

WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

Scripture used: [Exodus 4:2-4 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

The central character of our Scripture is Moses. Moses was born into poverty and oppression. But he himself grew up in abundance, privilege, and power - yet he never forgot about his roots, his origins. He kept dreaming about having a part in the liberation of the Jewish people. Then one day he lost everything - all status - which led to a radically different life. This dramatic setback was a perfect staging ground, a preparation for his next act - recognizing what God had placed in his hand. In our hands are responsibilities, relationships, influences, "slices of life". Life experiences, good and bad. Moses was a no-name shepherd in the wilderness. His staff (literally a rod used by the shepherd to guide the flock) represents the new mission he's been given. It exemplifies the momentous shift from a dead dream to a new life.

KEY POINTS

1. **The first question is: What's in our hands, which represents the dreams of our lives?** This reflects gifts, resources, and experiences. Our young parishioner Sydney Vaughn, 17, was interviewed on the Kelly Clarkson show. She has distinguished herself with stellar academics and volunteering, and being a nonprofit leader and innovator at a young age. She was admitted to a special Brown University program that goes straight from undergraduate studies into medical school. Sydney's dream to become a pediatric surgeon is rooted in her family journey with the medical needs of her brother, and her life demonstrates that dreams often arise out of setbacks.
2. **The second question is: What's in my hand that shouldn't be?** We are burdened with lots of distractions and dysfunctions. Starting with screen time: 15-24 year-olds spend 5 hours a day on social media. We check our phones 159 times per day on average. Screens control us, and make us live a life of aimless interruption. We must engage with life in ways that can fulfill our dreams. Pastor Hurmon met his wife in 1985. At that time, he loved Whitney Houston's song "Saving All My Love for You." He later realized it was a somewhat scandalous song, with a "cheating" subtext. The lesson: we must monitor the melodies, and evaluate the message of the lyrics. The melody attracts us, the lyrics entrap us. We must protect our relationships, values, and imagination. The wrong thing in our hand will lead to the wrong thing in our head.
3. **The third question is: What's not in my hand that should be?** God told Moses: "Go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh, and you must lead my people out of Egypt." Getting the call, becoming the focus, forced Moses to draw on all his resources. The staff represented his priorities, his character, his life. It was the centerpiece of the journey, of God's plan / vision / dream for him, of him taking ownership of the assigned mission.
4. [Exodus 4:4 \(NLT\)](#) - Moses releases the stick, and it goes from a dead thing to a living thing. When he grabs the snake by the tail, it turns back into a stick but now is to be used for his new calling to lead his people out of slavery. It is a symbol of the **transition of ownership**. This is when we no longer belong to ourselves. Who owns our time, talents, gifts? When do we give them up for God? When do we accept that gifts and profound wisdom are vehicles to a higher calling?

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Hands are a powerful metaphor for what we have power to do, and also are a powerful metaphor for what occupies our time. Which one of these metaphors do you more resonate with? When you literally look at your hands, do you think of them (and yourself) as powerful or powerless? Why?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider the staff in [Exodus 4:2-4 \(NLT\)](#). What parts of your life seem "dead" or "static" right now? What would it look like to "throw them down" and release them to God? Do you believe that God can bring to life our dreams, our gifts, our vision? Is there something you need to discard from your hands in order to align your life with God's best (consider your use of time, media choices, etc.)?
- 3) **DO** - Meditate/pray this week and reflect on the image of offering your hands to God. Your hands can represent the totality of our lives in what we do, what occupies our time, etc. Ask God for one step you can do this week to live in alignment with God's call on your life! Join us next Sunday for Mother's Day!