

# RISE UP AND WALK

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My sermon today is titled Rise Up and Walk, so today I would like to ask everyone to literally rise up and walk. All of you that are sitting in the back, would you move to the front. Everyone that is in the front, would you move to the back. Everyone on the left, move to the right and everyone on the right move to the left. If you are in the middle, move somewhere else away from where you are. In other words, move to the opposite place of where you are now and sit there for today.

Now let me ask you, “How did you feel about moving? What were your thoughts?”

- I didn’t want to move.
- I picked the place I was because I wanted to sit there.
- That was where I’m most comfortable.
- Why do I need to move?

What would you do if God said to you, “Get up and go to where I am sending you,” and not tell you where? No itinerary, no idea of where you are going or where you will be stopping along the way, no details. You’re just told to go. Leaving everything that is comfortable to you — your friends, your relatives, your home. Just pick up and go.

When we go somewhere we usually have some type of plan. If you fly somewhere, you don’t just show up at the airport and take any plane available to wherever it happens to be flying. Most people would think you were crazy or at least a little bit odd.

Well, basically that’s what happened to Abram (later called Abraham). Follow the story in Genesis 12.

*Genesis 12:1 Then the LORD told Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you."*

*Genesis 12:4 So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.*

Moses was another one whom God told to “rise up and walk” and take the children of Israel to the Promised Land. He was 80 years old and he had run away from Egypt 40 years earlier, because he had killed an Egyptian guard who had beaten a Hebrew slave. When Pharaoh found out, he wanted to kill Moses. So Moses fled Egypt.

Now God was telling him to go back and face Pharaoh and bring all the children of Israel out of there and take them to the Promised Land (about 600,000 men, plus all the women and children). The Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians. Can you imagine going back there and telling Pharaoh that you want him to release all of his Israelite slaves, who will be leaving Egypt for good?

Moses tried talking God out of using him. He thought someone else would surely be better suited. In fact, he said to God:

*Exodus 3:11 "But who am I to appear before Pharaoh?" Moses asked God. "How can you expect me to lead the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Moses was afraid.)*

Exodus 3:12 *God answered, "I will be with you..."*

Exodus 3:13 *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 shall I tell them?"*

Exodus 4:1 *Then Moses protested again, "What if they won't believe me or listen to me? What if they say, 'The Lord never appeared to you?'"*

Exodus 4:10 *But Moses pleaded with the Lord, "O, Lord, I'm not very good with words. I have never been, and I'm not now, even though you have spoken to me, I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled."*

Exodus 4:11 *"Who makes mouths?" the LORD asked him. "Who makes people so they can speak or not speak, hear or not hear, see or not see? Is it not I, the LORD?"<sup>12</sup> Now go, and do as I have told you. I will help you speak well, and I will tell you what to say."*

Exodus 4:13 *But Moses again pleaded, "Lord, please! Send anyone else."*

Exodus 4:14 *Then the LORD became angry with Moses. "All right," he said. "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he speaks well. And look! He is on his way to meet you now. He will be delighted to see you."<sup>15</sup> Talk to him, and put the words in his mouth. I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will instruct you both in what to do."*

Moses made a decision to rise and walk and obey His God. So, Moses took his wife and sons with him to a land his family had never been to before.

Now, I have one more example for you from the New Testament:

John 5:2 *Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda,\* with five covered porches.*

<sup>3</sup> *Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches.* <sup>4</sup> *An angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.* <sup>5</sup> *One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years.* <sup>6</sup> *When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?"*

<sup>7</sup> *"I can't, sir," the sick man said, "for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me."*

<sup>8</sup> *Jesus told him, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!"*

<sup>9</sup> *Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!*

Just like this man who laid by the Beautiful Gate for 38 years, we can get stuck and think that we can't move. He was always waiting for someone to give him a handout — something, just so he could get by. He was so used to sitting by this gate day in and day out. He wasn't really expecting much to happen. That's why Jesus had to ask him, "Do you want to be made well?" At first, the man had said he couldn't, because he had no way to get in the water when it was moving. He had not even considered that he could be healed *without* stepping into the water.

What if he had said, "No I can't, I'm crippled" or "Someone else may get my spot here and then what will I do? He would have missed his opportunity to be healed. But he recognized the power and authority when Jesus spoke and he obeyed. The man left his comfort zone and stepped out in faith. Jesus said, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."

There are many reasons why we get stuck and don't move with the Lord. We may go through difficult times in life, get discouraged, and find it hard to get up and go again. Sometimes, I think, we just sit in our same spot, not really expecting anything and maybe not wanting to put forth any effort. Or we may think that we have to do things the same way they have always been done. We're used to that routine.

