**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** What does it take to have the courage to go first? In a world that so often tries to pressure us onto certain paths, how do we blaze our own trail? How do we walk the straight and narrow path that Jesus set before us? Lean in as we learn from some of the heroes of the faith of what it means to be #TRAILBLAZERS.

**Week Overview:** Moses had all of the excuses imaginable. He couldn’t talk, couldn’t lead, wasn’t enough. But God shifted the focus off Moses and onto Himself, showing that when Trailblazers choose faith over fear, they can conquer anything.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):** Personal story of a time that you ran away from God.

**Tension (what’s the struggle):** Moses asked the same questions we’re still asking. “Who am I?” (3:11) 🡪 God turns focus towards self. “Who are you?” (3:13) 🡪 “I AM!” TRUST ME!

**Text:** Exodus 3 & 4 🡪 Exodus 13:20-15:1

**THP**: #TRAILBLAZERS CHOOSE FAITH OVER FEAR.

**Supporting Points:** Not as easy as it sounds… we have same excuses as Moses.

1. What if they don’t believe? (4:1) 🡪 God says TRUST ME. WATCH & SEE.
2. I’m not enough (4:10) 🡪 God says he is (Acts 7:21) and so are you (Imago Dei).
3. Send someone else (defeat) (4:13) 🡪 God says I will help you.

**Application (call to action)**: Will you choose faith or fear?

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

*THP/Main Points – Bold*

**Intro:**

Northview Students make some noise! How we feeling tonight? Who had a great time kicking off this brand-new school year together last week? Yes, yes. It was incredible.

If you’ve got a Bible, turn with me to Exodus chapter 3. Exodus chapter 3 is where we’re going to be reading from today. And I’m going to read starting in verse 11. It says,

*“Who am I? (Everybody say, “Who am I?”) that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”*

Will you pray with me?

*Prayer.*

*Amen.*

**Personal Story:**

*Who am I? Who am I? Well, a little bit about who I am: I grew up in a 2-parent household. We were a “good” Christian family. Both of my parents were/are pastors and I LIVED at the church growing up. I was there all the time and I LOVED it. I had no idea that it wasn’t “normal” to spend 5-6 days a week here. It was home.*

*That is, until my dad was caught in an affair. Until my dad’s poor decisions forced our family to uproot and leave our church and our home. Until I watched as hundreds of people turned their back on my family. Until, even after my dad became broken and reconciled—even though our own family forgave him—I watched so many people in the Church scoff at the idea of forgiveness and a second chance—the very essence of who we believe Jesus is—a free giver of second chances. And I watched as time after time, I saw people in the church—heroes of mine—treat others cruelly, treat others unkindly, fail to extend forgiveness, fail to offer support. And I’m not talking about our human condition and sinful people falling short. I’m talking about deliberate acts of disobedience towards God’s people. And it broke me. And maybe you’ve experienced something similar and it broke you too.*

*It shook me to my core and for the first time in my life, I felt a deep sense of bitterness and resentment begin to swell inside of me. And for a few years, I wanted nothing to do with ministry. For years in High School, I would clearly, explicitly state how AGAINST I was ever being in ministry like my parents. Ministry became evil in my life. I’d go to church, but I wanted nothing to do with the people who worked in the church. And then, when I got to college, for the first time, I decided it wasn’t just the people in the church, it was the Church as a whole—as an institution. I wanted nothing to do with it. And so I stopped going. And I became empty, cynical and lonely. I felt spiritually and relationally empty. I was desperate for God.*

*And so, I remember being in my dorm room one evening. It was March 16, 2016. And for the first time in months, I felt this tug on my heart to go open up my Bible. And so I mozied on over, pretty passive aggressive, probably mumbling under my breath. And I just did the Holy Drop. Y’all know what I’m talking about? I was like “mumbling, mumbling” drop. And please hear me, this is not the right way or the correct way to hear from God. You could do this 1000 times and maybe it’ll never speak to you. But for some reason, God used the passage that my Bible opened to in a way that he never had before or since. And I’ll never forget, seeing my Bible opened to Exodus chapter 3. “Moses and the Burning Bush.”*

