

Moses

Part 3

Exodus 3

1 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.”

- The story of Moses unfolds much like the story of Joseph. For both the story starts off good then takes a humble turn.
- Joseph was loved and favored by his father, he had a dream that he would become great only to be betrayed by his brothers and sold as a slave to Egypt.
- Moses was a beautiful baby boy, protected by his mother, found by the daughter of Pharaoh and raised as a prince in Egypt. After fleeing from Pharaoh he finds himself displaced as a foreigner in the desert of Midian. Moses is no longer a prince now he is a shepherd tending another man's flock on the back side of a desert.
- At this point Moses is 80 years old, has a wife, a son and a place of belonging, but the story seems far from anything great.

Question: Is it possible for God to use someone this late in their life?

The startling answer is yes: The Bible is filled with stories like this

- Moses is 80 when he begins in his calling.
- Abraham is 75 when God calls him to move to a new land
- Anna was 84 when she recognized Jesus as Messiah during his dedication in the temple as an infant.
- Daniel is 82 when he is tossed into the Lions Den

- John is in his 90's when he writes the book of "Revelation"
- David is 70 when he sets out to build the Temple
- Jehoida is 100 when he destroyed the temple of Baal, smashed the idols, fixed the house of God and overthrew the wicked queen. As a priest he was buried among the kings because of all that he accomplished for the Lord.
- Caleb is 85 when he conquers his mountain and drives out the giants.

So if you've still got a pulse... God's still got a purpose...

Vs. 1b

and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

- Moses like Jesus, was in a wilderness when God launched him into ministry.
- Moses like Elijah was in a wilderness when God visited him and spoke to him.

Wilderness: also defined as a desert, desolation or uninhabited land.

- This is often the kind of place that God chooses to speak to us. A desolate, undesirable place. It's rarely in the crowd, rarely in the hustle bustle, rarely in the busyness and distractions of life that God speaks. Because God will often speak when he has our undivided attention. In this wilderness, Moses was alone and that's when God chose to meet with him.
- As much as we avoid being alone, alone is sometimes a good thing. I have found some of the richest times with God happen when I'm alone.

Story: When I first moved to Bible College, I was alone for a two weeks.

- If you ever find yourself alone, there is great opportunity. It's possible that God has you there to grow closer to him.

Vs. 1b

and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

- Moses had no clue that the mountain he stood next to would play such an important role in his life. Mt. Horeb also known as Mt. Sinai is the place where God revealed himself to Moses in a burning bush. Mt. Horeb is the place where God will reveal his Glory to Moses. Mt. Horeb God is also the place where God will reveal His Law to Moses and the nation of Israel.
- Not only is this Mt. a key location for Moses, but it is also the place where Elijah the Prophet will eventually hear the still small voice of God, after fleeing from Jezebel.

Vs. 2,3

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."

- Little did Moses know, but this is the beginning of many encounter with God for him.
- The word used here for angel comes from the Hebrew word that is also translated messenger. So Vs. 2 could read like this "There the messenger of the Lord appears to him"
- This is helpful to me, because I see a difference between an angel and the Lord himself.

“Not a created angel certainly, for he is called Jehovah in Exodus 3:4 and has the most expressive attributes of the Godhead applied to him... Yet he is an angel, a messenger, in whom was the name of God... And who is this but JESUS, the Leader, Redeemer, and Saviour of all mankind?” (Clark)

“Undoubtedly, this is another occasion where Jesus appeared before His incarnation in the Old Testament as the Angel of the LORD, as He did many times.” (Guzik)

- We also see Christ pre-incarnate in the OT stories of Hagar, Gideon, Samson and Joshua.

Vs. 2b-3 *“...Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight...”*

- A burning bush by itself might not have been an unlikely instance. It is possible to see dry, desert vegetation burning from lightning strikes. What makes this sight unusual was the burning bush not being consumed.

“Though the bush burned with fire, it did not crackle or diminish, no leaf curled and no branch charred. It burned, but was not consumed.” (Meyer)

Symbols of the Burning Bush

1. Some think the burning bush to be a symbol of Israel, or the people of God generally. They are afflicted but not destroyed, because God is in the midst of them.
2. The burning bush can also be seen as a symbol of the cross.

