

Exodus 7:8-13

Why Settle For Less - is the theme for today's sermon. It's a phrase we hear pretty often in today's advertising campaigns. You can have the most luxurious car at the best price - or a new car or home loan at the lowest rate. If you have been injured or know someone who has been injured, you can have the best trial lawyer in the state of Wisconsin by just calling this number 1-800-SUE-FAST. The point is, if you can have the very **best**, why would you **Settle For Less**? It's a great question, and it's one that we can apply to our **spiritual beliefs** as well.

Today in our text, God takes us back to the final days of the captivity of His people in the land of Egypt. The Egyptians had enslaved God's people for 430 years, and had **burdened** them with **harsh** and **unreasonable** expectations for their labors. God heard His people's cries for **mercy** and **deliverance**. So, God raised up **Moses** to be the man who would rescue the Israelites from their bondage, and who would lead them to the Promised Land.

From our point of view, it seems like God could have made a **better** choice. Forty years earlier, Moses **wanted** to be that leader. He even **killed** an Egyptian who had been **beating** one of the Israelites - an act which when it was **discovered**, caused Moses to **flee** from Egypt, and to live in the wilderness of **Midian**. But that was forty years **earlier**, and the **time** wasn't **right** yet. God's **training period** for His people in Egypt had not yet been **completed**. However, just prior to our **text** for today, when God **wanted** Moses to be the leader of His people, Moses had **changed**. He actually tried to get **out** of being the leader of God's people just about any way he could. At first, he had all kinds of **questions** for the LORD - Who am **I** that You would choose **me** to be a leader? Forty years ago the people didn't **want** me to be their leader. What if they ask me the **name** of the one who **sent** me, what should I say? What if they won't **listen** to me, or what if they think I'm **lying**? Then after God **answered** all of his questions, Moses tried **another** excuse. He claimed that he wasn't a good public **speaker**. But when God promised that He would **give** him the right words to speak, Moses **finally** just blurted out, "*O Lord, please **send someone else** to do it.*" If you're looking for a leader who is going to take the bull by the horns, those words of Moses don't build much **confidence**, do they?

But God always knows what He is doing, so He obviously had the right man in Moses, even with all his **weaknesses**. I believe that's part of the **key**. God

actually **wanted** a leader who was full of **weaknesses**, so the people would realize that their **real** leader was **God Himself** - and that **all** their strength and blessings came from **Him alone**. It's a pattern that the LORD would **continue** to follow, as down through the ages He would choose men to serve as His **prophets**, and **disciples**, and **apostles**. God regularly chose men to be His servants who were more like jars of **clay** than vases of **silver** or **gold** - more like **cracked** pots instead of storage vessels of **high quality**. Think of King **David**, a **murderer** and an **adulterer**. Think of **Jeremiah**, the **weeping** prophet - or of **Jonah**, who tried to **run away** from his responsibilities. Think of **Matthew** the **tax collector**, or **Thomas** the **doubter**, or **Judas** the **betrayor** - or even of the Apostle **Paul**, who called himself the **chief** of **sinners**. Even with all his **faults**, Moses was in pretty good company. These men could **all** take comfort in God's words to Paul which say, "*My **grace** is sufficient for you, for **My** power is made perfect in **weakness**.*"

And **we** can take comfort in that too. In fact, why would we ever **Settle For Less**? Why would we ever turn to **any other** source of **strength** or **comfort** or **love**, when we already have the **LORD**? Our political and religious **leaders** can't provide us with more - neither can our **families**, our **jobs**, or even the **angels**. The LORD is simply the **best** there is, so **Why Settle For Less**?

