

## When God Shows Up: A Call to Action

I'm here at Waahila Ridge State Park. It is here where I would come and have my ½ DAWGs, Half Day alone with God as a university of Hawaii student. It was here where I would get away from college life and tune in to God. Where he'd speak, and I'd try to listen, and have God direct my steps in all areas of my life.

It's so tranquil up here, but down the mountain I know many are getting restless so wanting to get back to normal, but at the same time, it's so uncertain what that new normal will be like.

Everyone is awaiting for a clear call of action on how soon to open up again. If we open up too early, there is a huge risk of community spread and medical experts say that would be devastating. But if we continue to take the more conservative safer action of keeping Hawaii closed, there is the cost of permanent job losses, foreclosure of homes, depression, anxiety, and tragically, even more suicides.

In any case, we are all crying out for this pandemic to end. Don't you feel like we're enslaved by this pandemic and we need to be delivered.

We need a clear call to action! And in distressful moments like this, we cry out to God, for him to give us clear direction and right action steps to take.

Throughout history, believers have cried out to God in times of distress.

In Psalm 3, The lyrics go, "But you, O Lord, are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who holds my head high. <sup>4</sup> I cried out to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy mountain.

In my early twenties I'd come up here, I remember crying out to God for my future plans, about relationships I had, and decision I had to make, action steps to take. And God would speak, not audibly, but into my soul. This is

where I'd begin to tell the difference between about my "self speak" and "God speak"

There are many examples in the bible where people cry out to God in their distress and how God calls his people to respond to some kind of action. And God uses various delivery systems to show up and call his people into action. Sometimes he uses circumstances, frequently he uses pain, and often God speaks loudly through the Holy Spirit whispers. At other times, He'll speak clearly through his very words from the bible, and God even uses others to speak into our lives, like mentors. So, it's not IF God call us into action. The question is, when he does, are we gonna obediently respond to his call or are we gonna make excuses, and stall on God's call, and do nothing.

In one familiar distressful situation, remember the enslaved Israelites crying out to God to be delivered from their lockdown situation. An no, it wasn't a pandemic that kept them in lockdown, they were enslaved and oppressed by their captors, the Egyptians, to hard labor to build their kingdom. And God heard their cries and showed up to one man to take action and lead the people to freedom. It's the familiar story of God calling Moses to action.

And in this call, God shows up in the wilderness and on a mountain.

Let me read to you about the encounter when God showed up to Moses from Exodus chapter 3:

*Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was*

*on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup> So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”*

*<sup>4</sup> When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.”*

I'll pick up the story from v 7, 9 - 10

*<sup>7</sup> The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. <sup>9</sup> And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup> So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”*

Did you catch how God showed up to Moses? It was through a burning bush that God caught Moses attention and called him into action in response to the distress of His people. No where else does God show up like this to call someone into action. That was God's call to Moses.

You see, our burning bush moment where God calls us into action will be unique and tailored made to each of us. The way that God calls us into action will surely be different. But what will **be the same** are our excuses for our inaction.

God called Moses to an impossible call of action. To free God's people out of slavery. You see, Moses had no army, no special forces, not even the support of his own people initially. But he had God on his side! And we can so miss what God promised Moses in that huge call to action for his life. Let's not miss this, verse 12 says. <sup>12</sup> And God said, “I will be with you.” And in the midst of that impossible task, I'm sure it was assuring for Moses, at least at that moment, to know that when God called him to do something

he'd never done before, that God was gonna be there every step of the way for him to carry out the plan.

That encounter changed Moses life—and the lives of generations to follow. Moses answered God's call from the bush with "Here I am" "Hineni" but whether he was scared or humble, he quickly made excuses for not immediately taking action. And I'll go over all those excuses he made to stall on God's call. Let's see if you can relate to these excuses that Moses gives when God called him to action.

Excuse number one:

1. In Exodus 3:11, this is how Moses responded to God. "But Moses protested to God, "Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?"

What he was saying was, "God, I'm not good enough. I'm not qualified: Does that sound familiar?"

When we honestly look at ourselves, we are all not good enough to take on something that's beyond ourselves, especially if God's calls us into action to something we've never done before. "God I no mo experience this" I'm not qualified, I'm sure you can call someone else to do what you want!" No, Moses, he's calling you!

And when God calls you, you might be the only one that can respond to that call of action. God's not always gonna call the qualified. He's gonna qualify those he calls. And it will require a step of faith!

