

SUNDAY WORD

MAR. 12, 2023



Moses is now 80 years old. He's well past retirement age and well past his prime. It's very rare to hear about a man who starts a new career in his 80th year. Yet here, we have Moses at the age of 80, about to get his marching orders from God. Not only that, he's going to live another 40 years. When most men are slowing down, Moses is just starting over. When God calls us, our age doesn't matter. Our age should not hinder us from obeying God and serving Him. What happened at the burning bush 6,000 years ago changed world history.

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." (NIV)

AN ORDINARY DAY

Everything in this story hangs on one fact. Moses meets God during an ordinary day. It's not as if he got up this morning and said, "My whole life is about to change." At the age of 80, he had every reason to think nothing would ever change. It was just one more day with the sheep in the desert. But his life was about to take a sudden turn in a new direction.

So, here's Moses doing his job in a remote place, doing what he has done each day for the last forty years. He doesn't have an inkling God is about to speak to him. What's the first step in discovering the will of God? You begin by doing what you already know to be the will of God in your present situation. You don't need to worry about God's will for tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, much less next week, next month, or next year. Just get up each day and do the will of God for that day, and in doing God's will today, you will discover God's will for tomorrow.

So many of us live for those mountain-peak experiences when the clouds part and God seems so close to us. Many people wish those spectacular moments would happen every day. Often when we say, "God, show me your will," what we really mean is, "Lord, give me some feeling, some insight, some spiritual revelation." >>>

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 What is the most significant thing you have learned from the sermon?
- 2 Have you had any experiences where God seemed to be trying to get your attention? What happened? What does this teach you?
- 3 How would you describe your relationship with God right now?
 - A burning bush (passionate)
 - A flickering shrub (unsteady)

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And God says, "I have already shown you my will. Now, get up and do it!" What is God's will for Moses? Take care of those sheep. Find them some water. Keep the wolves away. God's call came to Moses during ordinary obedience, the same will be true for us today.

So, here's Moses in the desert. It's been forty long years of hot days and cold nights. Forty years of dust, dirt, wind, and sand. Forty years with the sheep in the wilderness. This story begins on a completely ordinary day. But then there is an extraordinary bush.

EXTRAORDINARY BUSH

Exodus 3:2-3 - "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." (NIV)

A bush in the desert is not extraordinary. It's not unusual that a bush is burning in the desert. Fire is a common thing in those conditions. But it's extraordinary that the bush was on fire but was not burned up. That's what caught Moses' attention. It's not just strange; it's unbelievable. If we saw the same thing, we would walk over to take a closer look.

God can make any bush burn. God can make any bush burn any time He likes. And he can make the bush burn without being consumed. In fact, any bush will do! By this strange sign, God was saying to Moses, "What I did with this bush, I can do with you."

PERSONAL CALL

Exodus 3:4-5 - "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.'" (NIV)

Always pay attention when a name is repeated twice in the Bible: "Moses, Moses." The repeated name is a sign of intimacy. It means something important and very personal is about to be revealed. When God calls his name, Moses responds by saying, "Here I am." It's a Hebrew word that says, "Hineni". It was Moses' way of saying: Here I am. I'm ready to serve. What do you want me to do?

It's what a servant says to his master. It's what a little boy says to his father. It's what believers say to God. "Here I am!" Hineni. Here I am. Abraham said it in Genesis 22:1. Jacob said it in Genesis 31:11. Moses said it in Exodus 3:4. Isaiah said it in Isaiah 6:8.

Moses doesn't try to hide, and he doesn't try to evade the question. That's crucial because when God calls, we can always find an excuse: "Not me, Lord." "Ask someone else." "I'm busy." "I'm happy right where I am." When God calls, we need to pay attention. That's why God told Moses to take off his shoes.

When Moses said, "Here am I," think about what he didn't know. We rarely get a choice in advance. He had no idea what was to come. No idea about facing Pharaoh. No idea about the 10 plagues. No idea about crossing the Red Sea. No idea about the Ten Commandments. No idea about 40 years in the desert.

Life works best one day at a time. It's better not to know. Life is hard enough as it is. That's the point I'm trying to make here. Moses didn't know about the challenges ahead of him because he didn't need to know. The same is true for us. All God asks is that when He calls, we answer: "Here I am." Let God fill in the details.

There's one final thing in this passage. After getting Moses' attention, God gives him a divine revelation.

Exodus 3:6 - "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."

This verse tells us: It's not about me. It's not about now. It's all about God. It's all about eternity. In this passage, God isn't telling Moses anything about Moses. Instead, God is saying, "Let me tell you who I am."

He's the Personal God: "I Am." The Egyptians had all sorts of gods they worshiped. But the God of the Bible is not like those pagan gods. He is the God who created all things. That God has come down to speak to Moses. He's the Eternal God: "I Am." Note the present tense: "I am," not "I was."

God takes broken, messed-up people, and He uses them. The rest of us are broken clay pots. Some are more broken than others. But that's how God works. That's the genius of His plan. God keeps His promises to imperfect men! When people fail, God never gives up on them. God keeps His promises to imperfect men because He is faithful even when they fail.

This is what Exodus 3:8 says: Exodus 3:8 - "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." (NIV)

That's a promise from God. He will come down from heaven and deliver His people from their slavery in Egypt. At this point, Moses has no idea how it will unfold. He doesn't know yet because he doesn't need to know right now.

God repeats Himself to make sure Moses gets the message: Exodus 3:9 - "And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them." (NIV)

Finally, we get one command for Moses in Exodus 3:10: "So now, go (NIV)." That's it. That's the whole call right there. And here's his job description: Exodus 3:10 - "I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." (NIV)

CONCLUSION

Don't be impatient to discover God's call on your life. You can't rush God's purpose. Moses was 80 when God called him. Perhaps a better way to say it is that God spoke to his spirit years earlier and gave him the desire to deliver his people. But the time was not right until many years later. Let us learn from this the value of patience. If you are in the desert right now, be patient. As you wait for further guidance, be faithful. When that guidance comes, be obedient.

God knows how to make bushes burn. At age 80, Moses probably thought his days of greatness were behind him. But the burning bush was God's way of saying, "You thought you were burned out, but I've got big plans for you." He can take a desert scrub bush and turn it into a burning flame that will not be consumed. What kind of bush qualifies? God is looking for men and women who will burn for Him. You may think your time has come and gone. You may feel dried up and useless. You may think your past disqualifies you. Think again.

When God gets your attention, pay attention. Maybe, God lays upon your heart a friend, the hurt of a community, or a struggle in your own family. If God lights a fire within your heart, pay attention. When God speaks, there are no excuses. What has He spoken to you about? Remember: All God needs is a bush that is burnable. Any old bush will do. Why not you? All God asks is that we make ourselves available to Him. May we all say, "Hineni!" Lord, Here I am. Send me!