Excuses.....Excuses.....Excuses!  
Exodus 3:1-15 ; 4:10-14a

Please open your Bibles to the third chapter of Exodus. We'll be getting to our scripture text in just a few moments.

I want to talk to you this evening about something probably everyone of us is guilty of and that is MAKING EXCUSES.

Benjamin Franklin once said, “He who is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.”

Some of us have been making excuses our whole lives. In fact, many of us having been making excuses for so long we've actually turned it into “a fine art.”

* When we want to avoid taking on responsibility.....WE MAKE EXCUSES!

* When someone invites us to go somewhere we really don’t want to go.....WE MAKE EXCUSES.

* When we’re late for work, or Church, or school.....WE MAKE EXCUSES.

* When we need to go see a doctor, but keep putting it off.....WE MAKE EXCUSES

* When we need to lose weight and start exercising more.....WE MAKE EXCUSES.

* When we fail or make mistakes.....WE MAKE EXCUSES.
* When we cling to a bad or sinful habit that we know we need to break.....**WE MAKE EXCUSES.**

* When we do something embarrassing, like tripping over a crack in the sidewalk......**WE MAKE EXCUSES.**

* When we don’t read our Bibles and spend time in prayer as we should......**WE MAKE EXCUSES.**

* When we miss Church on Sunday......**WE MAKE EXCUSES.**

(PAUSE)

While we make take **excuse-making** lightly as though its no big deal, we must understand that **excuse-making** hinders our personal growth as well as our spiritual growth.

**Excuse-making** keeps us “locked in” to our own little spiritual “comfort zone.” **Excuse-making** prevents us from doing all God calls us to do and keeps us from becoming all God created us to be.

When you look at the lives of the **great men and women of faith** in the scriptures you see they were all **great risk-takers** instead of **excuse-makers**.

One of the greatest men of faith in all the Bible is Moses. When we think of Moses we **think of him leading the Exodus from Egypt**......**we think of him receiving the Ten Commandments on top of Mt. Sinai**........**we think of him appearing with Elijah alongside of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.**

But as we are going to see in tonight’s message, before Moses became a **great man of faith** he had to get past a major obstacle in his own life and that was his habit of making excuses.
It had been forty years since Moses killed that Egyptian task-master who was mercilessly beating the defenseless Hebrew. Fearing for his own life, Moses fled Egypt and went to live in seclusion in the Desert of Midian.

Shortly after he arrived in the Midian desert, Moses met a Midianite priest named Jethro. Moses soon fell in love with Zipporah, one of Jethro's seven daughters, and they ended up getting married.

During those forty years Moses spent in the Desert of Midian the oppression against the Hebrew children back in Egypt grew worse and worse. In fact, it was so bad the Hebrew children began to cry out to God to send them “a deliverer.”

Well one day, while Moses was tending his father-in-law’s sheep near Mt. Horeb, something very strange happened.

Let's pick up the scripture record in EXODUS chapter three, starting with verse 1...........

**EXODUS 3:1-14 (NKJV)**

1  Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
2  And the Angel of the L ORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.
3  Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.”
4  So when the L ORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses! And he said, “Here I am.”
5  Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.”
6  Moreover He said, “I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.
7 And the Lord said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.

8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.

9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

12 So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

13 Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

15 Moreover, God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.”

Now I want you to think about something. GOD has heard the cries of His Hebrew children. He could have chosen anybody to go deliver His people.

*He could have sent a great military leader with a massive army to “storm” Egypt and take His people out by force.

*Or He could have chosen a great political figure who was highly skilled in foreign diplomacy to negotiate a deal with Pharaoh to get the hostages released.
GOD could have chosen anybody......ANYBODY! But instead GOD has chosen Moses, an 80 year old man........a fugitive from justice who is wanted for murder back in Egypt, the very place He intended to send him.

It just doesn't make much sense, does it? Well it didn't make a whole lot of sense to Moses either. In these verses I just read we see Moses offer God three excuses to get out of this great mission God was calling him to do.

First......

I. Moses Used The Excuse of INABILITY (v.11)

11. But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

1. Moses' first concern is that he is a NOBODY and therefore he's not QUALIFIED to go before Pharaoh and demand the release of the Hebrew children.

2. I see a couple of reasons why Moses didn't feel he wasn't qualified to do what God was calling him to do.

(A) One reason was because of his PAST FAILURE.

Even though it had been 40 years since he killed that Egyptian task-master, Moses was still haunted by the guilt of what he had done.
And no doubt Moses feared he would be killed if he ever set foot in Egypt again.

**APPLICATION:** How many of us excuse ourselves from service to the Lord and His Church because we are still haunted with the guilt of past failures and sins in our life. Even though GOD has forgiven all our sins by the cleansing blood of Christ, many of us believe our past failures disqualifies us for present service. If that were true, **why would God choose a murderer like Moses?**

No one is ever too “broken” to be used by God! In fact, many of the people God used were broken in one way or another.

(B) Another reason Moses felt he wasn’t qualified was because of his **PRESENT AGE.**

Remember I told you while ago Moses was **80 years old** at this time. Most eighty year old men I know are retired and taking life easy. Moses probably believed a much younger man would be more well-suited for the task.

