

## Scripture Reading -Exodus 3:1-4:17

<sup>1</sup> 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."

<sup>5</sup> "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." <sup>6</sup> Then he said, "I am the God of your father,<sup>[a]</sup> 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.

<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>8</sup> 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. <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."

<sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

<sup>12</sup> 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<sup>[b]</sup> will worship God on this mountain."

<sup>13</sup> 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?"

<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM.<sup>[c]</sup> This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

<sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD,<sup>[d]</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> "Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. <sup>17</sup> And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—a land flowing with milk and honey.'

<sup>18</sup> “The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.’ <sup>19</sup> But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him.

<sup>20</sup> So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

<sup>21</sup> “And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. <sup>22</sup> Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians.”

<sup>4:1</sup> Moses answered, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you?’”

<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?”

“A staff,” he replied.

<sup>3</sup> The LORD said, “Throw it on the ground.”

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> “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.”

<sup>6</sup> 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<sup>[e]</sup>—it had become as white as snow.

<sup>7</sup> “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.

<sup>8</sup> Then the LORD said, “If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first sign, they may believe the second. <sup>9</sup> 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.”

<sup>10</sup> 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.”

<sup>11</sup> The LORD said to him, “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? <sup>12</sup> Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

<sup>13</sup> But Moses said, “Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.”

<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD’s anger burned against Moses and he said, “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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it.”

**Footnotes:**

- a. Exodus 3:6 Masoretic Text; Samaritan Pentateuch (see Acts 7:32) *fathers*
- b. Exodus 3:12 The Hebrew is plural.
- c. Exodus 3:14 Or *I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE*
- d. Exodus 3:15 The Hebrew for *LORD* sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for *I AM* in verse 14.
- e. Exodus 4:6 The Hebrew word for *leprous* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

**Message**  
**E100 – Week 4**  
***“What Happens When God Calls”***

So, how goes the scripture reading?

Did you get your five E100 readings read this week?

Did you open yourself up to hearing God speak His Word to you, or

did you decide to “play it safe”; not “rock the boat” and risk having to make changes in how you live day by day?

The Word of God is powerful and “dangerous” because it does demand us to change our thinking and doing even as it call us to give up any sense of control we have over our lives and to trust in God; to place faith in God to guide our days.

I can understand why people may not have read the Bible this past week, but I hope that after remember the story of Moses’ calling, we will all be encouraged to read the Bible in the coming week.

As we consider Moses’ calling, what can we learn about God callings us to be about His work of salvation and redemption?

**1. God works through humble people.**

While Moses is somewhat distanced by time and generations from the Patriarchs; Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, the story of Moses and the Exodus is still at the very center of Jewish identity and their understanding about living in a relationship with God. God is Savior and Deliverer; saving us from slavery and our enemies, and delivering us to the Promised Land,

the land of Canaan originally promised to Abraham, or to that promised “new heaven and new earth” celebrated by Christians.

And all this salvation and deliverance is played out in the story of Moses.

- A person who should have been killed by the Egyptians at birth, but whom God rescued
- A person who was raised as a son of Pharaoh’s daughter; a privileged upbringing nourishing both body & mind to reign above others with an ego that once caused him to murder a man, thinking he had that right to do so and even to get away with it.
- A person God needed to humble in order to use him, to save His people from slavery.

And so this morning’s reading (Exodus 3:1ff) finds Moses, this once prideful grandson of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, shepherding sheep in the desert. We discover that his overconfidence is gone, but what is left is a person whom God can use; a person who will let God be God through them; a person who will trust in God rather than self.

This truth continually begs the questions:

Can God use me the way I am?

Can I allow God to be Savior/Deliverer, and not myself?

In other words, Am I a humble servant of God; willing to listen for God’s voice and obey God, or, am I doing what I want to do to feed by own ego?

God accomplishes His great work through humble people.

What else does Moses’ story teach us about God’s calling on our lives?

## 2. When God calls us He first gets our attention.

Would a burning bush catch your attention? Maybe, but maybe not.

But if you were a shepherd whose job it was to keep watch and protect your sheep from external threats, a burning bush would certainly capture your attention, especially one which kept burning and was not consumed by the flame. God knew that a shepherd would take notice.

