

What's in Your Hand? Responding to God's Call

Sunday, February 2, 2020

Exodus 3 New International Version (NIV)

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 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."

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.'

15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD,^[d] 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.

¹⁶ “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. ¹⁷ 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.’

¹⁸ “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.’ ¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. ²⁰ 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.

²¹ “And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. ²² 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.”

Exodus 4:1-17 New International Version (NIV)

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

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

“A staff,” he replied.

³ The LORD said, “Throw it on the ground.”

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

⁶ 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^[a]—it had become as white as snow.

⁷ “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.

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

¹⁰ 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.”

¹¹ 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? ¹² Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

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

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it.”

We think of Moses as being one of the biggest influencers of the Bible. We can’t help but focus on the greatness of the victories one under his leadership, his closeness with God, the God given wisdom that he delivered to the people.

But in so many ways Moses was just an ordinary person like you and me. While living life on the backside of the desert, Moses received a call from God. He responded to that call and the rest is history.

God has a call for our lives as well.

1. God wants to use YOU

Remember that Esther taught us that we were created to fulfill the purposes of God. Rather than just do things himself, God has chosen to use us to fulfill his purposes.

- Adam
- The incarnation shows us that God wants to utilize our humanity to fulfill his work.

Exodus 3 New International Version (NIV)

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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 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.**”

Moses: Moses to get his attention. I’m talking to you.

Maybe Moses thought he was unusable because of his past. He was an outcast, a foreigner, a murderer, a failure.

Question: How does God want to use me?

2. There is GREAT NEED all around us

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.

¹⁶ “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. ¹⁷ 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.’

John 4:35 New International Version (NIV)

³⁵ Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

Question: What needs can you see around you?

3. You HAVE SOMETHING to offer

¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

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

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

“A staff,” he replied.

³ The LORD said, “Throw it on the ground.”

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

⁶ 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^[a]—it had become as white as snow.

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

Ordinary things become extraordinary when put into Gods hands

John 6:1-13 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

6 Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), ² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. ³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴ The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

⁵ When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages^[a] to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”

⁸ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, ⁹ “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

¹⁰ Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

¹² When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten

Question: What tools do I have in my life that could be used for God?

4. Stop making EXCUSES

¹⁰ 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.”

¹¹ 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? ¹² Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

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

Question: What excuses have I been making to God?

5. Each of us have DIFFERENT GIFTS

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it.”

1 Corinthians 12 New International Version (NIV)

12 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^[b] ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Question: What gifts do I see in others?