“The Hebrew word used to describe this bush comes from the word “to stick or to prick,” this meaning a thorn-bush or bramble. We can think

of the cross – where Jesus, crowned with thorns, endured the fires of judgment and yet was not consumed by them – and be reminded of the cross when we consider the burning bush.” (Guzik)

3. I would appeal that the burning bush in the OT is also a symbol of what is yet to come “The Promise of the Father” for the church today. The Apostle Paul likens the glory that was on Moses under the old covenant to the glory of the Spirit promised to us under the new. (1 Corinthians 3:7-18).
- The picture of the burning bush inhabiting but not consuming the vessel is much like what we see in **Acts 2:3** “They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”

When the fire of God’s presence burns on the believer

1. It will catch the attention of those around, much like it did on the day of Pentecost.
2. The believer is empowered and changed forever, but is not physically consumed.
3. The fire of the Holy Spirit will like in the case of Moses cause the ground to be Holy. The person who experiences the Baptism of the Holy Spirit will experience a desire to walk in Purity to continue hosting the presence of the Lord on their life.

Vs. 4-

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, 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.

Vs. 4

When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

- Moses is 80 years old, he is alone and undistracted by the world, He is captivated by God’s supernatural presence and he hears God’s voice for the first time.
- The double call (Moses, Moses!) implied importance and urgency, as when God called Abraham, Abraham! (Genesis 22:11), Samuel, Samuel! (1 Samuel 3:10), Simon, Simon (Luke 22:31), Martha, Martha (Luke 10:41), and Saul, Saul (Acts 9:4).

Moses is unfamiliar with God and his voice. So God takes the opportunity to orient Moses, introduce himself and tells Moses the reason for the encounter.

- Moses doesn’t initially know that the burning bush is God.

First: God gives Moses orientation - **Vs. 5** “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”

Application: Oh that we (the Church) would also walk in a reverent, holy posture in the presence of God. It’s so important that we understand when we approach God, He is Holy.

Second: God introduces himself - **Vs. 6** “Then he said, “I am the God of your father, 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.”

- The fact that God says to Moses, “I am the God of your father...” tells me that Moses knew about God because his father knew God. This is proof that we can know a lot about God and still not know Him.

Third: God gives Moses the reason for the encounter

Vs. 7-10

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.”

- God gives Moses the reason for the encounter and Moses is not it, Israel is. Moses is not the point of the story, God responding to a people he has made an endless promise to is.
- Moses heard God’s voice that day... let’s me say this, What Moses heard that day was difficult... He probably didn’t go home excited to share... He probably didn’t sleep well... What God said to Moses meant the comfortable days of shepherding sheep in Midian was over... Now he was either going to see a great miracle or he was going to die...

- Everyone today talks about hearing God's voice but can I tell you I have found when God speaks it's never what you expect and sometimes what you don't want to hear.
- Unless we are willing and surrendered to the point where we want to hear God's voice, even if it's contrary to our natural desires, I believe God will withhold his voice, simple because we aren't ready, willing or obedient enough to listen.
- It's important that we understand the difference between hearing God's voice, sensing his leading, having a good idea or frankly being lead by our own soul.
- I personally sense God's leading on a weekly basis. The last time I abruptly heard God's voice was Dec 23, 2019. There is a difference between hearing God's voice and sensing his leading.
- Every time I have ever heard God's voice it challenged me, didn't make sense in the natural and called for sacrificial obedience.

Question: Until Exodus 3, God had never spoken to Moses and now he's 80 years old. Moses ran for his life, God didn't say a word... Moses found a new home in Midian and God never said a word... **(That doesn't mean that God wasn't present, but He didn't speak a word)** Now God speaks to Moses for the first time.

Why? What for?

- **A Job...** (Moses already has a job and seems content)
- **A Job that Moses doesn't want...** (Moses abandoned his desire to defend his native people 40 years ago)
- **A Job that doesn't make sense...** (Moses failed in Egypt)

- **A Job that doesn't seem possible...** (Egypt is the most powerful nation the world)
- **A Job that could get him killed...** (Moses ran from Egypt to save his life, now God wants him to go back and ask for their entire work force)

Closing: