

Is God Calling You?

Text: Exodus 3:1-15

Romans 12:9-21 (Series A. 15th Sunday after Pentecost) Ps.26:1-6

Matthew 16:21-28

The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt and I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them... So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt (exodus, verses 3,7,10).

Let us pray:

A congregation in a not too far away country was searching for a pastor. The call committee was having some difficulty making a decision. One member of the committee, who was a bit tired of the whole process, had received a letter of introduction from a pastor who was interested in being called. She read the letter: "To the pastoral search committee:

It is my understanding that you have a vacancy in your congregation, and I would like to apply for the position. I cannot say that I preach very well. In fact, I tend to stutter when I speak and get stuck for words. I do have a lot of experience since I am over 75 years old.

I have only just recently had an encounter with God. I heard a voice which told me personally that I was the one to be your pastor. One never knows when God will appear right before your very eyes. As far as people skills go, I do tend to lose my temper every once in a while.

I also am inclined to want things done my way, and can get impatient and cranky if it's not taken care of right away. Once I even killed somebody. But since I know you are gracious people, I know you will believe me when I say that's all behind me now. I intend on showing up there in a few weeks to lead your congregation into a brighter future. Although I was reluctant at first to work with you, I still feel called to be with you nonetheless."

The committee member glanced up at the rest of the group. "Well, what do you think folks? Is this the right person to be our pastor or not?" The rest of the committee was horrified. Have an old man with no seminary training, who is arrogant, temperamental, hears voices, an ex-murderer as their pastor? Who signed the letter of introduction any way? She answered, "It's signed, 'Moses'."

God is full of surprises that the way he deals with people, that this story shouldn't surprise us. Moses didn't have the right qualifications from a human viewpoint, but that didn't stop God calling him to serve the people of Israel. God still calls today; he calls you and calls me to work in his church, to serve people using our God-given abilities, to assist even when we think we don't have the right skills. What can we learn from Moses' call to serve God that might help us discern if God is calling us? I have five thoughts that I would to share with you this morning.

1. When God calls, he calls ordinary people. Moses was the least likely candidate to receive a call from God, especially such an important call. He wasn't all that young; he wasn't an especially pious man. Although he did receive a good education in the household of Pharaoh, but he lived out in the wilderness looking after sheep, hiding from authorities because he had killed a man in a fit of rage. He didn't consider himself as a leader.

Moses was not a volunteer. He wasn't looking for a career change. He wasn't interested in a special, risky task for God. So, God takes the initiative. The call was all God's idea. In fact, God calls like this, is his specialty. *Jeremiah* was still a child, when he was called and he didn't consider himself as one who could stand up and speak out. *Mary* was just a young girl when she became the mother of our Lord God. **David** an ordinary shepherd boy became a great king. *Peter, James* and *John* were just ordinary fishermen with no evident leadership qualities. You and I are people like that. God calls you and me, just ordinary people to serve him in some way. You and I might consider ourselves just ordinary persons, but God is willing to call us, just as we are.

2. When God calls, he calls people out of their ordinary everyday

routines. Moses was looking after sheep like he did every other day, when he met God for the very first time. He wasn't looking for a career change. He wasn't looking for God; he was just an ordinary shepherd. There, on an average working day, something happened. It was so strange that Moses was filled with curiosity and went to investigate. God was getting Moses' attention.

A bush burst into flame, but it wasn't being turned to ash. Then a voice came from the bush. How would you feel if one of the bushes in your garden suddenly caught on fire and started talking to you? Some of us would call the doctor. Perhaps others would investigate more closely. That's what Moses did. When God call us, it may not be anywhere as dramatic as a burning bush. But God can use every day circumstances of our life to call us to serve him in some way.

Twenty- two years ago I felt called by God to Montreal to serve as a pastor in his church. What about my family, the culture, language? I argued within myself. Was I scared, unsure of myself? Absolutely! Yes! But through prayer, we felt his presence in our decision as we stepped out in faith and took that long journey from B.C. to Montreal. His call was a call to the pastoral ministry. You may be called to a different kind of ministry, depending on the abilities God has given you.

You may be called to be a caregiver to the sick and elderly,
a teacher of children,
a supporter to our young people,
a leader some kind,
a visitor of newcomers or those who can't get to church.

