

Exodus 2:23-3:10 The name of the Lord

Welcome to week two of our holiday church series. Last week we were introduced to the situation, the Israelites are in Egypt in slavery not having a great time. This week we see God begin to put into action his plan to do something about the situation his people are in. He does this by bringing one of his servants into the world. A man called Moses, and we heard in the Bible reading that his birth story is amazing, he survives people trying to kill him and even though he is an Israelite he is raised in the Egyptian palace. Today we are going to focus on Moses first encounter with God in Exodus 3, as we start to understand the way that God relates to his people.

Let's pray.

God gives Moses his name

There is something about a relationship that changes when you know someone's name, especially their first name.

- Name tags at church
- When someone remembers you
- Teachers
- Someone forgot my name recently

Moses has run away from Egypt because he has committed a crime and doesn't want to be punished. He is wondering in the desert when he sees something weird. A bush that is on fire, but doesn't seem to be burning. He thinks this is strange and so approaches it to see what is going on.

As he gets closer something strange happens, When the Lord saw Moses coming near the bush, he called him by name, and Moses answered, "Here I am."

A little tip when reading the Old Testament. If God ever calls someone's name and they respond with 'here I am' then something important is about to be said. It is from here that we discover that Moses has been chosen by God to take his people out of Egypt, that

God has heard the suffering of his people and that he has decided.

To save them from slavery and he is going to use Moses as his leader to do that.

Big job analogy...Luke Moran would give jobs. – Being sent on a job by a teacher. Or Mum says.

This is where we get to our key idea today. It is at this point in the story that God responds to Moses' concerns, but responds in a way different to the ways we might expect. I mean he give him a couple of cool things he can do like turn his staff into a snake. But most importantly he gives him his name.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ God said to Moses:

I am the eternal God. So tell them that the LORD,^g whose name is “I Am,” has sent you. This is my name forever, and it is the name that people must use from now on.

God shows Moses that he can trust him, that he will be with him and with his people in a much closer way than they had expected. That he would know his people and they will know his name. That this far back in the Old Testament, before Moses begins to lead, before the plagues, before the great Exodus happens, God shows us that he is going to be a God that is close to his people and has a relationship with them. It also provides Moses with the authority to go forward because he is going in God's name, just like we might with a teacher, to do the task.

Over the next couple of weeks we are going to see the way that God uses great power to save his people and this can make him seem like a big powerful scary God, and he is. But we need to see that through this chapter because it is here that we see that while he may be scary to his enemies, to his people he is close, caring, relational, he lets his people in to a relationship with him by giving them his name.

Jesus claims that name

In John 8 further forward in the Bible, in the New Testament we have a story of Jesus speaking with the Pharisees. They are trying to understand who he is, and in response to them he says this.

⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷ “You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”

⁵⁸ “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” ⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Now the fact that they pick up stones to throw at him is a giveaway that he has just made a big claim. But straight after reading Exodus 3 we can see what Jesus is saying about himself here.

Jesus is claiming that his name too is I am. And therefore he is claiming to be connected to the person we meet in Exodus 1. Jesus himself, the son of God, along with the Father and Holy Spirit is in fact God. That in him we meet the same God from Exodus, that it is this God who has become a man.

Jesus clearly claims in the Gospel of John to be God. But not just any God. The God, the one true God, who saved his people from Egypt, who gave his people his name because he wants to be in a close relationship with them. Who has then as the son of God become a man so that he could experience our humanity and ultimately save us on the cross. That the same God of the Old Testament is the God of the New and he saves his people who are now us, as he did save the Israelites in the Old Testament. Jesus name means, God saves.

This God though. He isn't some distant God in the clouds like some tv shows would like him to seem. He is a God who has given his people his name because he wants to be close to us. In Jesus this goes a step

further by living a life as a human, that he can connect with our experiences as human beings because he has done that.

Today we have seen that Moses has been chosen to lead God's people out of slavery. But first God has made a statement about the relationship he is going to have with his people by giving them his name. That he will be in a close relationship with them as their God who cares for them. In John we see Jesus use this name to describe himself so that we can see that this relationship is continued and made even closer, by this God's choice to become a man in order to save us just like he did the Israelites, but this time for eternity.