



Trinity Sunday

June 11, 2017

10:15 a.m.

Rev. Todd Goldschmidt, Pastor

Theme: I Am Has Sent Me to You!

Sermon Text: Exodus 3:1-14

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. **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] 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 [Jehovah] 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] will worship God on this mountain. [Mt. Sinai]"

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] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Sunday Worship Service: 10:15 A.M. (Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 9 am)

7305 208th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98053

(425) 868-9404 - www.lhlc.org, pastortodd@lhlc.org

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Put yourself in Moses' sandals for a minute. You're 80 years old. You've spent the past 40 years tending your father-in-law's flocks on the sparse savannah of the Sinai Peninsula. The work is hard, the terrain rugged and the climate brutal. Most days Moses must've felt like Bill Murray in the movie "Groundhog's Day": the same thing, over, and over, and over again. Mind-numbing monotony might've made Moses go stir-crazy. But shepherding requires physical strength, valor, a caring heart, veterinary skills, expertise with a sling and a crooked-staff, intimate knowledge of the topography and the trained eye of a meteorologist. It took *patience* and *humility* to be a good shepherd—quality's that Moses clearly lacked during the first 40-year chapter of his life (a chapter mostly spent in the Pharaoh's royal palace as his daughter's adopted son). Used to getting what he wanted when he wanted it, Moses possessed a quick temper and sported an air of superiority.

Yet despite being spoiled rotten, Moses never forgot about Jehovah, the God of unconditional grace, whom he'd learned about on his mother's lap or the sagas of his believing ancestors that his father regaled him with when he tucked him in at night. When he'd been weaned—likely around the age of 5—he went to live in the lap of luxury in Pharaoh's palace. But just as he never forgot his parent's godly examples or the life lessons they'd taught him from God's oral record, so he never forsook his true identity as one of God's chosen people. Pair that truth with his hot temper, though, and Moses commits murder in Ex. Ch. 2. Spying an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave—"one of his own people"—"he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand" (vv. 11 & 12). Fearing Pharaoh might find out, Moses fled to Midian.

Moses enjoyed all the perks and privileges as a prince in Egypt. He was instructed "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). As the plight of the Hebrews began to gnaw at his soul, Moses took it upon himself to be the savior of his people. As Stephen said before the Sanhedrin: "[Moses] supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand" (Acts 7:25). Moses was a man of action with a hot temper and a short fuse. Did God want to save His people? Yes. Did He want to use Moses as His chosen instrument of salvation? Yes. But Moses acted recklessly. By taking matters into his own hands he tried to force God's hand. The lesson for us is clear: we must be keenly aware of not only doing God's will, but doing so in *His* timing, not ours. When we try to do God's will in *our* timing, we just make a bigger mess.

Moses needed time to grow and mature and learn to be meek and humble before God, and this brings us to Ch. 2 of Moses' life: his 40 years in the land of Midian. During this time, Moses learned the simple life of a shepherd, a husband, and a father. God took an impulsive and hot-tempered young man and began the process of molding and shaping Moses into the perfect instrument for Him to use. What can we learn from this time in his life? If the 1st lesson is to wait on God's timing, the 2nd lesson is to not be idle while we do so. Granted, the Bible doesn't say a lot about this period of Moses' life. But it's not as if he sat idly by awaiting God's call. He spent the better part of 40 years learning valuable life-lessons of being a shepherd and supporting and raising a family. But back to the events of our text. The day dawns as usual. A hawk circles overhead in the cloudless sky as a desert



owl hoots from over the ridge where he'd pastured the flocks the day before. It smells like rain.

But *this* day turns out to be anything but routine! For Moses sees a bizarre sight: a flame of fire in the midst of a mountain shrub. Curious, he determines, **"I'll go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."** The Angel of the Lord, Who is the Lord, calls out to him, **"Moses, Moses!"** He replies, **"Here I am."** **"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."**

God then calls Moses to rescue His captive flock in Egypt. He's being sent from one God—the *Lord*—to lead the Hebrew people away from another god—*Pharaoh*. But Moses replied, **"Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" And God said, "I will be with you."** Moses then asks a question that to us may seem strange. But for Moses and his fellow Jews, it was a question whose answer was of the utmost importance. 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?"** The reply to Moses' request is one of the most important in the history of all creation and one of the most comforting to God's children. God told Moses to tell the Israelites:

I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU!

