deeds!

And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. (Mark 1:27-28)

g) There were even moments of doubt and anxiety but in the end, a triumph of faith. "*Father, if it is possible, take this cup from me. But not my will but your will be done!*"

h) At the end of His life there was this prayer:

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. (John 17:4-8)

8. Jesus **can** lead each of us to speak faithfully for God:

"But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before

them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. (Mark 13:9-11)

Who speaks for God? Answer: *Jesus does, by His Spirit, in His Word, and through people like Moses, and you, and me!*