

LESSON 3 ~ GOD'S SOVEREIGN CALL

JULY 19, 2020

Background Scripture: Exodus 3
Lesson Passage: Exodus 3:1-10 (NASB)

Introduction: Barbara grew up under the care of the British government in the 1960s, but when she turned sixteen, she and her newborn son, Simon, became homeless. The state was no longer obligated to provide for her at that age. Barbara wrote to the Queen of England for help and received a response! The Queen compassionately arranged for Barbara to be given a house of her own. The Queen of England had the right resources to help Barbara, and her compassionate assistance can be seen as a small picture of God's help. The King of heaven knows all of our needs and sovereignly works out His plans in our lives. As He does, however, He longs for us to come to Him—sharing our needs and other concerns—as part of our loving relationship with Him. The Israelites brought their need for deliverance to God. They were suffering under the burden of Egyptian slavery and cried out for help. He heard them and remembered His promise (Exodus 2:25). He instructed Moses to bring liberty to His people and declared that He would once again release them “into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (3:8). Our King loves it when we come to Him! He wisely provides what we need, not necessarily what we want. Let's rest in His sovereign, loving provision.

Scripture Reference: Exodus 3:1-9 (NASB)

1 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. 3 So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." 4 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 come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. 7 The Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. 8 So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. 9 Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."

Topic Explored: “God’s Sovereign Call” ~ For Christians, the concept of finding a job can oftentimes be very confusing. We want it to be fulfilling and purposeful. However, there’s a deeper longing within us than just the desire for a purposeful and fulfilling occupation. Christians are also searching for God’s will for their lives because we believe that God should have something to say about our futures. We think the choice of a job is not fully up to us. But what if God never tells us what He wants us to do? What are we supposed to do if God seems eerily

silent whenever we ask Him to tell us what He wants for our lives? What if God's calling on our lives is not to a specific job but instead to a specific way of living. God may call you to do something specific, and if he does, you better do it or you might be swallowed by a big fish. Okay, it may not be that extreme. But I don't think we should be focused on pursuing a specific call to a specific job. Instead, you and I should be like Noah, Abraham, Moses—focused on walking with God. And if we do that—if we focus on walking with God, instead of on discovering a specific calling for our lives—we may get to a point where God sees our obedience, and asks us to do something specific as He did Moses in our lesson. Moses is now 80 years old, and God's "sovereign intervention" in his life continues to unfold.

Memory Verse: *10 Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.*" (Exodus 3:10) NASB

Lesson Focus: Exodus 3:1-9 (NASB)

Verse 1 ~ Moses has no idea what the day held for him. There was no message in the clouds, no rock slide, no thunder, no lightening. There was no hint that his life was going to change. It was just another day. It is interesting that when God's sovereign intervention comes, it arrives on ordinary days. You may have been praying for it, but when it comes it always takes you by surprise. Just like the day that David was told by his father to take some food to his brothers. He did not know it, but there was a giant named Goliath just dying to be killed. From that day forward, David's life was never the same. So, it was for Moses, it was just another day in the desert. He had been there 40 years. Here is the point, when God leads you into a ministry, it happens on ordinary days.

Verses 2-4 ~ The Hebrew word for "BUSH" means thorny shrub. It was just like millions of others. There was nothing unique about the shrub. It was just another shrub. And the fact that it burned was not unusual. Spontaneous combustion often will burn a bush in the desert. So, the fact that there is a burning bush is not what catches Moses' attention. What catches Moses attention is the fact that much time has gone by, and the bush is still burning. And out of curiosity, Moses turns aside to get a closer look at this bush that will not burn out. Once God saw the break in Moses concentration, God spoke to Moses. We are in such a quick pace, get it done routine. No wonder we seldom hear from God. Take time to hear what God is saying. God says to Moses, "Moses, Moses." God is not going to shout. He speaks in a still small voice. Moses' reply. He says, "Here I am." Now if God had called Moses 40 years early, Moses probably would have said, "I knew God was going to call me. After all, I'm the champion of Egypt. I'm the hero of this land. I know Egyptian and Hebrew. I have been trained as a prince; I've won battles with the enemy. God, it is about time that you called!" But now Moses just speaks: "Here I am."

Verse 5 ~ Moses hides his face. Why did he do that? The Lord identifies Himself in this verse, speaking out of a bush which is blazing with fire but not consumed. He calls Himself the "God of your father." God clarifies this by stating that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This not only establishes His identity; it reaffirms God's intent to fulfill His covenant to His people. There is no doubt this is the same God who revealed Himself to the patriarchs of the Jewish people.

In response, Moses "hid his face." He feared looking at God. The Jews believed no one could see God and live (Exodus 33:20). The ground was holy (Exodus 3:5) and God was there with Moses. This is the first written occurrence of God directly speaking with someone over the prior 400

years of the history of Israel. The farthest thing from Moses' mind is the thought that God wants to use him. Some of you are convinced that because of your past you will not be used by God. And if you are used of God, you are convinced that it will be in a limited sense.

Verses 6-9 ~ Moses must have been thinking, "God, you want to use me? Wait a minute. Don't you remember, I am the one who blows those assignments. Don't you remember?" God says, "I never forgot you. I have been training you." Moses says, "But God, I am the one who blows it." God says, "And you're also the one who has been forgiven." Moses must be in complete shock that God would want to send him.

Verse 10 ~ God has spoken to Moses out of a miraculous, burning-but-unburnt bush. After stating His intent of freeing Israel, God has begun to describe how Moses will lead the Hebrew people through a transition from oppression to prosperity. God transitions from explanation to command in this verse. Moses is to leave Midian, go back to Egypt and the Egyptian king, gather the people, and leave Egypt with them. In one sweeping sentence, the life of Moses is completely upended. He will no longer lead sheep; he will lead the people of Israel. He will no longer live on the run from Pharaoh; he will confront Pharaoh. Moses will no longer live in exile from his people; he will now live among them.

Let's talk about it. . .

1. **How can you discern or understand if God is calling you into vocational ministry?**
2. **What does it mean to be "called into ministry" or "called of God?"**

Making it personal:

- Every Christian is called by God to a specific purpose. The call to vocational ministry has unique demands, and it should not be pursued without prayer, counsel and spiritual examination.

Closing Prayer: *"Loving God, thank You that we can bring our needs to You. Help us to be content in whatever paths and provisions You choose. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen!"*