

Exodus 3:1–12

- 1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
- 2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.
- 3 Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.”
- 4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”
- 5 Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.”
- 6 Moreover 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 upon God.
- 7 And the LORD said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.
- 8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.
- 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.
- 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”
- 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

¹² So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Our Gift to Jesus, (Pt.1) **Exodus 3:1-12**

INTRO:

It's Christmas time once again. At this time of year, we think about Christmas trees, fellowship, and food (lots and lots of food), but most of all we think about gifts we are going to give to one another. We should think, first, about the greatest Christmas gift ever given, the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son. If we think of that gift, we will respond as Paul did in **2 Corinthians 9:15**, "*Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift*"

While we think about God's great gift to us, we usually think about the gifts we are going to get for the people we love. You know, socks for Uncle Dan, a stick pin for Auntie Sue, a book for Grandpa, and etc. What about the gift we give Jesus? We already know the gift that He wants from us. He wants our hearts to Him and our bodies a living sacrifice to Him. Yet, many times we have a hard time giving ourselves to Jesus. Moses, one of the greatest men who ever lived, also had a difficult time giving himself to the LORD for the task God had created him to do. It would be helpful this Christmas season to look at the struggle Moses had in giving himself to the LORD. Hopefully, while learning from him, we too will learn how to give ourselves to Jesus this Christmas. Moses' problem began in **Exodus 3** as the LORD interrupted his life for a word from his Creator.

I. The Background (v. 1-10)

II. The Problem (v. 11)

III. God's Answer (v. 12)

I. The Background (v. 1-10)

A. Before we can fully appreciate what is transpiring here in **Exodus 3**, we must grasp a little of the history of Moses' life.

1. Remember Moses was born to a Levitical family in slavery in Egypt. At the time of his birth, Pharaoh issued a decree that all male Hebrew children were to be killed at birth.

2. However, Moses' parents hid Moses and raised him in secret until they could hide him no longer. Then, Moses' mother put him in an ark that she made and put him in the Nile River. Pharaoh's daughter found him and adopted him as her son.

3. Thus through God's providence Moses spent the early part of his life in the home of his parents and then later in the royal court. Early on Moses seemed to understand God had a special plan for his life. At the age of forty he tried to put that plan into effect by killing an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite slave.

Acts 7:23-25 *“When [Moses] was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand.”*

Because of this, Moses fled for his life to Midian and lived as a Shepherd.

B. As **Exodus 3** opens, another 40 years has elapsed. Moses is now 80 years old, a married man with a job and a family. He is settled down and secure in the “family sheep business” and is relatively happy. Suddenly, one day at work, the LORD interrupted his life with a word from his Creator and Moses' life would never be the same again.

1. First, God got his attention

v.1-4 *“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’” And he said, ‘Here I am.’”*

A bush that burns but does not burn up is bound to get attention.

2. **v.5-6** *“Then He said, ‘Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.’ Moreover 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 upon God.”*

Once God had his attention, He made sure Moses knew Who was speaking to him. This is no strange freak of nature. Moses was standing in the very presence of the God he had heard about since he was a child. Moses didn't realize it just yet, but this was the graduation ceremony for Desert Theological Seminary, the long course. Moses was about to embark on his life's work after God had invested eighty years training him for the job. What was this job?

v.7-10 *“And the LORD said: ‘I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.’”*

II. The Problem (v. 11)

A. How would you respond to this sudden invasion in your life? Probably the same way Moses did. *“But God, I don’t know about all of this.”*

v.11 *“But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.’”*

In the verses which follow, Moses gave the LORD several reasons why God should find someone else for this important job.

B. First, God, you, should find someone else to lead Israel out of Egypt because I, Moses, am not qualified and I am not significant enough to do the job.

1. Yes, LORD, it is true that at one time I was somebody. I was the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter. But that was all a very long time ago. Now I am a simple shepherd with a good job and a family to support. I can’t just leave this to go somewhere and risk my life to obey you.

