Famous Excuse–Makers in the Bible

Series: Profiles in Faith: Learning From the Victories and Failures of Our Fellow Humans

Introduction: Regarding God’s call and commissions in our lives...

Luke 4:8 Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’ ”

“Here I am, Lord, send me” vs. “Here I am, Lord, send someone else.”

Famous Excuse-Makers #1 and #2. Adam and Eve, Our First Parents

God’s Call and Commission to Adam and Eve
Genesis 2:16-17 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

Adam and Eve’s Excuses
Gen. 3:12 The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.”
Genesis 3:13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

God’s Answer to Adam and Eve’s Excuses
“’It’s not my fault . . .’

cf. Genesis 3 re: personal responsibility

Famous Excuse-Maker #3. Cain, the son of Adam and Eve

God’s Call and Commission to Cain
cf. Genesis 4 re: Cain and Abel called to bring an acceptable sacrifice to God. Cain is filled with anger and jealousy and rose up and killed Abel.

Cain’s Excuse:
Genesis 4:9b And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”
“Don’t know. I’m not responsible for others.”

God’s Answer to Cain’s Excuse:
Exodus 4:2 And God said, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'”

Famous Excuse-Maker #4. Moses, the Deliverer

God’s Call and Commission to Moses
God commissioned Moses (at 80 years old) to go to Pharaoh with the message: “Let my people go!”

Moses’ Excuse #1
Exodus 3:11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?”
“You don’t know what You are doing in calling someone like me.”

God’s Answer to Moses’ Excuse #1
Exodus 3:12 And He said, “Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.”
“It isn’t about you. I will demonstrate My power through you.”

Moses’ Excuse #2
Exodus 3:13 Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?”
“They are going to question me.”

God’s Answer to Moses’ Excuse #2
Exodus 3:14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM’; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'” cf. Exodus 3:15–22

Moses’ Excuse #3
Exodus 4:1 Then Moses said, “What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’ ”

“Lord, why should anybody listen to me. I’m a nobody.”

God’s Answer to Moses’ Excuse #3
cf. Exodus 4:2–9
“’I am going to give you proof of how powerful I am.”
Exodus 4:10 Then Moses said to the Lord, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”
“Lord, I don’t have what it takes.”

**God’s Answer to Moses’ Excuse #4**
Exodus 4:11-12 The Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.”
“I made you. I can certainly use you for My glory.”

**Moses’ Excuse #5**
Exodus 4:13 But he said, “Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will.”
“Send someone else...anybody but me.”

**God’s Answer to Moses’ Excuse #5**
Exodus 4:14 “Then the anger of the Lord burned against Moses...” cf. Ex. 4:14–16
“You are so full of excuses, I will use someone else...and you!”
2 Cor. 3:5 “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God...”

**Famous Excuse-Maker #5. Gideon, the Judge**

**God’s Call and Commission to Gideon**
Judges 6:12, 14 The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior. . . . The Lord looked at him and said, “Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?”

**Gideon’s Excuse #1**
Judges 6:15 He said to Him, “O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s house.”
“I am poor, insignificant and way too young.”

**God’s Answer to Gideon’s Excuse #1**
Judg. 6:16 But the Lord said to him, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man.”
“I will be with you and empower you to do what I call you to do.”

**Gideon’s Excuse #2**
Judg. 6:17 So Gideon said to Him, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me.
“Lord, I need more proof.”

**God’s Answer to Gideon’s Excuse #2**
 cf. Judges 6
“How much more evidence do you really need?”

**Famous Excuse-Maker #6, Jeremiah, the Prophet**

**God’s Call and Commission to Jeremiah**
Jeremiah 1:4-5 Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

**Jeremiah’s Excuse**
Jeremiah 1:6 Then I said, “Alas, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth.”
“Who is going to listen to someone like me?” cf. 1 Tim 4:12

**God’s Answer to Jeremiah’s Excuse**
Jeremiah 1:7–10 But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you,” declares the Lord. Then the Lord stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. “See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”
“I appointed you to do this and will give you the power.”

**Famous Excuse-Maker #7. Jonah, the Prophet**

**God’s Call and Commission to Jonah**
Jonah 1:1–2 The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

**Jonah’s Excuse #1**
Jonah 1:3 “But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was
going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.”

God’s Answer to Jonah’s Excuse #1

God’s Answer to Jonah’s Excuse #2

Jonah 4:1-3 But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, “Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. “Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life.”

“Lord, are You sure You know what You are doing?”

Proverbs 16:9 “The mind of man plans his way but the Lord directs his steps.”

God’s Answer to Jonah’s Excuse #2

God’s Answer to Jonah’s Excuse #2

Jonah 4:4 The Lord said, “Do you have good reason to be angry?”

“Have you lost your love for me and compassion for the lost?”

Jonah 4:11 “Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?” cf. Romans 5:8

Famous Excuse-Makers #8. Jesus’ Disciples

The Call and Commission of Jesus’ Disciples

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The Excuses of Jesus’ Disciples cf. Luke 9

God’s Answer to His Disciples

Luke 9:60 He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62 "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

“I am the Ultimate Priority.”

Col. 1:18 “He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first–born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.” cf. Book of Colossians re: the preeminence of Christ.

Famous Excuse-Maker #9. Us

God’s Call and Commission to Us cf. Matthew 28:19-20, etc.

Our Excuses #1 - #100

“Lord, here am I, but . . .” “I want to serve you, however . . .”

“Excuses are the nails used to build a house of failure.” (Emerson)

God’s Answer to Our Many Excuses

God’s Ultimate Answer to Every Excuse

“I am with you . . . and I am all you need. Let me demonstrate My power through you.”

Eph. 3:20-21 “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Conclusion:

A word to unbelievers (cf. Luke 14)

God has revealed Himself in many ways and we are “. . . without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)