Moses was a man with **weak** and **wavering** faith. But, the Pharaoh of Egypt was a man with **no faith** at all. Let's take just a moment here to **look** at the Pharaoh of Egypt. When Pharaoh asked for a **miracle** from Moses to **prove** his authority, Moses told Aaron to throw down his **staff** (just as God had instructed him), and it became a **snake**. But Pharaoh **rejected** this miracle (as God knew he would). And his **rejection** of God's sign of authority brought great **grief** to **himself**, as well as to all his subjects. If Pharaoh had simply **listened** to Moses and **followed** the will of the LORD by letting God's people go, Egypt could have been **spared** from the suffering which was brought to them through **all ten** of the plagues which follow the words of our text. But remember, **Pharaoh** thought of **himself** as a god. And he wasn't going to let some **other** god boss him around, and make him look **inferior**. Pharaoh didn't understand that he really didn't have a **choice** in the matter, because everyone and everything **is inferior** to the one true God. **Nothing** compares with His standard of **power**, and **wisdom**, and **love**.

But for a **while**, Pharaoh thought he could **keep up** with God. We read, "*Pharaoh then summoned **wise** men and **sorcerers**, and the Egyptian **magicians** also did the **same things** by their secret arts. Each one threw down his **staff** and it became a **snake**.*" So Pharaoh was thinking, "See - you're no stronger than **I** am -

you have no more authority than **I** do.” However, the LORD quickly showed Pharaoh that such thinking was **ridiculous**. We read, “*But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs.*”

Unfortunately, even after the LORD had clearly **shown** His superiority over the false gods of Egypt, Pharaoh refused to follow the LORD. Instead, he **hardened** his heart. While that sounds pretty **foolish** to us, all too often we have done the same thing ourselves. The LORD has shown us the path He wants us to be on, and **we** have decided to take a **different** path. That’s certainly not the **wisest** thing to do, but it is a very **human** thing to do. You and I are not **exempt** from the temptations of the world around us. You and I can easily fall **victim** to the deceptions of the devil. He wiggles some juicy little **worm** in front of our eyes, and we immediately **swallow it** hook, line, and sinker - without even stopping to **think** about the fact that we already have a whole refrigerator **full** of juicy little worms at **home** - which were graciously provided by our loving, heavenly **Father**.

I think you know what I **mean** by that. The devil **says** he can give us **more** - that he can do **better** for us - if we just follow **him**. But he’s **lying**. The very **best** Satan can do, is simply to **copy** what God has **already done**. And most of the time his copies aren’t even very **accurate**. **Why Settle For Less**, when we already have the very **best**? It really boils down to what God demands in the very **first** of His commandments, “*You shall have **no other gods**. What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God **above all things**.*” The LORD will put up with **many** things in our lives, but **second place** is not one of them. Through **all** of His actions, the LORD has shown us that He is the **first** - the **foremost** - the **best** - the only **true** and **living** God - and He expects us to **keep** Him in that position in our hearts and lives as well.

And by the way, since we already **have** the very best, why not **share** Him with others? The opportunities are there all around us, but I think all too often we are like Moses. We have lots of **questions** for God - What if they won’t **like** me - What if they won’t **listen** to me - What if I say the **wrong** thing? And then after God **answers** all those questions we continue to find excuses like, “I’m not **good** at this sort of thing,” or “I haven’t been properly **trained** to do this.” And when God **removes** those barriers we finally just blurt out, “*O Lord, please **send someone else to do it.***”

Why are we so **reluctant** to share such **Good News**? The opportunities around us are people we **know** and **love** - our family, our friends, our neighbors.

Our good and gracious God **wants** them to hear His Gospel and be **saved**. He has **promised** that He will be **with** us and that He will **bless** our efforts. So, why do **we** think that when we do what God **wants** us to do, something **bad** is going to happen? Remember, it's just a **lie** - it's just a **temptation** - it's just the devil, the world, and our sinful nature trying to get us to settle for **less** than the **best**. **Don't Settle For Less**. **Be** the person God has **made** you to be, and **do** the **work** He has given you to do. Your efforts will **not** be fruitless. As He did in the days of Moses and Aaron, God will use the efforts of people like you and me. And through His Word, God will lead many people to believe in His **Son**, and will allow them to enter into the Promised Land of **heaven**. Amen.