*It was a story I read over and over again as a child. But for the very first time, I felt like Moses. I was in the desert. I was in exile. I was out there—alone, afraid, empty. And God found me in this miraculous way. And as I read this conversation between Moses and God, I literally felt like it was the very same conversation I was having with God in that present moment.*

**Text:**

I want to read to you this conversation and as I’m reading it, don’t simply read it on the screen or in your Bible as just a passage of scripture in church. I want you to internalize it. I want you to put yourself in Moses’ shoes. Insert yourself into the situation. What do you sense? What do you feel? See, hear, taste? Read this with me, Exodus chapter 3, starting in verse 1:

\*\*\*There is a lot of Scripture in this script. I think it tells the story itself. You can get creative with how the scripture is read (i.e. have different students read different parts) or you have the license to cut/edit what parts of the story you feel are most important.\*\*\*

*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.****2****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.****3****So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”* ***4****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.”*

***5****“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”****6****Then he said, “I am the God of your father,[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1586a)*] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.* ***7****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.****8****So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.****9****And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.****10****So now, go. I AM SENDING YOU to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”* ***11****But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”* ***12****And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1592b)*] will worship God on this mountain.”*

***13****Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”* ***14****God said to Moses, “I am who I am.[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1594c)*] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’* ***15****God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord,[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1595d)*] the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ “This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.*

**Tension:**

Such a powerful conversation, isn’t it? I mean, this is real. This is raw. This is as authentic as it gets. God says, “MOSES!!!!!” And Moses, says “Here I am.” God says, “Moses, I am sending you, I am calling you, I am tabbing you to rise up and LEAD your people out of slavery from Egypt. Moses is terrified. “Wait, wait…God, did I just hear you right? Hahaha. You’re calling me? You’re asking me? You’re sending ME?!” God says, “I’m sending you” and look at the text, Moses immediately responds, “Wait, who am I?” WHO AM I?? That’s a haunting question, if we’re being honest, isn’t it? Because it’s the same question we’re still asking today.

How often in our own lives has God already given us permission, he’s already given us the green light and we say, “WAIT GOD! You might be wrong on this. Me? Are you sure? Who am I?”

It’s the same question I found myself asking in my dorm room on March 16, 2016. I sensed God was not just calling me back to church, not just to forgive those I felt wounded by, not just to fully heal from the heartbreak and pain I had experienced, but to GO and lead people out of spiritual slavery back to him. And I found myself immediately apprehensive, immediately defensive. “GOD! WHO AM I?”

And I love how God responds to that question. Because, you know if I was God (which thank goodness I’m not), but if I was God, I would totally be like, “Bruhh. Who are you?! C’mon son! You’re MOSES! M-O-S-E-S. You a dawg!! You’re gonna part the seas! You’re gonna turn the nile to blood! I’m going to do miracles and wonders through you! GET HYPEEEE!!!!!” Hahaha. Right? Like, how often when we ask that question, do we want to hear from God what we’re trying to say to ourselves? “Micah, you can do this! You’re a man! You’re a stud!” We start adopting DJ Khaled lines, “WE THE BEST.” “ALL I DO IS WIN!” Right?

But, not God. Moses says, “GOD! WHO AM I?” And God doesn’t respond by saying, “here’s who YOU are.” He responds by saying, “here’s who I AM.” Look, verse 11,

\*\*\*In this section, I have re-written scripture. However, to cut down on time or scripture read/to be more engaging, you can PARAPHRASE the scriptures to be more entertaining/intense/etc.\*\*\*

***11****But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”* ***12****And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1592b)*] will worship God on this mountain.”*

