

Week 3: “No Excuses. No Regrets.”

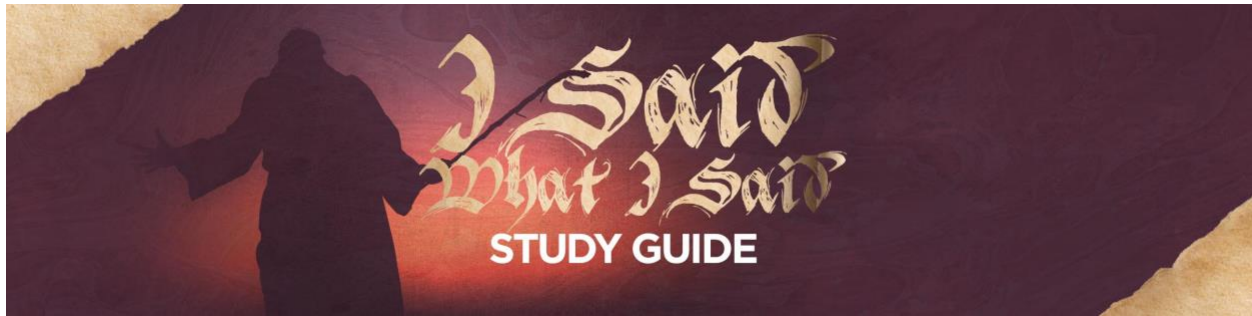
1. READ

Pastor Watley’s Scriptures: Exodus 3 : 1 – 8 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” ⁴When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” ⁵Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. ⁷Then the Lord said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Further Reading: Isaiah 6 : 1 - New International Version (NIV)

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. ²Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy *is* the Lord of hosts; The whole earth *is* full of His glory!” ⁴And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵So I said: “Woe *is* me, for I am undone! Because I *am* a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.” ⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar. ⁷And he touched my mouth *with it*, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.” ⁸Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here *am* I! Send me.”



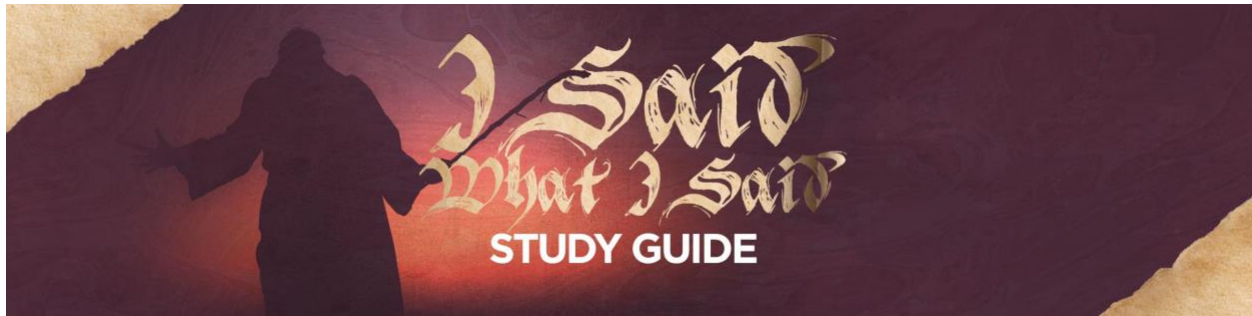
2. REFLECT

[Make sure to watch this week's sermon!]



This week our Senior Pastor Rev. Matthew L. Watley continued his sermon series entitled “I Said What I Said.” Throughout this series, we will be delving deeper into the life, legacy, mission, and ministry of Moses. In addition to the monumental events we frequently associate with Moses like the parting of the Red Sea and the Ten Commandments, we will also be studying some of the things that made Moses human. This includes his fears, doubts, and shortcomings. This also includes his excuses and his regrets. And yet, God used him anyhow!

