

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church

**Sermon by Pastor A. E.
Schultz**

**Exodus 3:14 Lent 3--Series C
March 3, 2013**



Moses and the Burning Bush

¹ 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 desert 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, 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...v.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 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. 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, 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 by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

The grace of God – the common thread of all our readings and the Psalm. You could probably say that every Sunday – the grace the mercy – the undeserved love of our Savior – Christ crucified and risen! There are security cameras almost everywhere these days. There was a security camera rolling the other day – when a young lady in the Ukraine – was taking out the trash on her way out. This young lady walks out of her apartment – carrying a small bag of trash – toward the dumpster. Suddenly – without any warning – a tree – some 2 ½ or 3 stories high begins to fall. The tree smashes into the dumpster – so close to this lady – there are little twigs in her hair and on her coat. What would you do? Would you freak out? Would you scream? Would you dive toward safety? This lady throws her trash bag into what is left of the dumpster – pulls the little twigs out of her hair and brushes the twigs from her shoulders – and simply walks away! It is only because of the grace of God – that this lady was spared – that she wasn't crushed by this tree! I wonder how often Jesus keeps us safe – and we don't even realize it. Again and again our Heavenly Father takes care of us. Today we will especially remember:

By God's Grace We Are What We Are!

1. *By God's grace we are where we are*
2. *By God's grace we do what we do*

Context! Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Esau. Jacob becomes Israel and has many sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher and Joseph. The descendants of Jacob numbered 70 in all; Joseph was in Egypt ahead of them. Joseph and all his brothers died. The children of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob by the grace of God – had large families – children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and more. The day came when there was a new Pharaoh. God's Word says, **"Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."** Exodus 1:8-10 And so it began – making the children of Israel slaves – to

make bricks to build for the Pharaoh. And when slavery only made them stronger – they took the baby boys and threw them into the Nile to drown them. How could people do that? How could they put to death little newborn babies? Surely the Egyptians would ask – how can we – in the United State of America – put to death close to 1.5 million babies – year after year – many of them little girls?

God’s Word says there was a man – a descendant of Levi – who married a Levite woman. They had a baby boy – **that she hid for 3 months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. Then Pharaoh’s daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying and she felt sorry for him.**” Here was baby Moses – to be raised in the home of the Pharaoh – with all the blessings that came from that! The best clothes, the best food, all the best “things and stuff” – the best teachers – the best minds in all of Egypt to teach the adopted son of the Pharaoh!

“One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.” People did see Moses murder the Egyptian. **When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.”** That’s where Moses met the woman who would become his wife – a woman named Zipporah. The LORD blessed Moses and Zipporah with the gift of a son – named Gershom – which sounds like the Hebrew word for a foreigner there. Interesting – every time you called your son’s name you would be reminded – I’m a foreigner there – a sojourner – a traveler! That’s what we are too, and so?

¹ 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 desert 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.”

The angel of the LORD... This is not some ordinary angel! This is the eternal Son of God – in Old Testament times – talking to Moses. 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, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."** The LORD saw...God said. This is God the Son – talking to Moses. Take off your sandals – your shoes – which have been walking on all sorts of unclean places! Take off your sandals – with all the filth on them. Understand and appreciate you are in the presence of holiness! This is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is the God not of the dead – but of the living! This is the Almighty!

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 LORD would set his people free. There would be plagues – horrible plagues – blood, frogs, gnats, flies, the cattle got sick, handfuls of soot became boils on the people and the animals, hail fell from the sky – shredding plants and pounding people. Grasshoppers came – their little jaws grinding up everything. It got so dark you couldn't see your hand literally in front of your face. And then came the worst – the death of the firstborn – every firstborn animal and every firstborn person. If we were Egyptians – I would have died, Matthew would have died, Uncle David would have died, Coletton and Jacob and Jackson Daniel and more! This is what the LORD says, **"Let my people go!"** And they would go – out into the night – through the Red Sea – through the wilderness – and finally at long last – into the promised land – the land literally flowing with milk and honey!

¹¹ **But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" Who am I?** Moses was not the only one to ask that question. King Solomon didn't think he was capable of being King over God's people. Isaiah and Jeremiah didn't think they were cut out to do the work the LORD called them to do. Amos was a shepherd and a

sycamore fig tree farmer and the LORD equipped him. While we might think the Apostle Paul – who wrote 1 Corinthians 13 and the letter to the Romans was surely a gifted speaker Paul wrote, 1 Corinthians chapter 2 Paul confessed **When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.** 1 Cor. 2:1b-5 The LORD would be with Moses. That would be more than enough!

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 . 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, 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 by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. I Am. That is God's name – I Am. He changes not. He is the same yesterday and today and forever. I learned from my nephew – about a guy named Gary – Gary Thompson – very recently of Lexington, Kentucky. A film shows Gary – in a wheelchair – nervously pulling at his hands. His speech seems painfully difficult – sentences – with every 3rd word mangled/missing. He is asking for money – to buy food. He looks pitiful – literally pitiful. He even tells the story that his mom once had 2.4 million dollars from a lawsuit against a motorcycle company – but squandered it. That much is true. His mom blew through almost 2 ½ million dollars. The rest is a lie. Gary is a liar – a cheat – too lazy to work – boasting of making some \$100,000 a year – taking advantage of kind and generous people. Terrible – and so? And yet – all I have to do is look into a mirror and I see a sinner worse. Together with the Apostle Paul we say, **"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of which I am the worst!"** Thanks be to God – He is the Great I Am. Jesus loves you and me just as much Sunday morning, March 3rd – as he did the moment he said from the cross – **"It is finished!"** All my sins paid for. All my guilt washed away. Jesus loves you and forgives you. And nothing will ever change that! Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Pastor Anthony E. Schultz