

Series: **Exodus: Seeing God in the Journey**
Title: **Encountering God – Here I am**
Text: **Exodus 2:23-3:6**

Who Forgets Whom?

Exodus 2:23-25

²³ During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. ²⁴ And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

God may be forgotten by the people

- 40 years – Moses may have forgotten his people and the God of his people
 - Maybe you have forgotten that God has a purpose and a plan for you.
 - Maybe you have been caught up in the day-to-day grind that a higher calling has passed you by.
- 400 years – The people had forgotten God and were out of touch with the Lord
 - Moses has to ask – what name do I give?
 - The people are so far from any of the traditions and teachings of their faith they can't even speak in the name of the god of their tradition
 - Faith has to begin when we get to the end of ourselves and reach out, cry out to something, someone beyond us.

God does not forget the people

- Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.
- God heard their groaning.
- God remembered his covenant.
 - Why would God have to remember? Did he forget?
 - No... Aristotle called God an unmoved mover.
 - But we see God here, as Jewish theologian Rabbi Abraham Heschel called Him - the Most Moved Mover.
 - For the first time you have this hierarchy coming back saying He's God, and He is already giving back the identity to His people.
 - The people had lost their identity and connection to the Divine.
 - God remembers and reminds them of His covenant.
 - It is not because they are good people. It is because He is faithful to His covenant.
- God saw the people.
- God knew their situation, and He knows yours.

Deuteronomy 31:6

“Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

STEPS TO ENCOUNTERING GOD

Come out of your desert

Exodus 3:1-6

¹ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ And he said, "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.

(Out of the wilderness)

A desert of identity

- Moses is now an unknown shepherd in Midian.
- You are not a nomad.

A desert of productivity

- He does not even own his own flock, but he is working his father-in-law's flock.
- He is tending the sheep.
- He has been humbled.

A desert of spirituality

- Forty, years day in and day out, in a land where the Creator God was not followed or honored.
- Father-in-law is a priest of Midian.
 - Reuel – Friend of god
 - Jethro – abundance - plenty

Come to the Mountain

Exodus 3:1b-2

^{1b}... came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.

• He came to the mountain of God

- Horeb – means desolate – desert
 - Dryness; drought; heat; waste; desolation; desert; barren; solitude.
 - There is a place where you can meet God even there in your desert...
 - ...but it is a solitary place...
 - ...a place where you have no distractions.
- Sinai – Brilliance, radiance and splendor
- You must move higher up. Lift your face.
- Lift your eyes.

Psalm 42:2

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

This is where the Lord shows Himself.

When you move, step from the desert toward the Mountain.

The Lord appears at the Mountain

- The angel of the Lord – messenger
- Yet He is called Jehovah in Ex. 3:4 – attributes of the Godhead.
- When we move from our desert existence and come to the Mountain of God – Look to Him: He reveals Himself.
- In a flame of fire in the bush
 - Desert thornbushes in the heat were known to ignite...not unusual.
 - Still there was no curling of the leaf, no diminishing of the plant, no charring of the branches. It was not consumed.
 - That's the symbol Jews often use for the Jewish people where they were always burned but were not consumed.

Come Look

Exodus 3:2b

^{2b} He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

- He looked, and behold...
 - What are we looking at?
 - When you look ----God will show you something.
 - You will see what you are looking for.
 - Search for a car... you see it everywhere you go.

Psalm 10:4

In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God."

Come turn aside

Exodus 3:3

And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned."

- I will turn aside and see
 - When God shows you something, will you step aside and see it?
 - You must move off of your regular path.
 - The way of man will not direct you on a holy path.
 - It is when you get out of the raging river and move into the stillness of the eddy that you can truly encounter God.
- Bush burning but not consumed
 - The bush is not being consumed – but Moses' life will be consumed.
 - The question is in this situation like that is what's being burned away?
 - "If you're 95% dead wood and you get too close to the fire, all that dead wood should go but it might be fatal." – Peterson
 - God will burn away what must be burnt away in us so that we can be used for His glory.
 - If you are walking in the flame of God...there must be ashes.

Matthew 7:7

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

SACREDNESS IN ENCOUNTERING GOD

Come as you are – Bring yourself

Exodus 3:4

When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”

- God calls you by name.
- You can answer or ignore Him.
 - “Here I am!”
 - Bring all of you... God knows you.

Jeremiah 29:12

Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

Come empty – Bare yourself

Exodus 3:5a

Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet...”

–Take off your sandals

- Do not cover your nakedness in His presence.
- Adam and Eve sinned and covered their nakedness with leaves.
- God sees all of you, calls all of you, and you cannot cover or hide anything.

1 Cor 1:29 (KJV) – *...That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

Come Reverently – Bow yourself

Exodus 3:5b-6

“...for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

The Presence of the Lord makes the ground sacred and holy.

- This is Holy ground.

Holy ground won't allow for the flesh.

Job 42:5-6

⁵ *“I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; ⁶ therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”*

- As a believer the Holy Spirit dwells in you.
- The Old Testament has the temple of God and the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant.
 - Once a year the shekinah glory of God would come down.
 - The day of atonement, when all is made right with God for Israel and for the nations
- The NT says that you and I carry the glory of God as His temple.
 - Everywhere you go is holy ground.
 - As you walk in the Spirit every step is as God's agent in this world.

Come Humbly - Break Yourself

Exodus 3:6

And he said, "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.

- Humbly, he hid his face and was afraid.

He looked to behold

He stepped aside to see

And when he encountered God – He was afraid to look at God

Prov. 3:34

Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.

1 Peter 5:6

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you...

- He hid his face.
 - We must move from the Desert to the Divine:
 - From Bold to Broken...
 - From Arrogant to Available...
 - From My will to His will.

- But it comes through the bush that burns away your ego:
 - You will be consumed but not destroyed.
 - You can encounter God.

Challenge

I will step out of my desert and look to God.

I will step aside from the things that distract me to encounter God.

I will come as I am before God.

I will submit to the Glory and Holiness of God.

I will say "Here I am!" to the Lord's call.