2. Surely there is someone out there who is a real somebody. You know, LORD, somebody more important than I am, more gifted than I am, and not as prone to failure as I am. Surely there is someone else who could do a better job than I can do. I am a colossal nobody.

C. Have you ever been where Moses was?

1. I know God doesn’t send many burning bushes anymore. And He really isn’t looking for someone to lead our nation out of bondage (on second thought, maybe He is). Yet, He is looking for folks who will reach out to their neighbors with the Gospel. He is looking for folks who will serve Him in the church.

2. How do we respond when God calls? Far too often, we act like Moses did. Who am I? I am nobody. I can’t sing. I can’t preach. My people skills are poor. Not me, LORD, why don’t you ask Dick, or Mary, or Harry?

D. Some other people that God used greatly answered God the same way that Moses did.

1. God interrupted Jeremiah’s life too.

Jeremiah 1:4-8 *“Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.’ Then said I: ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.’ But the LORD said to me: ‘Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you,’ says the LORD.”*

Jeremiah's response was no different than Moses'. *"God you can't mean me, I can't speak. I almost flunked high school speech. Lord, I am young, inexperienced and insignificant."*

2. Jeremiah and Moses made the same mistake. They thought God is looking for somebodies to serve Him. God isn't looking for somebodies, He is looking for nobodies. He desires to use nobodies He can equip, and develop, and use to glorify Himself. Then when He uses them, nobody will think that person accomplished what was done, but so that everyone will know that God did the work!

III. God's Answer (v. 12)

A. ***"[the LORD] said, 'But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.'"***

God was not willing to accept Moses' objection, so He responds to Moses' objection with two promises. First, He promises His presence for the journey. While Moses did not recognize this at the time, still this was a far greater provision than if God had given him an army and chariots to go deliver Israel from the clutches of the Egyptians.

1. A nobody plus God is somebody. More than that, he is somebody no one can stop. Do you remember at the end of Moses' life, when the time came to find a replacement for this nobody who God enabled to do miracles, liberate a nation, and give the Law? The mantle of leadership fell on another nobody by the name of Joshua. Those were big sandals to fill. What went with the responsibility? How about a promise?

Joshua 1:9 ***"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."***

2. We might be tempted to say, *"That is great for the Moses and Joshua's of the world, but who am I?"* When Jesus sent out a bunch of uneducated fishermen to reach the world with the Gospel what did He do to equip them? ***"Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*** (Matthew 28:20). The promise Moses and Joshua had, is a promise He pledged to us.

B. This promise was not the only promise He gave. He gave Moses a second promise. Not only did God promise that He would be with Moses in the process, He promised him he would succeed in getting the job done.

Exodus 3:12 ***"This shall be the sign for you that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."***

You will lead the people of God out of bondage. When you do [notice it is not a matter of "if" but "when"] when you do, you will meet with Me on this mountain. Do you like sure things? I do. This is a sure thing. Moses you will go and you will

succeed, no 'ifs,' 'ands,' or 'buts' about it! Where was Moses standing when God made this promise? He was on Horeb, the mountain of God. Mount Horeb has another name in Scripture. It is also called Mount Sinai. They indeed did come out of Egypt and they did indeed meet with God on Mount Sinai.

How about us?

The Lord wants us to give ourselves unreservedly to Him this Christmas season. What do we say to this desire? I suspect we are tempted to respond as Moses did. *“Not me, Lord, I am nobody!”*

Remember, God is not looking for a somebody. He is looking for nobodies that He can equip, mold and use for His glory.

If I give myself to God, how will I know that I won't fall flat on my face? Remember the provision that God made for Moses He also given this promise to us. ***“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper. I will not fear. What can man do to me?’”*** (Hebrews 13:5-6)

This Christmas season, God is interrupting your life for a word from the Creator, how will you and I respond?

Hymn #378 *Only One Life to Offer*