

October 3 2021

God's Name is revealed

Exodus 2:23-25; 3:1-15; 4:10-17

**Young people's message:** The burning question suggested to you this week is, is God calling me and what is He calling me to?

I like to think that God is always calling us. It may be as simple as being closer to Him as we journey on in this life. We often wonder what God is calling us to in relation to our purpose in this life. Just as Moses found out this morning. God was calling him to lead the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt.

When it comes to those big moments in our life it is always good to ask ourselves where is God in this and what is He calling me to do? Should I go to university or should I get a trade? Should I be friends with this person or not? The best answer I have is to talk to God in prayer. They call this discernment. It can be a short process when the answer is clear. Or it may take more time if the situation is more complex. The short answer is to pray about it. It does not hurt to get some guidance or advice from your parents.

Also remember that God does not call the perfect to carry out His jobs. Yet God does perfect those He calls. Just like Moses. He felt unfit for the job because he felt his language skills were poor. God told him not to worry. God would have Aaron do all the talking with Pharaoh. When God has a plan, He always finds a way to carry it out. Regardless

of how unfit we may feel for the job God has set before us. Remember, that with God we can do anything.

**Adult's message:** Rabbis consider this text to be the start of Jewish Mysticism. It is at the burning bush that Moses discovers the first of the Divine Attributes of God. The first and lowest ones form the foundation that the other nine rest on. The first one is that God is King. Once you know this all the other attributes seemingly follow. Pharaoh would learn these ten attributes through the ten plagues God would send upon Egypt. Only to reveal to him that he was not God. This Jewish Mysticism is called Kabbalism. Rabbis start to study it in greater depth once they turn forty years old.

So lets, look at Pharaoh and Moses. Pharaoh was a smart and ambitious dictator. He needed cities built and he feared the Jewish population would overtake the Egyptians. So he enslaved the Jews.

Pharaoh asks the Jews to build him houses made out of mud and straw bricks. On a more sophisticated level, Pharaoh was intelligent and evil. He believed himself to be God or at least one of the Gods. He had looked at what God said and wanted from the Jews. He knew that the Jewish God demanded they build Him a house. The Jews were devoted to this project and Pharaoh knew it. To imitate their God, Pharaoh decides to take the Jews away from their project and have them build him a house instead. To add insult to injury Pharaoh has the Jews make bricks from the lowest building material. He did not tell them to build his home from rock or cut stones. The Jews had to work with mud.

Moses comes to the Jews and tells them that God is waiting for them at Mt. Sinai. Moses tells them that they have the wrong project for the wrong king. Other false Gods try to imitate the real God. Pharaoh is trying his best. Moses tells them they are not where they belong. They are to be building the house for the true God who is waiting for them on Mt. Sinai.

Moses then goes to Pharaoh and tells him that they need to go into the dessert for three days. Pharaoh says no. There are plagues around at this time. Moses wanted to take all the Jews and their cattle into the dessert to pray and offer sacrifice to their God. Pharaoh says no again and then changes his mind many times after that. There are ten plagues in this story. Why ten prolonged plagues and not just one really good one to finish the job? God uses ten plagues to teach Pharaoh that he is not God. Each plague corresponds to one of the ten divine attributes of God. The ten attributes are: 1. Kingship, God is the only King. 2. Wisdom 3. Understanding 4. Lovingkindness 5. Might 6. Judgement 7. Beauty 8. Splendor 9. Victory 10. Divine Presence.

We often think that Pharaoh is being stubborn in this situation. The Rabbis have a very interesting understanding of his actions. Pharaoh asks Moses, what is in the dessert and what are you going to do in the dessert? Here in Egypt you Jews are productive and you are contributing to one of the greatest civilizations of the world. There is a future for you in Egypt. The Egyptians had technologies that we still do not understand. Their society was sophisticated and advanced. Pharaoh tells Moses that the future is in Egypt. If you go out into the dessert you will all die. This is reckless and irresponsible. So Pharaoh does not allow them to go.

After a few more plagues, Pharaoh changes his mind. He tells Moses to take a few spiritual men and go into the desert and see what you find. Moses says no. All the Jews and their cattle must go into the desert. Pharaoh says no, that is crazy. Then a few more plagues come and Pharaoh says GO, but leave your cattle here. So it will motivate the Jews to return. Moses says no, we need all our cattle and some of yours. We don't know how many sacrifices God will need. Pharaoh realizes that there is no arguing with Moses and he says no.

Each plague moved Pharaoh to a greater recognition of the true God. The Jews were not asking to go into the desert to develop a religion and search for a god. Pharaoh was starting to hear what Moses was really saying at this stage of the story. That God has called the Jews to Mt. Sinai to meet Him. Pharaoh realized that he had it all wrong. The Jews are not looking for God, but God is looking for them. The Jews are not trying to be religious. They are only responding to God's call. Pharaoh had never considered that. Idols do not call you, they do not set up appointments. This is not about the Jews it is about God. The Jews cannot refuse God. Now Pharaoh understands what Moses was talking about all the while. Pharaoh knows that the Jews cannot refuse God. So he lets them leave Egypt destined for Mt. Sinai.

It took the ten plagues for Pharaoh to realize that he was not God. That this was not about the Jews but God who was waiting for them at Mt. Sinai. This was a harsh learning experience for Pharaoh. He needed to experience the ten divine attributes of God via the plagues. I wonder if Moses figured that out while the plagues were happening? God bless you all, Pastor D.