

## Exodus 3:1-15

How do you **introduce** yourself to people? Maybe you extend your **hand** and say, “Hi, my name is ...” What if the occasion calls for a more **formal** introduction? Maybe you’re interested in a **job** position, and the company requires an introductory **letter** prior to your interview. You’d certainly make sure that all the words you wrote were spelled **correctly**, that your sentences were **grammatically** correct, and that the **information** about yourself was both **accurate** and **interesting**. Introductions are **important**, because we can learn a **lot** about people from the way they **introduce** themselves. If they look you in the **eye**, and give you a **firm handshake**, that’s a pretty good indication that they’re pleased to **meet** you, and would like to get to know you even **better**.

God **also** understands that introductions are **important**, so He introduces Himself to **us** in ways that we can get to know **Him** better. God’s introductions tell us **a lot** about Him. For example, when His Son, Jesus, at age 30 introduced Himself to the public at the time of His **baptism**, He showed them that He was **interested** in them, and that He was **committed** to the task which had been given to Him by His heavenly Father. Jesus was willing to do **everything** that was necessary, in order to **cleanse** us of our sins, and to **save** us for all eternity.

**Another** one of God’s introductions took place long **before** Jesus’ baptism. It was back when God’s Old Testament people were **slaves** in Egypt. The time had come for God to launch a **new phase** in His plan of salvation. It was time for God to bring **Moses** back to Egypt, and to set the Israelites **free** from their slavery. At that time, God **introduced** Himself with quite a **flair** - literally with **fire** - in a **Burning Bush**. What can we **learn** about God from this introduction? That’s the question we’ll be considering in today’s sermon: What can we learn from God’s introduction at **The Burning Bush**?

First of all, let’s take a look at the **setting** for our text. God’s people had settled in **Egypt** during a time of severe **famine**, when **Joseph** was the **leader** of Egypt. At that time, Joseph literally saved the world from **starvation**. But after the deeds of Joseph had been **forgotten**, a **cruel** Pharaoh took over, and God’s people were made **slaves** to the Egyptians. When the population of the Israelites started to get out of **control**, the Pharaoh decreed that all Hebrew baby **boys** should be thrown into the Nile River. So Moses’ parents threw **him** into the Nile - but **first** they placed him into a waterproof **basket**. He escaped **death** when the Pharaoh’s daughter **retrieved** the basket, and raised Moses in the royal **palace**, as her **son**.

But years later, after Moses had killed an **Egyptian**, he had to **flee** for his life to the land of **Midian**. There Moses got **married**, and raised a **family**. For the next 40 years Moses lived as a **shepherd** in the wilderness. During those years, God's people continued to face **oppression** from the Egyptians, and they cried out to God for **help**. Now it was time for God to bring Moses **back** to Egypt.

That's where our **text** begins: "*Now Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, a priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the **far** side of the **wilderness** and came to **Horeb**, the mountain of **God**. The Angel of the **LORD** appeared to him in **blazing fire** from within a **bush**. Moses saw that the bush was **on fire**, but the bush was **not** burning up. So he said, 'I will go over and look at this **amazing** sight - to find out **why** the bush is **not** burning up.'*" As Moses stepped closer, God **called out** to him from within the bush, "*Do not come any closer. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is **holy** ground.*" He then said, '*I am the God of your **fathers**, the God of **Abraham**, the God of **Isaac**, and the God of **Jacob**.*' Moses **hid** his face, because he was **afraid** to look at God."

What can we **learn** from God's **introduction** of Himself at **The Burning Bush**? First of all, we learn that God has a **glory** which calls for **respect**. The LORD appeared in flames of **fire** - flames that did not **consume** the bush. That's not **ordinary**, because our **God** is not **ordinary**. He's **glorious**, and that's why He instructed **Moses** to take off his **sandals** as he **approached God** at the burning bush.

In those days when a person entered someone's **home**, he would take off his **sandals** in order to show **respect** to the **host**. We often do the **same** thing **today**. So, God told **Moses** to take off **his** sandals, because he was entering onto **holy** ground. **God** was there - and God deserves **respect**. The Psalmist asks, "*Who may **go up** to the mountain of the LORD? Who may **stand** in his holy place? He who has **clean** hands and a **pure** heart, whose soul is **not** set on what is **false**, who does not **swear** deceitfully.*" Are our hands **clean**, and are our hearts **pure**? Absolutely **not**. **Sin** covers us from head to toe. So, we **also** need to show **respect** to our God whenever we **approach** Him in **prayer**.

