

GOD WANTS YOU NOW

Exodus 3:1-14

God always works among men through men. Our scripture lesson portrays this fact with great simplicity and urgency. What God has done in other days and through other people He wants to do now through you and me.

Our scripture passage suggests three things:

I. A Needy World.

The Jewish people were in slavery, their condition was unbearable and their future seemingly was hopeless. Their condition was a symbol of the present situation. Our world is desperately in need. That need is so great that none of us should remain unmoved. Complacency must not be given any place in our lives.

II. A Concerned God.

This is the basic revelation we find in this scripture lesson, as well as in many other places in the Word of God. Our God is neither ignorant of anything in this world nor unconcerned about it. Listen to the eternal God: "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites" (Exodus 3:7-8).

III. A Dedicated Personality.

Forty years before, Moses fled from Egypt to save his life from the wrath of Pharaoh. He went to the land of Midian and became a shepherd, keeping the flock of a Midian priest. He spent forty years in the desolate wastes of that strange land. As a man of eighty, he was approaching the evening of life with his dreams and visions unfulfilled.

One day as Moses led his sheep into the quiet hills his attention was attracted by a burning bush. That was not so strange except for the fact that the bush was not consumed. It was a sight that he had never seen before. It struck him with astonishment. His natural impulse was to inquire into its cause. Therefore, he turned aside and drew near to observe. Suddenly his steps were arrested. A voice called to Moses out of the burning bush, calling him by name and telling him that the place was holy ground. The voice of God said, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Moses had turned aside to find out why the bush was not consumed. Think of what he would have missed had he passed on. To meet with God and to be taught by Him, man must turn aside often, even from his lawful occupation, but especially from the pleasures of sin and the reasonings of a carnal mind.

Why was that holy ground? Moses had doubtless been there before, but the ground had not been holy previously. What had changed the ordinary and commonplace into a holy thing? The skies were no bluer, the grass was not any greener, the sun was no brighter, the scenery was no more beautiful, so what unseen thing had changed it into holy ground?

First, it was the place where he met God. Moses was face to face with God. He listened to His voice. It was the glory of God that clothed the bush. God's presence will

make any place holy ground. Wherever a person comes face to face with God in the struggles of life, that time and that spot will ever live in his memory as a holy place.

When pointing to the place where he met God and was saved, one said, "There is the most sacred spot on earth to me." I doubt if Paul ever passed along the road to Damascus without stopping at the spot where the Lord saved him. The old dungeon in Rome where he wrote some of his epistles was to him holy ground because God had visited him there. God's presence changed that prison into the vestibule of heaven. It was dark, damp, cold and cruel, but people travel thousands of miles to see the place which God filled with the glory of heaven. Palestine is unattractive from the standpoint of scenic beauty, but the feet of Christ changed it into holy ground. Paths across it seem to bear the prints of the feet which were pierced with the nails.

The First Baptist Church in Waco was being crowded out of a growing business section; railroads, tall buildings and heavy traffic were making the location an undesirable one. It became necessary to move and build. All knew it; all were willing for the change; but the time came for leaving the old spot and many of the older members sobbed and wept because they were being pulled away from the place made sacred by many experiences. There had been many struggles; many had been saved; many had been married; and their loved ones had been brought there for the last rites. It was holy ground. The presence of God will change any ordinary place into a sanctuary.

Second, it was the place where God made His will known. Moses had been an aimless wanderer until that day, with no definite plan or program, with no convictions about his labors for God. On that day God commissioned him to go to Egypt in His name and power and deliver the Jews from their bondage and lead them to the land of promise. Moses hesitated. He thought that the task was too big for him and that his strength was too inadequate.

However, Moses discovered what you can discover, namely, that God never calls a person to a task without supplying adequate strength for its accomplishment. What He asks us to do, He always enables us to achieve. He who asks you to identify yourself with His purpose assures you of both His presence and His power. In accepting God's urgent call, you will discover the highest meaning of your life and be able to make a real contribution to the furtherance of the gospel of Christ.

From this incident we learn that God will find you wherever you are and will give you a duty to perform. When all things were ready God found Moses there in the rocky country of Midian. He seemed almost to have hidden away from God, for the record says that he led the sheep to the farther side of the Mountain of Horeb. Many a day had he pastured them in the open plain and nothing unusual occurred. But on this day, when he least expected it, he saw the presence of God in the bush, which shone with divine glory.

In the light of this sacred story, do not fear that you will ever be forgotten or overlooked if you are following God's leading. When you are needed, God will find you. He took Elisha from the plow and made him a great prophet. He took David from the shepherd life and made him a great king. He took John and Peter from their fishing boats and made them masters of eternal truth. When God has a work to do on earth, He does it through human personality. God always gives whatever is needful to carry out the work to which He calls us.

Moses yielded his will to that of God, but not without a definite struggle. He accepted the charge and responsibility, but not without much fear and many misgivings. Henceforth, he made every step toward a definite goal.

Men of all ages have had sacred places in their lives; Jacob in his dreams at Bethel, and his wrestling at Peniel, and Abraham offering up Isaac on Mount Moriah. Abraham could not live long enough to forget such an experience or such a marked spot. Elijah,

on Mount Carmel, overcame the prophets of Baal by the power of the Lord. Such days are pivotal, where characters are made and destinies are determined.

When God commissioned Moses, the latter asked, "When they want to know who sent me, what shall I tell them?" The Lord answered, "Tell them I AM hath sent you." "I AM" meant the full supply of every need. That is to say, "I am all that you will need for your task and your journey."

It was at the burning bush that Moses brought his will into absolute subjection to God's will. It was a struggle for him to do that. He pleaded his insignificance, his inability to talk, his past mistakes in Egypt and his lack of influence. All of these weaknesses and excuses were set aside by the power of God, and Moses finally brought his will into absolute obedience and conformity to God's will. He accepted in totality the program of God, and, thereafter, the Lord was the master of his life.