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Exodus 3:1-22

INTRODUCTION

1. Image: William Carey reminded the church of its mission to reach the lost.
2. Need: It's easy to forget what God calls us to do.
3. Subject: What does God call us to do?
4. Text: Exodus 3:1-22
5. Preview: We're going to look this morning at story. From it, we'll find a principle. Then we'll talk about an application. [Exegetical, Theological, Application]

BODY

- I. God sends Moses on mission (3:1-22)
 - A. God interrupts Moses (3:1-6)
 - B. Israel's suffering compels God to send help (3:7-10)
 - C. God promises to help Moses save Israel (3:11-14)
 1. God will help Moses save Israel by his presence (3:12a)
 2. God will help Moses save Israel by his work (3:12b)
 3. God will help Moses save Israel by his authority (3:14)
 - D. God gives Moses a message (3:15-22)
 1. He is the God of all (3:15)
 2. He is the God of deliverance (3:16-17)
 3. He is the God of judgment (3:18-22)
- II. God sends us on mission
 - A. God interrupts believers.
 1. God interrupted Old Testament saints
 - a. Think of Gideon
 - b. Think of Amos
 - c. Think of Jeremiah
 2. God interrupts our lives with the gospel.
 - B. Love for rebels compelled God to send help (John 3:16)
 - C. God sends believers out as messengers.
 1. God sent OT saints to save Israel.
 - a. Gideon rescued Israel from the Midianites
 - b. Amos preached a message of repentance to the northern kingdom of Israel
 - c. Jeremiah preached a message of repentance to the southern kingdom of Judah
 2. God sent Christ to save people from sin (Luke 4:43)
 3. God sends us out as messengers of salvation (Matt 28:18-20)
- III. Carry out God's message.
 - A. Proclaim God's message through your deeds
 - a. Imagine your team worker forgets to send you the latest results

- b. When you line up at the grocery store, you notice the customer behind you.
- B. Proclaim God's message through your words
 - a. Offer to pray for your wait staff
 - b. Learn about your co-workers/classmates
- C. Proclaim God's message through your commitment
 - a. Spend time with international students
 - b. Partner with missionaries
 - c. Go to community events regularly.

CONCLUSION:

1. Review: Be faithful in proclaiming God's message to others.
2. Closing Image: William Carey's heart for the nations sparked the protestant movement in mission that continues till today.

MANUSCRIPT

It was the late 1700s. A group of Baptist leaders in the UK gathered together for a meeting. A newly ordained minister stood to speak. Everyone knew him as the cobbler. He fixed shoes. Fixing shoes made it difficult to put food on the table. Despite the difficulties, he learned Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. He also developed a heart for the nations. You see, the protestant church at this time had forgotten its commission to reach the lost in other parts of the world. This oversight prompted this minister to stand and argue that the church to engage once again in reaching fellow sinners, who were lost not knowing the gospel, in other parts of the world. Who was this minister that would challenge the status quo of the church? Who would try to jog the memory of the church to remember its mission? His name was William Carey. **William Carey reminded the church of its mission to reach the lost.** But an older minister interrupted him saying: “Young man, sit down! You are an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, he’ll do it without consulting you or me.”

It’s easy to forget what we’re called to do. We think the Christian life is about how we can spiritually grow. We read our Bibles, pray, and go to small group. We read the newest Christian books or articles. We think the Christian life is about raising our families well. We spend all our time making sure that we create a safe environment for them to grow. We think the Christian life is about stewarding our studies well. We have to excel in our school work. These things are good.

Is this what God has called us to do? Have we possibly forgotten what God has called us to do? Busy lives hinder us from thinking about things of God. Various events fill our schedule that prevent us from pondering this question – school, work, hobbies, family. I want to take

some time this morning to consider the question together: **“What has God called believers to do?”**

To answer the question, we turn our attention to Exodus, chapter 3. If you have your Bibles, then please turn there with me. Tap and swipe if you’re on your Bible apps. Exodus, chapter 3.

We’re going to look this morning at the story. From it we’ll find a principle. Then we’ll talk about an application. Again, we’ll discuss the story, principle, and application.

First, the story. The story of Moses. His story can be summarized in this way: **God sends Moses on mission.**

Moses kept the flock as he usually did in the wilderness. It’s been his occupation for the last forty years. As the years waned, this prince turned shepherd did his best to forget about his life as an Egyptian prince. He tried to forget the time when he killed an Egyptian to protect a Hebrew. He thought that no one saw the incident. But someone always sees. This led him to exile in Midian. He could still remember the cry of the Hebrews under the heavy hand of the Egyptians. He thought maybe I’ll live out the rest of my life here in the land of Midian. I’m already 80 years old...