Age is no restriction – remember Moses challenged Pharaoh when he was in his 70's. God called Jeremiah when he was a teenager. God reached down and grabbed the ordinary lives of these people for extraordinary purposes. Is God calling you?

3. When God calls, he has a very definite purpose in mind. Moses may not have known a great deal about God since he was brought up in an Egyptian household and so God introduces himself, *"I am the God who was worshiped by your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."*

Then God revealed something of the pain in his heart as he told Moses how his people were being cruelly treated. He had heard their cries for help. Now he was sending Moses to lead the people out of Egypt to a new home. When God calls, he has something very definite in mind.

Do you sense that God is calling you to do something very specific?

Is he calling you to be a peacemaker, a reconciler?

Is he calling you to let go of the slavery of anger, jealousy, ill feeling, and anxiety that traps you?

Is he calling you to be his spokesperson to someone who is crossing a wilderness of sickness and grief?

Is he calling you to lead someone to the promised land of eternal life through Jesus?

4. When Gods calls, we object. When Moses heard what God wanted him to do, he said, "What? Who? Me? People won't believe me. Who would believe a murderer who hears voices from burning bushes? Who am I that I should go and confront the mighty King of Egypt? He won't listen to me. He's more likely to cut off my head.

And God, you are asking me to get a whole nation out of Egypt, to steal valuable slaves, and lead them across some of the most inhospitable country. What is more, I'm a poor speaker. I'm slow, and I can never think of what to say". A litany of objections. Moses tried all the excuses he could think of, but God had an answer for them all. All of us are quite accomplished at doing this. We have all become experts at making excuses.

Perhaps we all need to stop for a moment when we are making an excuse and think that this might just be God calling us to do something and if we make an excuse, we may miss a valuable moment to make a difference in the life of a person, or make a valuable contribution to the life of the church.

5. When God calls, he reassures. Moses was given assurance that God would help him to speak, find the right words and what to do along the way. God would provide everything that Moses needed, even an assistant to help him, Aaron. God never promised that this would be an easy assignment, however, he promised to always be present to help. Ministry is always in partnership with others, and God.

Has this been your experience - that God has called you to step out in faith, even though you could have easily given ten good reasons why you couldn't? Have you thought that you were the most unlikely person for a particular job, but you dared to take up the challenge and you found that you were able to do it? Paul would have considered himself the most unlikely candidate to be called as a messenger of the Good News.

But we know how God was with Moses and Paul and all those who first reaction was "Who me?" We may not understand the reasons why Gods calls us to take up certain tasks, but one thing we do understand - it is not beyond God to call you or me to do something that we wouldn't have thought of doing in our wildest dreams. When God calls us, he knows that we can handle the challenge - with his help. When God calls, he also promises, *I will be with you*. And you can be certain of that promise. Just look at Jesus and the cross. There you see God's commitment and promise to us in the flesh.

When God calls may our response finally be, "I may not be the best person in the world to do the job you are calling me to do. There are plenty of others better than me. But I believe I am the person *you* are calling to do the job."

1. When God calls, he calls ordinary people.

2. *When God calls, he calls people out of their ordinary everyday routines.*

3. *When God calls, he has a very definite purpose in mind.*

4. *When Gods calls, we object.*

5. *When God calls, he reassures.*

By the way, if by chance, this story about Moses and God's call to service doesn't relate to you and your experiences, just wait. It will. It is your call.

Let us pray:

Glorious Creator, Your Sacred Fire sanctifies our faith, transforms our souls, and guides us to find our footing on holy ground in this earthly life. Help us to continually seek Your Strength and Your Face, that we may not be consumed by human things, but set our minds on all that is divine.

O God of Yesterday, Today, and Forever, release us from desire for the superficial milk and honey of this life, the spiritual stumbling blocks of faith. Ignite our passion to Follow, not obstruct, the Way of Christ toward our Salvation. We ask in the name of Jesus, Son of Man, and the Holy Spirit, our Divine Fervor, who reign together with You as One, Living, and Eternal God. **Amen.**

Make melodies in your heart with these hymns:

- God Is Here # 526
- Listen, God Is Calling # 513
- On our Way Rejoicing # 537

Happy birthday and Happy wedding anniversaries to all individuals celebrating this special day in August and September 2020

Good news: In person worship service will resume next Sunday, September 6 at our regular worship time at 11:00 with communion. Please bring your face mask, we will practice social distancing in the sanctuary pass the word around. Welcome back and be blessed.