When you read through the scriptures it is amazing how many times God used elderly people to do his work. **Abraham was 100 and Sarah 90** when they brought Isaac, “the son of promise” into the world.
ZECHARIAH and ELIZABETH were well past the normal years of child-bearing when they brought John the Baptist into the world.

When CALEB was 85 years old he still wanted to go out and fight on the battlefield with the Israelite army.

NOAH was 500 years old when he and his sons built the ark.

There is NO retirement age in God's service. No one ever gets too old to serve God!

3. Moses felt his PAST FAILURE and his PRESENT AGE disqualified him for the task God was calling him to do.

4. Did God say, “You know Moses, you're probably right.” Killing that Egyptian forty years ago and being 80 years old are real 'deal breakers.”

5. No, notice God's response in verse 12......

v.12 So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”
God promises Moses two things: One, that he will not be going to Egypt alone. God is going with him. And two, God is promising his success. Notice, God didn’t say, “If you are successful in getting the people out of Egypt.” GOD SAID, “When you have brought the people out of Egypt.”

6. What does this say to you and me? It tells us that GOD never calls us to do something, but what His presence doesn’t go with us every step of the way in the form of His Holy Spirit. And it tells us GOD will supply everything we need to ensure our success.

7. Remember that the next time the LORD presents you with an opportunity to serve Him.

Well when Moses realized he wasn’t getting anywhere with his EXCUSE OF INABILITY, he tried another one......
II. Moses Used The Excuse of INADEQUACY (v.13)

13 Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

1. Moses is afraid the Hebrew people will ask them a “theological question.” “Who is this GOD you claim to represent?” “What is His name?”

2. In essence, Moses is saying, “God, I just don’t know enough about You to take on this mission.”

3. Isn’t that a common excuse we use when we want to avoid taking on responsibility such as teaching a Sunday School class or teaching in Vacation Bible School. “I just don't know enough about God.” “I just don't know much about the Bible.” “What if they ask me a question I can't answer?”

4. Well in verses 14,15 God responds to Moses' excuse of INADEQUACY.

14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

15 Moreover, God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.”
5. GOD gave Moses two unmistakeable calling cards to prove to the Israelite children he had truly been sent by Jehovah God.

There were already many “false gods” in those days. But no god on earth bore the special, unique names of Jehovah God.

No god bore the name “I AM” except Jehovah God. And no god bore the name, “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” except Jehovah God.

6. When it comes to rendering Christian service we need to remind ourselves we are serving the One True God, the Great I Am, and we should consider it a great privilege and honor to serve Him, rather than try to excuse ourself from service because of our feelings of inadequacy.

Well Moses tried the EXCUSE OF INABILITY and that didn’t work. Then he tried the EXCUSE OF INADEQUACY and that didn’t work either.

So Moses tries one more time.....
III. Moses Used The Excuse of INFIRMITY (4:10-14)

EXODUS 4:10-14a (NKJV)

10 Then Moses said to the Lord, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

11 So the Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord?

12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

13 But he said, “O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.”

14 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses

1. Notice in verse 10 Moses says, “I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” What Moses is saying is, “I'm not an eloquent speaker,” “I stumble over my words,” “I'm a stutterer.”

2. Well God didn't buy this excuse any more than the previous two. Look at verses 11-12......

11 So the Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord?

12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”
3. God is reminding Moses that He is the creator of all people, both those who are whole and those who are disabled.

4. And notice the rather unusual promise God makes to Moses in verse 12........”Now therefore, go and I will be with your mouth and teach you what to say.”

5. Listen carefully! “Man's disabilities do not limit God's abilities!”

FANNY CROSBY wrote more than 8,000 hymns including some of our favorites such as “Blessed Assurance,” “To God Be The Glory,” and “He Hideth My Soul.” And by the way, FANNY CROSBY was totally blind.

JONI EARECKSON TADA has been confined to a wheelchair since she was a teenager following a diving accident that left her paralyzed from the shoulders down. But despite her disability, God has blessed Joni with a very successful career as a Christian author, recording artist, painter, and Radio Talk Show hostess.

MYRA WATSON was a classmate of mine at Johnson Bible College. Myra was born with cerebral palsy and was confined to a wheelchair her whole life. We had to carry Myra up the steps to the second floor classrooms throughout her four years at Johnson. Following her graduation she went to Africa as a missionary.
6. The next time GOD lays an opportunity to serve before you and you start to excuse yourself for some real or imagined disability, just remember God uses blind people....deaf people....crippled people.. shy people.....nervous people....uneducated people.... old people......young people.....and everyone in between.

7. And it is through our weaknesses and disabilities that God's glory is magnified!

C O N C L U S I O N

Why do we make excuses? In a word........FEAR.

*Fear of embarrassment
*Fear of failure
*Fear of success
*Fear of change
*Fear of uncertainty
*Fear of relinquishing control
*Fear of responsibility
*Fear of making mistakes

Every time we make an excuse we are revealing that we are afraid of something. The scriptures teach us “God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (II Timothy 1:7)

If we are to live by FAITH we must pack up all our excuses and make ourselves available to be used in the service of THE GREAT “I AM.”