As his flock of sheep ate up more desert shrubs, it became more difficult to find food. This may have led Moses to take them to the land near Horeb. As his sheep ate their fill, Moses catches a glimpse of a fire. He suspects it’s a burning bush. Bushes burn up all the time in the wilderness. He turns his attention back to his flock. When he looks up again, the fire hasn’t died down. **God interrupts Moses using a burning bush.** Exodus 3:2 says; *“And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold,*

the bush was burning yet it was not consumed.” That’s peculiar... By this time, the bush should have surely burned up. This piques Moses’s curiosity, so he goes up to behold the sight. Moses says to himself in verse 3: *“I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.”* When Moses gets close to the burning bush, he hears his name: “Moses, Moses.” Moses replies: *“Here I am”*. Then he receives these instructions in verse 5: *“Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”*

For those of us who are Asian, we understand the instructions to remove one’s shoes. You don’t want guests tracking in dirt and whatever else they may have walked over. At other temples in the near East, people are also asked to remove their sandals because you wouldn’t want to contaminate the holy with uncleanness.

Then God says in verse 6: *“I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”*. When Moses hears that this is the God of his father and ancestors, his body tingles with fear. He had heard of the God who gave Abraham a promise to be a blessing to the world. He had heard of the God who brought Joseph down to Egypt and save the nation from famine. This God he heard from stories now spoke to him. He hides his face because he was afraid.

What prompted God to call Moses? **Israel’s suffering compelled God to send help.** God sees and hears Israel’s suffering. Look with me at verse 7. Notice the two verbs: seen and heard. Verse 7: *“I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.”* God knows the trouble of Israel. God had not spoken to people for 400 years... Their suffering prompts God to move into time and space once again and appear to Moses in this burning bush. God comes down to earth. Read with me in verse 8:

“and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of Egyptians”. The suffering of Israel prompted God to do something.

He proceeds to promise that he will deliver them to a land flowing with milk and honey (3:8b). Milk and Honey doesn't sound very appealing for people who can buy it in abundance at the local grocery store. Why is milk and honey associated with prosperity? To get milk you need milk-producing animals: goat and cows. You'll need a lot of them. This land will be so much that your cows and goats will eat their fill and produce for you milk abundant. What is the big deal about honey? Well, honey is produced from pollen collected from flowers and trees. You don't produce much honey from wilderness. This land will have abundant trees and shrubs for honey to produce. The land is fertile. This land will produce more than enough for Israel. It has echoes to the land of Eden.

How will God accomplish this task of delivering Israel out of Egypt into this abundant land? He plans to send Moses. When Moses hears this in verse 10: *“Come I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt”*, Moses thinks to himself: “Woah! God must have the wrong guy... Doesn't he know what I've done. I've murdered a person. This led me to flee Egypt. This is why I left a life of luxury and ended up tending sheep”. Moses puts it this way in verse 11: *“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”* This is a nice way of Moses saying: “God, please find someone else.”

God promises to help Moses save Israel. God promises to aid Moses. He promises that he will help Moses when he returns to Egypt.

God will help Moses save Israel by his presence. Verse 12 states: *“But I will be with you.”* You may think: “What good is it to have the presence of God with you?” Why is it that a child, who is afraid of the dark, asks for his dad to be in the room? Can dad make the darkness go away? No. But the child trusts dad to overcome the darkness. Why is it that when you walk down a dark street and see a police car, it calms your heart? The presence of someone with authority gives you peace because if something happens they’ll step in to take care of it.

God will help Moses save Israel by his work. God will save Israel and bring him to this place to worship him. Verse 12 says: *“And this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”* How can it be a sign when God hasn’t accomplished it yet? It’s not so much as a sign as it is a reminder. It will be a reminder that when Moses sees this mountain again, God had helped him. It would keep Moses humble to remember he didn’t do anything of his ability to save Israel.

[General MacArthur: I will return]

God will help Moses save Israel by his authority. When Moses asks God: *“What do I say when Israel doesn’t believe that you sent me and asks me your name? What am I supposed to say?”* God replies in verse 14: *“God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”* And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’”. What does the name: “I AM” mean? It’s derived from the Hebrew word: “to be”. For God to call himself: “I AM” is to indicate his self-existence. He is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything as it says in the New City Catechism. Before God revealed himself to Israel as the God of their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now you will know that I am God over all creation. This foreshadows the plagues he unleashes upon Egypt.

God gives Moses a message. What is the message will Moses deliver? Moses will deliver 3 messages. His first message is delivered to all of Israel.

First, **He is the God of all.** Verse 15 says: *“Say this to the people of Israel, 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.”* Note how there has been an addition to the name of God. It is no longer just the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. The LORD has been added. Capitol L. Capitol O. Capitol R. Capitol D. “I AM” has sent me. Moses is to reveal that the covenant keeping God has sent him to Israel.