God is a God of change and many times wants to do a new thing in a new way. If we let ourselves get too comfortable and used to a routine, we will miss the new places and the new things He wants to do. We can get fed spiritually every week from messages the Lord gives to our pastor and take in just what we like and go back to our comfort zone. We may even do a lot of good things, but we need to ask ourselves if they are what God has called us to do, because there are plenty of things to be done in all of our lives. But is it really about just being busy and doing good things? When God is the one leading, it will always be a good and productive plan. We need to pray and ask the Lord for His guidance.

We are all called to "rise up and walk" just like the people in the Bible that I have mentioned. The Lord has given us the Bible as our handbook. He has told us things that we are supposed to do, such as (Isaiah 61:1-2) to comfort the brokenhearted, set captives free, heal the sick, raise the dead, share the gospel message, and much more, but so many times we are so comfortable in our own little space and we know what to expect in our comfort zone and stepping out past the boundaries we have set is scary and unknown. We like to be at least partly in control of our situations and we want to know what the next step is going to be, but the Lord wants to teach us to depend on Him and trust Him. This is walking in faith and obedience expecting our God to work in and through our lives.

I'm just like everyone else. Even preparing this sermon, I go through so much because I want to know months in advance what the Lord is going to give me to say and most of the time it's really close to the date before I know, and sometimes the Lord is even giving me part of it the night before I am supposed to speak.

The Lord gave me the title of this sermon about a month ago, with a couple of verses. I didn't know how it was going to come together and I really didn't know how to do it. I drove myself crazy. I finally gave up and told the Lord, "Well, I don't have anything to say unless You give it to me, so here I am." Then He was so gracious and gave me the message He wanted me to give you about a week and a half ago. Still, it is up for change, if the Holy Spirit wants to change or add something. I'm learning, just like you, how to listen and trust in the Lord.

When the Lord takes us into new territory, we don't know which way to go, what the conditions will be like, or how long it may take. The only way to know the right way and all the other details is to go to the Lord in prayer and stay close to Him, listening for His voice and instruction. He's the only One who knows how. We have to intentionally seek Him and His leading. When we venture out on our own, we get lost along the way and lose all perspective and vision. We can become anxious, and fearful and start complaining.

The children of Israel started out with Moses on their journey, but it didn't take very long before they got scared and started complaining. Then, they started looking back at what they had left in Egypt, that they didn't have in the wilderness. They forgot they had been in bondage as slaves to the Egyptians — beaten, looked down on, and treated severely.

They had left their comfort zone, all that was familiar to them. Before, they had known what to expect each day, they knew the routine and what was expected of them.

But, in their new surroundings, they had neglected seeking their God and started blaming Moses for their troubles. Now, out in the wilderness, they were afraid. They complained about the food, the water and any difficulty that arose. They didn't want to seek the Lord for themselves, they wanted Moses to be the one to give himself to God and listen to God. They were afraid of God. The Lord listened to Moses and answered his prayers on their behalf and many times Moses interceded and interrupted what God wanted to do to them.

Because most of them were not obedient and did not rise up and walk with the Lord, without complaining, they were not allowed to enter the Promised Land.

Of all those who had left Egypt together, there were two who sought the Lord and followed God with their whole heart: Joshua and Caleb. They trusted Him and followed Him. They ended up being where the Lord wanted them, in the Promised Land, and blessed by God.

Today, you only had to get up and move across the room, without any explanation, and for some of you that was probably uncomfortable. I just wanted you to get a little bit of a feel for what it is like to move when you weren't planning to.

*2 Corinthians 5:7* ***We walk by faith, not by sight.***

Matthew Henry commented: "Faith is for this world, and sight is reserved for the other world: and it is our duty, and will be our interest, to walk by faith, till we come to live by sight."

Gregory Thomas offered this definition of faith: Conviction or persuasion with corresponding actions.

If we want what God has planned for us individually and as a church body, it requires rising and walking with the Lord, even when we don't understand every step. If we trust God and believe He knows what He is doing, we need to stay very close to Him and listen for His instruction, not just another one of our own good ideas. Guidance must come from the Lord. He gives us His peace when we walk in His ways and it will come together in His time.

What if we all stepped out of our comfort zones, past our boundaries of ease and asked God to take us to the place He has ready for us? What if we actually practiced listening to God intentionally, worshipping Him intentionally, and moving in faith in the direction He wants to take us?

I would like to challenge you today to step out in faith with God and submit yourself to Him. Ask Him to help you to walk out of your comfort zone. It doesn't mean you have to wait until you're "not afraid" or "better equipped." Do it afraid. He will instruct you and use you for His glory. Each of us is accountable to God and needs to be instructed by God.

The Lord said He would go with us and show us and instruct us.

Ask the Lord how He would have you to serve Him. The Lord has big plans, if we will allow Him to work through us. Our God is a big God and a good God, He wants to work through you. Will you rise up and walk today?