

“Lose Your Big Buts” Exodus 3.11-14; 4.1, 10-12 – Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs

Contrasted by the story we heard last month of Mary’s acceptance of God’s invitation to become the mother of Jesus, here we see Moses as one who puts up all the objections he can think of as to why he cannot possibly do what God has called him to do. Are you ready to lose your BIG BUTS and to fulfill God’s dream for you? This is our fourth week of our Dare to Dream message series. Today, we are talking about how you have to lose your big butts. There are some big butts in this room that we are going to lose. When Mike Slaughter was a young pastor, Ken Blanchard, author of *The One Minute Manager* helped him develop his life mission statement. Ken said every one of us needs an elevator statement. It is something you can say in one sentence. Here is the short version of Mike’s life mission statement: *To connect people to their God destiny and to connect people to their burning bush.*

Moses has just had a God-vision, a Burning Bush experience we talked about last week. He is 80 years old, and God is telling this old guy that he is to go from the land of Midian, back into Egypt to be the deliverer to lead approximately 1 million people who were in slavery out of Egypt. So, Moses comes up with a boatload of butts. We get a litany of them this morning in Exodus 3 and 4.

Do you have a BIG BUT? What’s your excuse? Mothers are good reminders and mine has told me many times about the time she asked me to do something and as only a little boy could I replied, “*Don’t you know I’m little?*” Jeremiah answered the call to be a prophet by pointing out to God that he was only a child! Mike Slaughter says he will be sitting with someone, and he will say, “Hey, you know what you need to do? You need to start a small group.” The response is something like, “But my bible knowledge is not very good.” Some of you sitting here today might be thinking, “I haven’t got this Jesus thing figured out. How am I going to go out and work for Jesus?” Mike responds, “Let me tell you this; I have a master’s degree in theology, and I still don’t have everything figured out.” Look at how God answers Moses’ question, “Who are you, God?” “*I am who I am.*” What kind of answer is that? That does not answer my question. We try to put God in a box. An infinite God cannot be comprehended by a finite mind. God is telling Moses - I am too big to understand, Moses, but guess what, I am here with you. I am not uninvolved or impersonal. I see this injustice that is going on. I hear the prayers of my people. I am here to do something about it, and I am going to do it through you.

Can you believe God put a call on Moses’ life and Moses spent two whole chapters arguing with God and trying to talk God out of it? You are never going to win that argument. Moses asked, what if they don’t believe me. The affirmation is: When God is all you have, then you have all you need. Are we getting rid of any big butts in the room? Are they getting smaller yet? We see Moses as totally inept and inadequate for the mission that God has called him to undertake. Would you agree with me? So, the question is, why does God choose someone like this for such a mission? My bigger question is why does God choose someone like you and me for such a mission? Eugene Peterson, who wrote the paraphrase of the Bible, *The Message*, said this, “Salvation is God’s work not ours. Incompetence may be the essential qualification. This is how we best traverse the

landscape of faith, humbly rather than capably.” Don’t you love that? “Humbly, rather than capably.” Incompetence may be the essential qualification. It’s not about you. It’s about the God who calls you!

What we are talking about here – these big BUTS are excuses. There is a huge difference between an obstacle and an excuse. An obstacle is something to work through, over, or around. But an excuse stops you in your tracks. What tightly held excuses prohibit you from living your dream? “I don’t have enough money.” “I don’t have the education.” “I don’t have the time.” Whatever it is, you need to name that excuse and lose that big but. From what self-limiting beliefs do you need to break free? Whatever it may be, become clear about your life mission statement and chop away at any excuses to follow the purpose that God has for you. This week take some time and write a prayer asking God to remove your excuses. List your excuses by name in the prayer. Next week we will see how everything you need, you already have. Lose the BIG Buts and Live the Dream. Alleluia and Amen.

Call Us to Do Your Holy Work

Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs 1/18/23

Call us to do your holy work.
Help us to do it and not shirk.
Help us go where you could use us.
Help us deny our excuses.

You called to Moses from a bush,
And gave to him, a holy push.
Help us remember what you said,
When he was filled with fear and dread.

We may be young. We may be old.
We may be weak, but with you we're bold.
We're never left out on our own.
With you we're never all alone.

Overcome each poor lame excuse.
Put us now to your holy use.
If it's your will let it be done.
At your command the victory's won.