Let's go back to our text now, and hear again how God showed **mercy** to His people who were being **oppressed**. The LORD told Moses, "*I have certainly seen the **misery** of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry for **help** because of their **slave drivers**. Yes, I am **aware** of their suffering. So I have come down to*

*deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up **out** of that land ... Come now, I will send **you** to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, **out** of Egypt.*” It was time for God to **rescue** His people, and to bring them to the **Promised Land** - and **Moses** was the man whom **God** chose to **accomplish** this task.

It’s **obvious** that the LORD has a deep **concern** for people who are being **oppressed**. The deliverance which He provided for His people through **Moses** when they were **enslaved** by the Egyptians, was truly **wonderful**. But it **pales** in comparison to the **deliverance** which He provided for the people of the **whole world** through **Jesus**. The LORD took to heart the oppression of **sin**, which was **weighing down** the world with **guilt** and **condemnation**. **Sin** captured **all** of us, and made us **slaves** to the will of the **Devil**. Satan was cracking the whip, and driving us to serve **his** desires - to follow **his** deeds - and there wasn’t anything we could **do** to **free** ourselves from his **oppression**. So, that’s where **God** stepped in. God was **concerned** about us, and He sent **Jesus** to **rescue** us. Jesus took all of our sins on **Himself**. All of our **grunge** and **filth** became **His**, and on the cross, He **paid** for those sins. The perfect sacrifice He made brought **forgiveness** for **all** people, as the Bible clearly tells us: *“The blood of Jesus Christ, (God’s) Son, cleanses us from **all** sin.”*

When we feel **trapped** in a **sin**, and are **struggling** to get free - or when we’re burdened with **guilt** over a sin that we committed long ago - our gracious God is **concerned** about us, and through **Jesus** He has set us **free**. Jesus is our **brother**, and the one who has **delivered** us from all our troubles.

We need to constantly **remember** that God is on our side. Even His name itself **reminds** us of that fact, because His **name** reveals His **faithfulness** - His **changelessness**. When Moses was hesitant about going back to Egypt, God **reassured** him with His **name**. In our text Moses asked, *“If 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**?’ what should I **say** to them?”* So God replied to Moses, *“**I AM WHO I AM.**”* He also said, *“You will say this to the Israelites: **I AM** has sent me to you.”* God also told Moses, *“Say **this** 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**, and this is how I am to be **remembered** from generation to generation.’”* God is the God who **is** - He is **eternal**, and He is **timeless**. He is totally **dependable**, because He remains the **same** - yesterday, today, and forever.

God's name also reveals His **independence** from all outward **influences**. He **is** who He **is**, and He **does** whatever **He wants** to do. God doesn't **owe** anyone **anything**. The Apostle Paul asked the Romans, "*Who has first given to **God** that he will be **repaid**?*" And the **answer** is **no one**. God's **love** is **also** independent. He loves us **not** because of anything **we** have done for **Him**, but entirely out of His **grace**. And God **showed** us that love in the most **beautiful** and **significant** way. "*While we were still **sinners**, Christ **died** for us.*"

God's **love** and **faithfulness** became **ours** at the time of our **baptism**, when God put His **name** on **us**. He made a **covenant** with us, and **promised** to be our **Father** - a Father who would **love** us and **forgive** us day after day. And God is **faithful** to His covenant. He says, "*Even if the mountains are **removed**, and the hills are **overthrown**, my **mercy** will **not** be removed from you, and my covenant of **peace** will **not** be **overthrown**.*" God will **always** remain **faithful** to His promises - in **this** life, and in the life to **come**.

May God's faithfulness toward **us** encourage us to be faithful to **Him** - so that we don't **waver** in our trust and confidence, but always remain **steadfast**. That's what we **want**. We want to bless God's holy name, and live up to our **status** as baptized **children** of God. May the LORD give us His **grace** and **favor**, so we may **honor** Him with our lives, give Him the **respect** which He **deserves**, and bring **glory** to Him in everything we think, say, and do. Amen.