

Good morning! This week we have been considering the way God operates through us to accomplish His purposes. This is a theme that must often be revisited in our lives because we tend to drift towards operating in our own strength, rather than operating in the strength that God provides. Remember what Paul told the congregation at Corinth? *“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is all you need.’ My power works best in weakness.”* (2 Cor. 12:9 NLT) That’s right; the secret of spiritual power is *weakness*. Our tendency to rely on our own strength gets in the way of doing what God really wants. We have read so far that God called Moses to lead the Hebrews out of their Egyptian bondage. What did Moses do to get started? He murdered an Egyptian and had to go into hiding. Forty years later, we find this former Prince of Egypt living in complete obscurity as a tenant farmer in the wilderness, tending someone else’s sheep---he didn’t even have his own sheep! Most of us would have thought that Moses had turned out to be a big loser but in fact, this was the path God had mapped out for one of the greatest leaders in human history. Let’s hop back into the story together this morning and pick up where we left off:

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.’” The Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” And he said, “A staff.” Then He said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. But the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail”—so he stretched 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.” The Lord furthermore said to him, “Now put your hand into your bosom.” So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then He said, “Put your hand into your bosom again.” So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. “If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign. But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

## **Ex. 4:1-9**

Think about this for a moment: by the time the events in this passage took place, Moses was an 80 year-old man who had been living the rugged life of a hired hand in the wilderness for 40 years. I'm sure he thought his leadership days were over. Whatever Moses was thinking, this encounter with God was a life-changer. He may have thought, "Really? At age 80 you're really telling me to go back to Egypt and lead a Hebrew rebellion? I just don't have the energy for it." If he thought that, he would have been right! We see in today's passage that God's plan was that Moses enter into God's purpose supernaturally. Moses correctly imagined that those hardheaded and rebellious Hebrews would not believe him. Only in God's supernatural power could he ever hope to confront the Pharaoh and lead the Hebrews out of bondage and into a new life. And by the way, it's no different for us. We may not have a staff like the one Moses had, but there was nothing special about that staff, anyway. He had it before he had this encounter with God. Moses was being sent to use what he already had in his hand to accomplish God's purpose. You too are being called to use what you already have in your hand to serve God supernaturally. God can take that ordinary thing and use it to change nations. The question is, will you do it? Will you trust God to use what you have in your hand to do something that you could never do without Him?