God says, “I—GOD—I will be with you. And when you inevitably do what I say you’re going to do—because I’m God and I can’t be stopped—you will have ALL of the Israelites worship me on this very mountain.” There’s your prophecy Moses. There’s your answer! Who am I?! You’re a servant of me—God. Hmm. How many of us would be like, “yeah, that’s not good enough? Imma need a little more from you here, God.” Moses too. Moses says, verse 13,

*“Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”*

So, Moses asks, “WHO AM I?” And God says, “You are mine. You’re my son. My servant. My vessel.” And so then, Moses is like, “Well, who are you?!” And God declares—before all of the world—exactly WHO. HE. IS. Verse 14,

***14****God said to Moses, “I am who I am.[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1594c)*] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’* ***15****God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord,[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1595d)*] the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ “This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.*

He says, “I AM WHO I AM.” “Well Micah, what kind of name is that? I AM??” What does that mean? It means He is God. He is I AM. He is unchanging. He is ever-present. He is all powerful. HE IS GOD.

And you would think that would do it. That Moses would be like, “OKAYYY. Burning bush? Great I AM? Yep, I’ll do what you’ve said.” But, like so many of us. It’s not good enough. It’s not good enough for God to just tell us who we are or who he is, we need MORE! Moses says, chapter 4 verse 1,

*Moses answered, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you’?”*

God responds and says,

*“What is that in your hand?” “A staff,” Moses replied.* ***3****The Lord said, “Throw it on the ground.” Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it.****4****Then the Lord said to him, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.” So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand.****5****“This,” said the Lord, “is so 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.”* ***6****Then the Lord said, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, the skin was leprous[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1608a)*]—it had become as white as snow.* ***7****“Now put it back into your cloak,” he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.* ***8****Then the Lord said, “If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first sign,they may believe the second.****9****But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground.”*

So, at this point, you gotta be like, “okay, not 1, but 2 miracles?! I believe you God! I’ll go!” But, not Moses, look here, verse 10,

***10****Moses said to the Lord, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”*

Now, God’s mad. He says,

*“Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord?* ***12****Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”*

But Moses isn’t done, he’s not giving up, he’s not giving in. He says,

*“Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.”*

And it says that, ***14****Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses and he said, “Fine. What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you.****15****You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do.****16****He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him.****17****But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it.”*

**Truth:**

Now, I know that’s a lot of Scripture. And you’re probably thinking, “what does this all have to do with being Trailblazers, Micah?” But, I share allll of that with you for a couple reasons. 1) For all of you stubborn people out there, they didn’t come more stubborn than Moses, but in the end, who gets his way? That’s right, God. **God’s GO always outweighs our NO (repeat).** 2) For you excuse-givers out there, it’s easy to read that story and say, “well, I’ll just be super stubborn and continue to make excuses and bargain with God until I get what I want.” Right?

Like, that’s certainly a way that this story can be interpreted. Moses says, “not me! Send someone else. I can’t talk. Please not me. I seriously can’t talk. God, send ANYONE else.” And finally, God says, “okay. Aaron can come with you.” Which ends up being the final straw for Moses to return. And we read that and we think, “AWESOME. Moses got his wish! That’s all I have to do!” But we just talked about it with Abraham last week! **Partial obedience leads to partial blessing (repeat).** What do you mean, Micah? How does that happen here?

Well, if you’re familiar with the Bible at all, decades later, the Israelites FINALLY enter the Promise Land. But, you know who wasn’t with them? Moses and Aaron. Why? Because 40+ years earlier, it was Aaron who led the Israelites to worshipping golden idols while Moses was receiving the 10 commandments. This led to 40 years of wandering in the desert instead of entering the Promised Land. And 40 years after that, it was Moses AND Aaron who disobeyed God when he TOLD them to “speak to a rock, that water might come out of it for the people.” Look here, Numbers 20, verse 10,

*10 and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, “Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?” 11 Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank. 12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”*

Who was the mouthpiece of Moses? Aaron. So, God gave Moses what he wanted. But, the greatest achievement of his life was never realized because of the poor influence Aaron had on Him.

