

# What's In Your Hand?

56 - Ephesians: Rise Up & Walk  
Church on the Park Live | Sunday, 24 May 2020

**Text:** Exodus 4:1-5

**Theme:** You can overcome fear, worry and anxiety to fulfil God's call.

**Intro:** Recently, I asked for your prayer requests and I was happy to get a good amount of responses. The main prayer requests had to do with fear, anxiety and worry. It's understandable because there's been so much fear spreading around the world. Fear is something that spreads like wildfire. The children of Israel were paralysed with fear when the report of the ten spies came to them. Ten people made millions of people afraid. And that fear kept them from trusting and obeying God. It also locked them in the wilderness for forty years, being disciplined by the Lord. So today, I want to remind you how you can overcome fear, worry and anxiety to fulfil God's call.

## 1) Have faith in God (Exodus 4:1-5).

- Have **faith** in God rather than the **feelings** of **fear, worry and anxiety**.
- If anyone had a reason to fear it was **Moses**. That's why he's a **mess** when God calls him (Exodus 4:1-5).
  - Think about how **rejected** he felt (Exodus 2:1-15, \*v.14).
    - He grows up **adopted, outside his culture**, yet in the king's palace.
      - He received a **great education** but I am sure he was **treated differently**.
    - As he grows, he **identifies** with his people, the **Hebrews**.
      - He **tries to save** one of his fellow Jews by **killing** an abusive Egyptian.
        - *Yet, what happens?*
          - He ends up being **rejected** by **his own people** as well as inciting the wrath of **Pharaoh** (Exodus 2:11-14).
            - **"Then Moses was afraid** and said, "Surely the matter had become known." When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled..." (vv. 14-15).
    - So now, he lives **forty years of his life in exile**, shepherding sheep in the desert.
      - The **hardest thing** for him would be **to go back to his people and Egypt—to revisit his past**.
        - *"That was my old life. I'm not going back there. My people rejected me. The Egyptians want to make me pay for the man I murdered."*
          - He also probably struggled with **forgiveness**. *"How can I forgive them for casting me out?"*
          - **Fear** is like a **bad seed** that takes roots and grows. It doesn't go away with time unless it's dealt with.
    - Yet, despite his **checkered and difficult past**, Moses is **the staff that God** wants to put in his hand. He wants to use this **staff to deliver his people**.
    - **The 'positive feedback loop'** (Jordan B. Peterson, *12 Rules*, pp. 17-22).
      - I'd call it **the 'Fear Feedback Loop.'**
    - In all these **fears**, the major **lesson** that God is teaching Moses is to have **faith in him**.
      - **Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6)**.
        - Without faith—you will be **locked in a prison of fear and disobedience**.
          - Fear **doesn't listen to reason**. It's **stubborn and rebellious**.
          - Fear is making **yourself and your feelings an idol**.
    - This is why **Jesus says, "Have faith in God..." (Mark 11:20-26)**.
      - **FIG - Faith In God**
    - Faith is the **foundation** of a **real relationship** with God.

## 2) Appreciate what you have (Exodus 4:2-3).

- Many times we **focus** on what we **do not have**.

- This is what **Moses** is focusing on. He's got his **eyes** on his **lack and need**.
  - **Expressing our need** for God is **important**. But don't get **stuck** in the **land of lack**.
- God asks Moses, "**What is this in your hand?**" (Exodus 4:2).
- וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִזֶּה בְיָדְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה
- God is going to take what is in **Moses' hand and transform it**—if Moses would just **listen** to him.
- **What has the Lord given you? What has he given you?**
  - It may seem like a **stick**—but God will **use** it if you **surrender** to him.
    - If you have **faith** in God, the Lord will use it to **part waters, break the back of the enemy and move mountains**.
  - I was **literally a stick** of a person when God sent me to **Australia**.
    - But I **cast myself on God** and here I am 21 years later.
- Jesus said, "For to everyone **who has**, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away" (Mt 25:29, NASB).
  - Fill your life with **thanksgiving** and **praise** for what God has **given you**.
    - "**Awake, sleeper**, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you...**always giving thanks** for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father..." (Eph. 5:14, 20).
- And don't forget to **throw** what you have **into God's hands**.
  - The word **throw** in Hebrew (שָׁלַךְ) means throw or cast.
    - It's **used in another famous verse**: "**Cast** [throw down] your **burden** upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken" (Ps 55:22).

### 3) Never shrink back (Exodus 4:4).

- God commanded Moses to **seize the serpent**.
  - If he would, he'd have **authority**.
    - His **old staff** would become a **new staff**—the **staff of God** (Exodus 4:20).
- **Seize your fear**.
  - The **serpent** for **Moses** represented **all of his fears**—**everything** that he was **running from**.
    - **All the pain, rejection, worries and fears**.
      - **Egypt, Pharaoh** and even the **rejection of the Jews** were represented by that serpent.
- The word **chazaq**.
  - וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיַּחֲזֵק בּוֹ וַיְהִי לְמִטָּה בְּכַפּוֹ׃
  - The Lexham Hebrew Bible. (2012). (Ex 4:4). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
    - The idea of **seizing** the serpent is **being strong (chazaq)**.
      - Our **strength** comes from **listening to God's word**.
- God is **slow to anger** with regard to **our fears**. But if we **stay** in them—even though he persuades us not to—he **gets angry**.
  - We see this with Moses' calling. Moses is full of fears. He is shaken by '**What ifs.**' God does miracles and signs to persuade him otherwise. Moses still wants God to **send someone else**.
    - In the end, God gets angry. Now, it's not easy to get God angry. He's slow to anger. But if you **persist in unbelief and doubt**—**focusing on yourself rather than his glory**—he will get angry. That doesn't mean he doesn't love you. But it does mean you're missing the point. Listen to Exodus: "Now then go, and I, even I, **will be with your mouth**, and teach you what you are to say." But he said, "Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will." Then the anger of the Lord burned against Moses..." (Ex 4:12–14).
      - Like Moses, God has chosen you for **this time and season (Eph. 5:15)**. It's easy for us to **pass the buck**. We want to **shift the responsibility** to someone else, anyone else. The potato is too hot for us to handle. Yet God says, "No, I have chosen you and given you my message."
        - Many of the great men of God that we have looked up to have passed away.

- This week it was **Ravi Zacharias**. He was one of my heroes and equipped me to debate in a hostile university environment. Yet, he's gone and we as God's people need to rise up.
- **\*Hebrews 10:35-39 - "...we are not of those who shrink back..."**

#### 4) Drive out doubt (Exodus 4:5).

- *How do you do that? How do you drive out doubt?*
- **Know your roots**
  - Know the stories and wisdom of **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**.
    - These men and others (see **Hebrews 11**) taught us how to live by faith.
- There is **one major weapon** that **drives out doubt**.
  - "So **faith comes by hearing**, and **hearing by the word of Christ**" (Romans 10:17).
  - "There is **no fear in love**; but **perfect love casts out fear**, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love" (1 John 4:18).
  - The **two verses** are **one**. **The word of God is the word of love**. Hearing of God's love drives out fear.

**Conclusion:** These four points spell: **HAND**. 1) Have faith in God, 2) Appreciate what you have, 3) Never shrink back and 4) Drive out doubt. Do these things and you will find that you overcome fear, anxiety and worry.