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" There were many gods, and Moses—because he was raised in Pharaoh's court—was aware of most of them. The Egyptians worshipped a panoply of gods, from the well-known Osiris and Isis, the sun-god Ra, the river gods and the legions of other lesser known gods. In addition, there were the regional gods, household deities and personal gods of stone and wood that folks carried about. Of course, we've gotten way past that sort of old-time idolatry. Ours is more sophisticated: we carve out images in the stock market, bow down to the idol-ness of retirement, gaze into the peep-stone of tomorrow's worry, kowtow to the swelling pride of education, seek the increasing status of self in one's field, or bask—if only for the night—in the deity of drugs, with the goddess of sex, under the deceptive fetish of coveting or mesmerized by the graven image in the mirror.

We suffer because of such fetters. We burden our lives with "gods" made in our own image and likeness. At so it was for Moses and for the children of Israel in Egypt. They were held captive not just by Pharaoh and his sadistic slave-drivers, but also by their own utterly depraved sinful natures. So Moses asks, **"Suppose I go the Israelites and say, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM Who I AM." And He said, "This is what you are to say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"**

This I AM is pronounced "Jehovah" or "Yahweh." His Name means "I exist" or "I be." But just who is this great I AM? He's the One Who told Moses, **"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."**



Here is the God Who sees the suffering and bondage of His people, from Eve as she wept over the lifeless body of her son Abel, to the anguished cries of His people whose backs bore the scourge-marks of Egypt's taskmasters, to each of His children today who bear burdens that stagger the soul or wrack the body and whose cries reach God's ears. The **I AM** says to *you* today, **"I have indeed seen the misery of my people."**

The Lord adds, **"I know their misery. So I have come down to rescue them."** Here, friends, is the God Who knows, not just intellectually, but by experience. He knows the sufferings and sorrows, hurts and pain of His people. This I AM is **"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"** (Rev. 13:8), Who stated: **"Very truly I tell you, before Abraham was born, I AM"** (John 8:58). He's Emmanuel, **"God with us,"** Who left heaven in the rearview mirror to redeem His people. This Jehovah is Jesus, **"the Word"** who **"became flesh and made his dwelling among us"** (John 1:14). This **"angel of the Lord"** is the Manna from heaven, Who suffered and died for the sins of the whole world of all times and generations. He is mankind's Redeemer!

This Good News goes forth so that those who aren't His people might become His people. All who hope in the Incarnate I AM will live forever. God also told Moses, **"I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."** What a comfort and blessing these words are for us! It might not seem like it, but here's what our Savior said when He was tested by the Sadducees, a religious group that didn't believe in the Resurrection. He took them right back to the burning bush, saying: **"But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living"** (Matt. 22:31-32).

Abraham isn't dead. He's alive and with the Lord God Almighty. So are Isaac and Jacob, along with our believing spouse, grandparent, child, sibling, friend or neighbor who departed this life. They're very much alive and with the Lord, for God **"is not the God of the dead, but of the living."** Jehovah appeared to Moses out of a burning bush, called him to lead His people out of Egypt and vowed, **"I will certainly be with you."** The risen Lord came to His disciples, called them to proclaim the gospel to a world held hostage to the Pharaoh of Hell, and pledged, **"Surely I am with you always to the very end of the age."** Still today, the great **I AM** says to pastors called to proclaim His Word, **"I will certainly be with you,"** as well as to each one of you, **"I am with you always."** Dear children of God, **I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU** with this message: He sees your suffering; He hears your cry; He knows your burdens. Christ came to suffer, to bear your burdens and die for your sins. He is your Deliverer. I AM is certainly with you, for time and for eternity. For the great **I AM** is the God of the living, not the dead! Amen.