And when Moses did, God quickly defined their encounter a holy... something set apart from the norm of life. Theologians call such a moment a Kairos moment, a distinctive moment when God breaks in to our time and meets us for a special reason. "Take off your sandals, Moses.." you are encountering God.

How does God get your attention these days? Occasionally we talk about the effect that TV commercials or internet ads have upon us in grabbing our attention. Hollywood certainly works hard to grab our attention (Dolby Surroundsound, 3-D). But these are not Kairos moments; they are not holy moments where God gets our attention.

How does God get your attention?

- How about a health scare or accident. Suddenly... a new perspective, right?
- How about the reorientation that can happen with the birth of a child, or the death of someone very special to you,

For Tim Winton, Australia's most celebrated novelist, it was the pure kindness of a Christian man named Len that got his attention.

Evidently, when Tim was five years old in the 1960's, his father, a policeman was knocked off his motorcycle by a drunk driver. After weeks in

a coma Tim's dad woke up and was sent home to physically mend the best he could. But for a long time Tim and his mom were left hopeless wondering how they could meet the needs of this big man, specifically how they could bath him each day.

A knock on the door quickly introduced them to Len, a local Christian man who had heard about their difficulties and volunteered to regularly come over to pick up Tim's father, carry him into the bath and to bath him.

It turned out that this simple act of kindness from a single Christian, repeated over and over again, had a powerful effect. Tim Winston, known today for his strong Christian witness, said "... watching a grown man bother, for nothing, to show up and wash a sick man—you know, it really affected me."

John Dickson, *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission* (Zondervan, 2010), pp. 97-98

God got Tim's attention through one Christian man's response to a family's needs. It makes you wonder whether you're an evangelist right now without really knowing it, simply by doing what God calls you to do!

And while God certainly gets our attention through life-events, God will regularly grab our attention through a simple reading of His Word. Have you ever read a passage, even one you've read dozens of times before, and suddenly you say to yourself: "I've never noticed that that before!" Just last Sunday someone came up and make that exact statement.

If that happens to you, pause. Don't just keep on reading to "get your reading done", and don't accept that insight simply as a new piece of knowledge.

Pause on that verse or passage, and recognize that the Holy Spirit is meeting you there; recognize that this might be a God-encounter worth attending to.

- Ask God “Why did You point this out now?”
- Ask God “What are you asking me to do with this insight?”

You see, God grabs our attention because He has a purpose in mind. What is that purpose?

- Maybe His Word answers a request you or someone else once prayed about. Maybe that new Word is a piece of Godly wisdom you need to address life.
- Maybe God simple wants you to pause & feel His love or comfort.
- But maybe, it is a Word intended to radically change your life, and you, like Moses, have to decide if you are willing to respond to God calling even if it means change.

Moses wasn't sure about getting involved with God's plan, was he?

I found it interesting this week to read this account again and compare how Moses was before God spoke of his involvement, as compared with after God calls Moses to action.

For everything was fine as the Lord told Moses about His compassion and concern and His plan to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and bring them to the Promised Land. I can imagine Moses nodding his head and being filled with joy in hearing about God's plan. I mean, Moses had tied to help the Israelites once, didn't he? It didn't work out so well, did

it? Moses ended up murdering an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave, but then Moses had had to run for his life from Pharaoh.

But now God would come to the rescue of the Israelites. Good news!

But then, what happens when God says:

<sup>10</sup> So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

What does this teach us about God’s calling on our lives?

### **3. We tend to initially oppose God’s calling.**

We all do... some for a second, others for a lifetime. Why do we do that?

Why can’t we all just be like Abraham who heard God calling:

#### **Genesis 12:1,4**

<sup>1</sup> .... *“Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. ....<sup>4</sup> So Abram went, as the LORD had told him;*

Why do we tend to oppose God’s calling upon us? Doesn’t it all come down to not wanting to yield our lives to God; to hand over control of them, or to avoid making painful changes?

