

Standing in a Holy Place

Exodus 3: 1-6

Likely we are all familiar with the life of Moses. He was born among the Hebrews in captivity in Egypt. Just prior to his birth, Pharaoh had made a decree that all the male children were to be killed. Moses' mother was a godly woman who sought to save Moses alive and hid him in the reeds of the river as Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe. God's hand was upon Moses and he was taken and raised as the son of Pharaoh.

During the course of life Moses was educated and grew in position among the Egyptians. It is quite possible that he would have assumed the throne in time, but God had another plan. At 40 years of age Moses had begun to notice the brutality toward the Hebrews, his brethren. As an Egyptian was beating a Hebrew, Moses slew the Egyptian and fled for his life into the land of Midian. There he met a wife, Zipporah, and worked for her father tending sheep.

We have picked up 40 years later. Moses is now 80 years old, still tending to his flock. It was here that God came to him to reveal the plan for his life. There is a powerful application to us in this passage. I want to examine the encounter that Moses had with the Lord as we consider: [Standing in a Holy Place](#).

I. A Place of Humility (1) – [Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.](#) Keep in mind that Moses had been raised a prince in Egypt. There were likely times when he was presented with the possibility of assuming Egypt's throne.

A. His Labor – Moses was working for his father in law, tending to sheep. Forty long years have passed since the days in Egypt and the prince is living in obscurity doing the work of a shepherd.

- For many this would appear meaningless and degrading work, but God was using this to prepare Moses for the task ahead. We find nothing to support the notion that Moses was dissatisfied with his work. He is simply providing for his family, content with his life as it is.
- Many need to understand the principle in this. God is seeking those who will be faithful to the work He has called them to do, whatever that may be. It may not be what we desired, but God is working in our lives, preparing us.

B. His Location – Moses is found tending the sheep on the [backside of the desert](#). He is far removed from the pleasures and prominence of Egypt. He is tending sheep in a place where no one even knows he is there. There was no recognition or perks, just tending to the sheep.

- The great lesson in this is to bloom where we are planted. God wants those who are diligent in the labor that He has called them to do, regardless of what that work is. The Lord is looking for those who are busy working where He has placed them. Little things come before bigger things!

II. A Place of Sovereignty (2) – And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. It may appear as if Moses had been forgotten, that the opportunities of life were all gone, but the Lord knew where he was and had a plan for his life.

A. God's Mercy – I don't know how you feel, but it is a miracle to me that God came to him at all. He certainly wasn't obligated to Moses. God chose to use Moses in His work, but it wasn't because He had to. The Lord could have just as easily delivered His people without Moses.

- Serving the Lord and living for Him is not a burden; it is a wonderful blessing. God didn't have to provide a means for our salvation, but He did. He doesn't need us to accomplish His will, but He allows us a part in the work of His kingdom.

B. God's Manifestation – Moses was there, minding his business, tending sheep, and the Lord showed up in the midst of a burning bush. (This was a pre-incarnation appearance of Christ.) Here is a man that the world had forgotten. Moses may have wondered if this was all that he would ever accomplish in life, but the Lord came to him and revealed His glorious presence.

- This really thrills my heart. We are much like Moses in that we are undeserving and overlooked by most of the world. Many Christians live life feeling defeated and insecure. They wonder about their future and their plans. But, every once in a while we are privileged to have the Lord's presence manifested in our midst!

- It is beyond my ability to comprehend why the Lord would take the time for us, but I am glad that He does. These times should not be taken lightly, but embraced and enjoyed!

III. A Place of Opportunity (3-4a) – And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. [4] And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. This was clearly a moment of opportunity for Moses. When Moses saw the bush burning, but not consumed, he made a conscious decision to draw nigh to it. God was there all along, watching to see how Moses would respond. He had presented Moses with an opportunity, but it was up to Moses to respond.