Second, **He is the God of deliverance.** Moses has a different message to the elders. In addition to the name of God, he tells them what God will do. It occurs at the end of verse 16 through 17. *“I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.”* God knows the misery of Israel and promises to deliver them from it. He will be known as the deliverer of Israel.

Lastly, **He is the God of judgment.** He will render judgment upon Egypt. Together with the elders of Israel, Moses has a message for pharaoh. The message is found in verse 18: *“The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.”* You may be wondering: I thought God was going to deliver Israel from Egypt. God wasn’t just going to give them a three-day break from their work to go on a retreat in the wilderness. Moses engaged in some indirect communication. For instance, we might say: “could you hand me the remote?” This means I’m

going to change the channel. When you ask: "May I borrow a piece of paper?" You're not going to return the piece of paper when you write on it. Likewise, Moses isn't asking for a three-day break. He's asking Pharaoh to let them go.

But God knows better. Unless Moses marches in with a powerful army to free Israel, pharaoh will not let them go. Verse 19 reads: "*But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.*" The phrase by a mighty hand refers to some strong military force.

Knowing God will bring the forces of nature down on Egypt. Verse 20 states: "*So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.*" God will not send an army with Moses into Egypt. Instead, he being the creator of the world will bring various plagues upon the land to demonstrate he is king and also so that they would let Israel go.

Not only will Egypt let Israel go, but Israel will also plunder Egypt. When Israel is about to depart from Egypt, the women of Israel will knock on the door and ask for their stuff. Miriam will go: "Knock. Knock." You know that beautiful necklace I've seen you wear, could I have it? The Egyptian woman will say: "take it!" If Miriam knocks on another door and asks: "Could I have some pieces of silver?" The Egyptian neighbor will say: "It's yours!" The Egyptians would give Israel whatever it wanted in order for them to leave. God will bring judgment upon Egypt through the powers of nature and the plundering of the nation.

Now that's the story of God calling Moses to serve as his messenger to deliver Israel from Egypt. What is the point? What is the principle?

God sends us on mission. Remember what I said in the beginning? We tend to forget what our mission is? We forget our purpose? From this story we remember God sends us on mission. **We are to reach both our neighbors here and also work so that people in other parts of the world may hear the gospel. We are to tell the world that a savior has come to save them not from Egyptians but from the power of sin.** We are called upon to be heralds of the gospel.

How does God do this? Like with Moses, **God interrupts believers.** God somehow reveals himself to people and chooses them to be his spokesperson. Every disruption is different. No one's story is the same. **God interrupts believers.**

God interrupts various Old Testament saints. He disrupts their lives from normalcy to an unexpected vocation. These people never expected God to choose them to do great things.

God interrupts Old Testament saints.

Think about Gideon. He's threshing floor in a winepress. An angel appears and says: "Greetings! Mighty Warrior!" God appoints him to be the d

Think about Amos. Amos was a simple shepherd and tenders of figs. But God interrupts his life to appoint him as his prophet.

Think about Jeremiah. God calls upon Jeremiah to be his prophet. Jeremiah objects. But God insists because he created Jeremiah for this very purpose.

But God doesn't just interrupts the lives of biblical characters. He also interrupts the lives of people like you and me. He opens our eyes to the gospel. **God interrupts our lives with the gospel to appoint us as his messenger.**

If you think about your spiritual journey, then you'll realize that you found God when you least expected it. Maybe you came to realize that you lived a purposeless live. You had the

grades, the friends, the boyfriend. But you still felt hollow inside because you knew that no matter what you did, you could never measure up. Then you meet someone on campus who shares with you that the feeling of emptiness is caused by sin. But the only way to overcome sin is through faith in Christ, who took the penalty of sin and died on the cross and rose again so that you may have new life. This message changed your life.

For myself, I know that God used a cousin to interrupt my life. She gave me a Bible for Christmas. As I read it, I learned that I was a sinner. When she brought me to church on Easter Sunday, I learned that Jesus Christ died for my sins and rose from the dead. If I placed my faith in Christ's redeeming work, then I would be forgiven for my sins and have a relationship with God again.

What compelled God to do such a thing? Why would he save people who were distant from him? **Love for rebels compelled God to send help.** The apostle John writes in the NT: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

Why does God disrupt the lives of people to call them to be his messengers? **God sends believers out as messengers.** We are to tell those who are lost and ignorant of God that there is hope. We tell people who are held in bondage by sin that there is freedom. We are to tell others of the news of salvation. **God sends believers out to serve as messengers.**

Remember those Old Testament saints? **God sends Old Testament saints as messengers.** These Old Testament saints have something to tell their fellow Israelites. Gideon served as a messenger who rallied Israel against Midian. Because of his efforts, **Gideon rescues Israel from Midian.** Amos leaves his home of southern Judah and goes to the northern

kingdom of Israel. **Amos proclaims a message of judgment to the northern kingdom of Israel.**

If Israel had listened, then God would have relented of his judgement. But Assyria took Israel into captivity. **Jeremiah proclaims a message of repentance to the southern kingdom of Judah.**

Again, if Judah had listened, then God would have relented of his judgment. But Babylon would take Israel into captivity.