**Application:**

Listen to me students, lean in right here. The sooner we say YES to God’s call, the sooner we enter into the blessing of what’s promised towards us. God is after all of us and he’s saying, “WILL YOU TRUST ME?” Because Trailblazers—true, authentic Trailblazers—**THP: CHOOSE FAITH OVER FEAR.** In the midst of the unknown, in the midst of the unseen, Trailblazers CHOOSE to TRUST in WHO GOD SAYS HE IS, rather than allowing fear or excuses or rationalities to overcome them. **God’s explanations always trump our excuses (repeat).**

Look! When Moses has an excuse, God has an explanation! Moses says, “what if they don’t believe?” God says TRUST ME. WATCH & SEE. Moses says, “God, I’m not enough!” God says, “I AM enough and so are you because you were created in MY image.” And Moses, as one final act, says, “God, please send someone else.” He’s defeated. But God says, “I will help you.” God’s will, God’s plan is always the source of ultimate satisfaction in life.

**Personal Story:**

*I’ll give you a perfect example. Me and Pastor Steve—our Senior Pastor. Pastor Steve shares all of the time how FOR 10 YEARS—he ran away from the calling God had on his life and he was NEVER happy until he stepped into full-time ministry. For 10 years, Pastor Steve was successful, achieving great things, but he was empty because he was running. It wasn’t until age 30 that he finally stepped into his calling and found happiness and fulfillment like never before. I was called and when I said, “God WHO AM I?” He said, “You’re mine.” I said, “well, who are you?” He said, “I AM WHO I AM.” And I trusted him. I had faith that he was who he said he was and that* ***what he was calling me to, he would see me through (repeat).*** *Pastor Steve spent 10 years telling God excuses. “Who am I? Who are you? What if they don’t believe? Show me a sign. Show me another sign. I can’t talk.” And Pastor Steve—who I believe to be one of the greatest pastors and leaders in our world today—missed out on 10 YEARS of fulfilling his calling simply because he chose not to lean into the faith of what God was calling him to versus the fear of what he was having to leave behind.*

**Landing:**

Now, your story might not be quite as dramatic as that. But, we’re all still asking the same questions. Each of us have fears, scars and wounds—voices inside of us telling us to NEVER step into what God is calling us to. The volume of fear is amplified in our head while the voice of faith has become a faint whisper. But we HAVE to choose! Will we be Trailblazers and **choose FAITH OVER FEAR**, or will we allow our lives to go by unfulfilled simply because we chose to give into what fear was telling us?

What in your life are you allowing FEAR to hold its grip on??

* Maybe FAITH is telling you to open up and share what’s really going on in your heart and in your life but FEAR is screaming of the rejection you’re going to face when you get vulnerable.
* Maybe FAITH is asking you to join that team, that club, that group, but FEAR says you’ll never be good enough to be accepted.
* Maybe FAITH is telling you to LEAN IN and become INVESTED in what God is doing here at Northview Students but FEAR says, “everyone will think I’m some kind of Jesus-freak! So, I’m jus going to keep playing it cool. I’m just going to keep my head down and not cause attention.
* Man…maybe FAITH is calling you to break up with that boyfriend or girlfriend that you KNOW isn’t God’s best for you. But FEAR screams of the insecurity you’re going to feel when you’re single.

And on and on we go before FEAR shuts us up, before it paralyzes us, before it constricts us and we cannot breathe an ounce of FAITH into our situations. Do you find yourself there? Are you tired? Are you weary? Are you done with giving into fear?! You’re in the right place. You’re seen. You’re loved. You’re enough…

**Closing:**

As we close, I simply want to challenge you tonight. Maybe you’ve walked in here for the first time or thousandth time tonight and you have constantly lived your life PARALYZED by fear. What if tonight, you chose to break off the chains and take off the weights of fear that has been dragging you down? What if tonight, you DECLARED—in FAITH—that God is bigger. That God is sovereign. That God is mighty!

C’mon, stand with me if you believe it! Let’s sing together!

Response?