In our lesson for week three entitled, “No Excuses. No Regrets” Pastor Watley explores the call story of Moses to remind us not to give in to self-imposed limitations. In fact, many of us spend our whole lives seeking comfort and validation in external things, while limiting our relationship with God. Instead of seeking safety, security, and shelter in our creator, we can get caught up seeking safety, security, and shelter from this fleeting world. As we hopelessly strive for status and material possessions, we compare what we have to others as an indicator of worldly success. And yet, as Pastor Watley reminds us, this is a trick of the enemy: ***Don't let the adversary twist your mind into thinking that somehow God has withheld his best from you!***

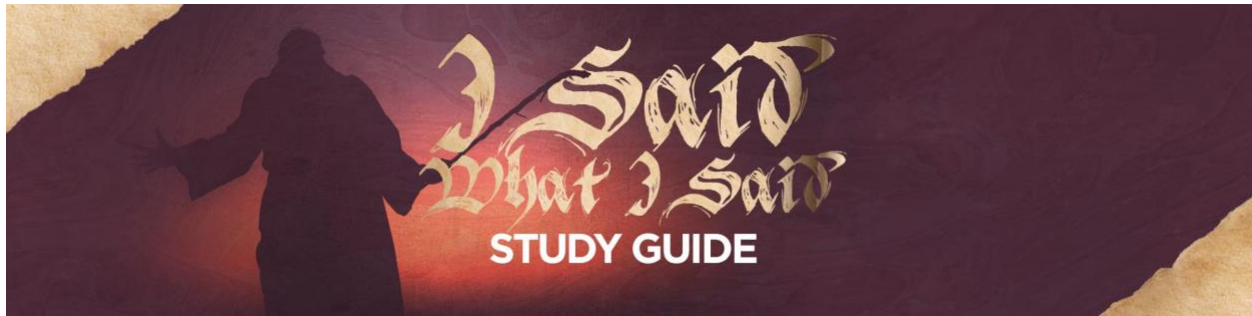


In our scripture for this week (Exodus 3:1-8), we see this principle at work in the call story of Moses. Out of all of the people that He could use, God specifically calls Moses to help complete His plans. Many of us know this call story of the “burning bush” because it is a clear and powerful example of God communicating with His people. And yet, this is not the first time God has communicated in this way. In fact, when God calls someone and summons them into relationship with Him, God always communicates in three ways. There is: 1) **Divine Interruption**, 2) **Divine Invitation**, and 3) **Divine Intervention**. Whether God was calling ancient prophets in the Old Testament, or calling us individually in 2021, these three elements are almost always present when God brings us into deeper relationship with Him.

For example, when God called Moses there was certainly **divine interruption**. As Moses was routinely keeping his father-in-law’s flock, God did something to arrest Moses’ attention. I’m sure Moses went out with this flock time and time again, and yet, this time was different. God interrupted his regularly scheduled programming to put Moses on a different path. In addition, God got his attention in a unique way. Verse two says “There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.” God used the extraordinary to grab Moses’ attention. And if we’ve learned anything from 2020, and even the few short weeks in 2021, we should be able to stop at our burning bush and realize that God has something to say!

Furthermore, when God called Moses, there was a **divine invitation**. Verse four says, “When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” In this passage we witness God call Moses by name, not once, but twice. God’s call indicates clarity and intentionality as He specifically selects Moses. Moses cannot deny that he was directly called. And yet, God acknowledges and respects our free will and allows us to make our own mistakes. Moses did not have to say yes, but he decided to freely take the first step towards God and responds “Here I am.” This is an important reminder to us that God has called us individually, not once, but twice. He knows our name and has uniquely equipped us with *Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Passion, and Experience* (SHAPE) to fulfill His purpose. It is up to us to steward these things wisely and continue to say yes to His call.

And lastly, when God called Moses there was a **divine intervention**. In verse five God says, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” God indicates to Moses that there is something uncommon happening in a common place. Although Moses had likely traveled that route before, the presence of God made the space holy. God’s presence intervened and changed the atmosphere. This is important for us because when God calls us, He intervenes in our lives and changes the atmosphere. No longer must we operate like everyone else. Instead, God has called us to be different and a reflection of His holy presence. So how are you different? How do you reflect God’s holiness in your life?



3. RESPOND

Introspective Questions

- How has God tried to get your attention? Have you had a “burning bush” experience?
- Take the SHAPE assessment to learn more about your qualities: [HERE](#)

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think God appeared to Moses through a burning bush?
- How would you have reacted to a burning bush with God’s voice accompanying it?