Many years later, **God sent Christ to save people from sin.** God sent the ultimate messenger in the form of his Jesus Christ. He was both the messenger and the message. He came to take the penalty of sin, which is death, in order to bring us back to God. He also gains for us the forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life.

Likewise, **God sends us out as messengers of salvation.** As Christians we have a message from God to the world. We find this command in Matthew 28:18-20: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, the end of the age”.*

This is our mission. This our purpose. This is our call. We are to expend our energies and efforts to ensure that people will have the opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ that frees them from the bondage of their sin. It’s so easy for us to forget this in the midst of good things: doing well in our careers, exceling in our studies, and caring for our families. While these things are good, they must not be the first thing.

If God has called us to be his messengers of salvation, then what are supposed to? How do we apply this principle in our lives?

Be faithful in proclaiming God's message of deliverance to others. Tell others about the hope that you have in Christ. Share with others how Jesus Christ has made a difference in your life. Recall to others how God saved you from a life sin. **Be faithful in proclaiming God's message of deliverance to others.**

Proclaim God's message through your deeds. Do things for others. Serve them so that the message of the gospel may be embodied in the way that you live.

Imagine one of your team members forgets to send the latest results of your project for one of your daily meetings. You know that you had assigned him the tasks. Instead of blaming your teammate in front of your boss, accept responsibility for the mistake. Just as Christ endured the suffering for sin on your behalf we can bear the blame for someone else's mistake.

When you line up at the local grocery store, you notice the customer behind you. You see the bags under her eyes and well-worn clothes. You know that she doesn't have much. Instead of just paying your bill and taking off, you offer to pay for her groceries as well. After all, if God had been generous to you, then you can be generous to others. **Proclaim God's message through your deeds.**

Proclaim God's message through your words. God didn't just give us a message to express through actions. He gave us a message to express through words. We are to speak God's message to others. How do we do that? Look for opportunities to bring up spiritual conversation.

Offer to pray for your wait staff. When your waitress brings you your food and asks: "Is there anything else I can do for you?" Instead of saying: "No.", say: "Actually, my family and I

are Christians and pray before we eat. We would love to know how we might pray for you.”

Whatever comes next, follow the Lord’s leading.

Maybe you’re having lunch with a co-worker. Instead of talking about the latest project at work, **take the time to learn about their interests, family, and hobbies.** Some of you may not enjoy engaging in small talk. But engaging in such conversation allows you to build bridges to future conversations about faith. See if there are opportunities to pray for them.

There are so many ways for us to proclaim the gospel through words that it’s not just limited to the four spiritual laws or roman roads. Whatever we do, realize that God has called us to proclaim the message through words.

Proclaim God’s message through your commitment. Be committed to sharing God’s message with others. You don’t do it sporadically. It should be a regular part of your life. We share God’s message not because of the response. I’ve learned long ago that when it comes to sharing the gospel, my responsibility is to provide people with the facts so that they can decide what to do. Whether or not they place their faith in Christ is between them and the Lord.

Spend regular time with an international student. Maybe as the international student spends more time with you, they see that faith is large part of your life. It could pique their interest and result in a spiritual conversation.

Partner with missionaries. When you hear that a church member feels led to serve in overseas mission work, you go to hear his sharing. You discover that he will be going to an Asia to work with a specific unreached people group there. This prompts you to think about being one of his financial partners by giving monthly.

Go to community events regularly. It might be a movie in the park. When you go with your family, you meet someone there who lives two houses down. When you take the family again to another movie in the park, you see the same neighbor. You both hit it off, so you learn that both of you like to play tennis. You arrange for a time to play. As you play with him more regularly, he learns that you're a Christian. Because you've played a couple of tennis matches, he feels comfortable asking you spiritual questions.

Proclaim God's message through your commitment. Be committed to people. Maintain regular relationships and you may be given an opportunity to speak spiritual truth into the lives of people.

This morning message, we talked about how God reminds us of our mission through his calling of Moses. God calls us to be messengers of deliverance to the world. As a result, we need to be faithful in proclaiming God's message of deliverance to others.

Remember William Carey? Although he was asked to sit down, it didn't stop him from going overseas to serve as a missionary to India. Before he died, he saw 700 people come to know Christ. He translated the Bible into India's major languages. But more importantly, his life would lead people like Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, and David Livingstone to take the gospel to the missions. William Carey's heart for the nations sparked the protestant movement in mission that continues till today. May we like Moses and Carey take the call to be God's messengers of salvation with greater seriousness and passion.