I remember when I was called out my high school baseball coach, "Earl I'm calling you as one of the team captains! I looked around. Hey, Earl, why you looking around, I calling you! You gonna man up or you going "panty

out” if I recall correctly what my coach said. Yes, coach, I no goin panty out! I guess you see leadership potential in me. That was in high school. I hope when God calls me to action today, I pray I’ll man up and respond to that call. And God, “If you are gonna call me, you are gonna qualify me. That’s what it was like when I was called to be a pastor? Who me, yeah you, Pastor Mike said! It was like, “God saying to me, Earl, you no going panty out now right! And I’m so glad I didn’t!

Moses give another excuse in verse 13, “But Moses protested, If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

It’s his excuse of “I no mo all the answers, God” I haven’t figured it all out yet, excuse.

As a boy Moses was raised in Pharaoh’s household. He had every advantage of learning. He was well trained, and yet he questioned his abilities. But, he missed the point. This call wasn’t about him—it was about God. This excuse is lame. Moses didn’t need to know it all because it was never about him in the first place.

And sometimes, we can use this excuse too. You don’t need to know all the answers. God does, and remember, he’ll be there with us to give us all the answers we need to accomplish His plan.

And his excuses didn’t stop there. This was another excuse: What if people don’t follow what you ask me to do? Listen in again to Moses’ protest, “But Moses protested again, in Exodus 4:1 “What if they won’t believe me or listen to me? What if they say, ‘The Lord never appeared to you’?”

People will have their doubts. “Did God really speak or is it you doing that “Self speak” again. We’ll always have opposition to God’s call. But don’t let that stop you from taking action.

How about this next excuse Moses gives: “I no can speak too good, God” In 4:10, <sup>10</sup> But Moses pleaded with the Lord, “O Lord, I’m not very good with words. I never have been, and I’m not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.

Sounds familiar. Don’t you think that if God called you to some kind of action, that he’ll give you the right words to say. He’ll actually speak through you if you just open your mouth.

Lastly, Moses could have stalled God’s plan for good with this excuse: It’s the “I no like do what your calling me fo do.” Excuse.

v. 13 <sup>13</sup> But Moses again pleaded, “Lord, please! Send anyone else.”

I don’t want to do this. Isn’t that’s the real issue? We’re just not willing to step out in faith and obey God when he speaks.

\*\* Now I want you to hear from someone who heard God’s call to action, but was tempted to stall on God’s call because he too had his excuses. Watch this.

Wasn’t that good. Look at what was produced through acting on God’s call. So many lives are different today! And it’s so good thing Marc had Becky, his wife to confirm that “you heard right Marc” “No panty out!”

And if God hasn’t already done so, God will *call* you to action and do something you’ve never done before. So, the big question is this, “How will you answer His call when God shows up and calls you to an action? It may

be an action to let go and forgive someone, to admit you're wrong, to step out of your comfort zone and take the next step of faith (whatever that is that he's calling you to do, maybe God is calling you to talk to someone about Jesus, sharing with them about what he's done in your life.

And don't worry, we may sometimes get it wrong, but we gotta trust that God is in control. And God even uses our mis-actions, and turns them into good. God as our loving father so wants us, his kids, to learn to hear this voice and respond to his call even if we get it wrong at times.

How has God been trying to get your attention? Maybe you've had your burning bush moment where God has gotten your attention and you've been stalling on your calling to some kind of action because of some kind of excuse. Remember if we heed his call, he's not gonna let you fall? Why, because he promises to be with us through it all. Haha, that rhymes.

That's God's promise.

I want to lead you into a time of response now.

In Christ's letter to the church at Laodicea in the last book of the bible, Revelation — also known as the lukewarm church. Christ says, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot" (v. 15). They professed to know Jesus, but they weren't responding to Jesus' call!

This is what Jesus says to a church in Revelation 3:20, Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." I know Jesus is knocking on our hearts to respond to his calls. I Don't wanna be like that church who doesn't respond to Jesus' call. That's why he's saying, "Braddahs and Sistahs, Here I am, I stand at the door and knock. If

anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in. No make excuses no more.

This is a picture of how Jesus is calling you to respond to his call.

Whatever that is! Don't be lukewarm! Choose to be hot for Jesus.

And if you have never responded to Jesus call of action to receive him into your life by believing he died for you, and wants relationship with you? It's starts with that first action step.

I wanna give you an opportunity to open your heart to Jesus and have you take that first and greatest action step you can ever take.

John says like this in 1 John 5:11 – 12

<sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

This is an invitation to receive Jesus into our lives. Jesus took that great action step to die for us to pay the penalty for all we've done wrong. Why don't we respond to that gift of eternal life, life with God now and for eternity, with that action step of opening up our lives to receive him and choosing to become a Christian.

Can you pray with me, Jesus I hear you calling me and I open the door of my heart to accept your invitation to a relationship with you.