This week I shared a quote with our Council which is fully of wisdom. The writer noted that contrary to popular belief,

**“People do not resist change, they resist loss.”**

Citation: Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. The Practice of Adaptive Leadership, Harvard Business Press, 2009. p. 22

And whether it is the loss of control in our lives if we fully put our trust in God’s guidance to take us from the grazing land of Midian to Pharaoh’s

palace in Egypt, or whether it's the loss of things we've come to view as precious; traditions, time, money, independence when God calls us to further His Kingdom on earth as members of a Church which shares the resources God has given to us.... we still resist, don't we. We hear God's call and we still make excuses. We make excuses like Moses:

3:11 **"Who am I** that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

4:10 **"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."

3:13 **"What if.."** the elders question who sent me.

4:1 **"What if** they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you'?"

And how many new excuses have we added to those offered by Moses to avoid saying "yes" to God's calling.

We tend to initially oppose God's callings don't we; unless we've been given that extraordinary spiritual gift of faith, we do..... and yet, is it not also true that while there is that is our initial tendency, if we eventually trust in God's calling, our opposition to future callings will lessen as God's faithful presence and power see us through calling after calling after calling.

For just a minute think about the most God-obeying fearless Christians you know. Maybe they're right here in the sanctuary. Who are those people who, like Abraham, would simply go if God told them to go; or to do anything no matter how difficult, if God told them to do it?

I would argue that most of today's courageous followers of God are that way because they've learned to say "Yes" to God over and over again amid real reservations and excuses.

We can always come up with excuses for why we can't do what God calls us to do; but when we begin to experience what God will do through those who say "yes" to His calling upon their life, the weight of those excuses evaporates.

What do you think happened to Moses' excuses after God used him to save hundreds-of-thousands, if not millions of people from slavery in Egypt, and brought them to God's Promised Land?

Now, we notice that God had to work Moses real hard to help him conquer his fears, but do you think when all was said-and-done, that Moses wished he had stayed in Midian to tend sheep?

Something that Moses learned, and something else Moses' story teaches us about God's calling on our lives is that...

#### **4. When God calls us to serve Him, he promises His presence and his power that will work through us.**

In the midst of Moses' excuses...

<sup>12</sup> *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 will worship God on this mountain."*

In the midst of Moses' excuses...

God gives Moses power to offer signs to Pharaoh that God was with him. And what God revealed to Moses by that burning bush was nothing compared to the signs He allowed Moses to shown to a hard-hearted

Pharaoh; signs, if you've studied ancient Egyptian beliefs, were outright attacks from the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob against the numerous false god's of the Egyptians. A darkness hiding the sun, turning the Nile bloody, frogs, flies, crop-destroying locusts; all those and more proving the supremacy of a living God's power over the false idols of this world.

When God calls us he will go with us and equip us with whatever power we need to accomplish His work.

- It may be miraculous signs and wonders... but
- It may also simply be the power to read God's Word, or
- to share a challenging message.
- It may be knowledge to solve a problem in an underdeveloped country or
- to bake a cake that makes a teenager feel loved.

The point is simple' if God calls, he will also equip. If He calls you to do something then He has either

- already equipped you for success, or
- He will empower you to be successful.

God takes humble obedient person and accomplish His great work of salvation and redemption through them. It's the overly-confident & prideful person with whom God's has a problem; for they will either try to do things their own way, or will rely only upon their own power and fall short.

A Christian leader once wrote to a young and struggling church these words concerning confidence about his work among them:

## **2 Corinthians 3:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> Such confidence we have through Christ before God. <sup>5</sup> Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

That Christian leader was the Apostle Paul who, just like Moses, was once an arrogant self-confident religious zealot whom God could not use. But then one day, God called him using a blinding light, a voice from heaven, and a brave Christian man named Ananias.

By God's power and calling a once vicious persecutor of Christians became Christianity's most influential missionary to the world.

It is amazing what God will accomplish when He gets our attention and when we put aside all our excuses and accept His calling, and trust in His presence and power to work through us.

So what is God calling you to do today? And,  
What are the excuses you're using to avoid trusting in God  
and participating in His great work?

Are you not sure of God's calling for you.

Then this week is a time to listen for God's voice.

This coming week's readings are listed in your bulletin. Be brave.

Be courageous. Open yourself up to hear the voice of God. AMEN

**Exodus 19:1 – 20:21**

**Exodus 32:1 – 34:35**

**Joshua 1:1-18**

**Joshua 3:1 – 4:24**

**Joshua 5:13 – 6:2**

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2010  
by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.