- What truth we discover for the children of God. The Lord presents Himself to us in various ways. He speaks to us through His Word; He speaks through the preaching of the Word; the blessed Spirit draws us toward the Lord. However, it is up to us as individuals as to how we will respond. He will not force us to serve Him, but He does provide opportunities.
- God is watching to see if we will make that step toward Him. I fear that many have a “burning bush” experience and never turn aside to see this great sight. How have you responded to the Lord’s opportunities?

IV. A Place of Clarity (4b) – And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. There was no doubt that Moses had entered the presence of the Lord. As he drew nigh to the bush, God spoke to Him. Moses immediately responded in submission. He was not yet aware of all that would be required of him, but he was certain that he had encountered the Lord.

- We hear a lot of discussion about knowing the will of God for our lives. People often say, “If I could only know God’s will for my life.” Now, I am not advising that you act on a whim, but I am certain that the Lord is clear when He speaks to us. He will always reveal Himself in such a way that it is apparent that He has spoken to you.
- I fear that our problem is not so much in discernment, but rather in disobedience. A lot of people are certain what the Lord has called them to do, but many are unwilling to submit to His will for their life. If you are interested in God’s will, seek His face continually, walk with Him daily, and I assure you that He will make His plan for your life very clear! That is not to say that He will reveal where the path will lead, but He will give you the assurance you need to step out in faith and begin the journey.

V. A Place of Majesty (5) – And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. As Moses stood before the burning bush, God gave instruction. He was not to come any closer. He was to take off his shoes because he stood on holy ground.

- There was nothing special about the bush, in and of itself. There was nothing particularly special about the backside of the desert. I’m sure that it appeared very similar to the surrounding landscape. What made this place special was that God’s presence had indwelt it. The Lord was there and that made the place holy ground!
- We have gotten too casual with the Lord in our generation. It is no insignificant thing to encounter the Lord. We will never be used of the Lord or experience His power manifested if we do not come before Him humbly and reverently.

- The house of God is a holy place because we meet the Lord here. We ought to treat it as such. But, this is not the only place that the Lord reveals Himself. Take note of those places and humble yourself before the Lord.

- If we are to experience God's power we must recognize who He is. We cannot expect to hear from Him if we fail to fear Him. He is not just one of the boys or the man upstairs. He is holy God, our Sovereign and Lord.

VI. A Place of Security (6a) – Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God reminded Moses of his heritage, his association to the chosen people. Just as He was with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He would be with him. Moses just had to put his faith and trust in the Lord.

- We can take comfort in these words of the Lord. He has never forsaken His own. His will is always accomplished. He brought Abraham out of a land of idolatry and made a great nation of him. He used Moses to lead them out of bondage, providing and protecting them along the way. When the fullness of time had come, He sent His only begotten Son to be offered a Sacrifice for our sins. He is the Almighty. He is in control of every aspect of our lives.

- You may be dealing with the call of God and are unsure and insecure. The church as a whole may be dealing with God's plan for this congregation. We cannot see what tomorrow will bring. We do not know exactly where the Lord will lead, but we can be assured of His guidance and provision in our lives. Bro. Rick Safriet said, "If God is in it, He will do it." God will never call us to an area of service and fail to provide what we need to accomplish His will.

VII. A Place of Conformity (6b) – And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. Being in the presence of God transformed Moses. As he stood in His awesome presence, he hid his face in fear. Moses had a healthy respect and reverence for the Lord. He was well aware that he had encountered the Lord of glory.

- Encountering God will change us. We cannot enter His presence and leave the same as we came. We will either recognize Him and be changed for the better or we will shun Him and leave His presence colder and more distant. I pray that we will recognize His glory and humble ourselves before Him. He is holy and He is worthy of our praise and submission.

God does not deal with our hearts without purpose. If He reveals Himself to you, in whatever way, He has a plan and a purpose for your life. The key to those situations lies in how we respond to Him.

I am certain that God has spoken to hearts today. There are those who need to respond to the Lord. The call of God can be frightening because we don't know all that it involves, but it is the greatest call in the world. If you are called of the Lord, in whatever capacity, you are blessed. Why not respond to Him in submission and obedience?