



God's Work is Our Work

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Exodus 3:10-22

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¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "But I will be with you, 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."

¹³ Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 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.'" ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "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.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. ¹⁶ Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, ¹⁷ 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.'" ¹⁸ And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, '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.' ¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, ²² but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.”

(Pastor Prays)

Exodus chapter 3 is probably one of the most famous chapters in the whole Bible. It is the place where we get the burning bush. Let's get right to the story. A man named Moses has spent 40 years in the desert. He doesn't have anything to his name. In fact, he's so poor he is watching over his father-in-law's sheep. He's been out there in the desert, doing it a long time. He is now 80 years old. And one day, while he's out there, he sees a bush that is burning on a mountain called the Mountain of God. It's Mount Sinai. He sees it burning, but it's burning in such a way that is not being consumed. It's burning but not burning up. So Moses says I'm going to go over there and see what this is all about. He goes over to investigate that, and when he gets there, he is confronted by a voice from the bush. *“Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”* So now Moses is in the desert in front of a burning bush, barefooted, listening to God. God brings comfort to his heart and tells him, I have heard what's going on in Egypt. And now we catch up with Moses, not just being comforted. God is commissioning him. I am going to send you. But this is less about Moses and more about God. Be careful how you read the Bible. You have two characters in this story in the Bible, but this is a book about God. This is a book that points us to the gospel. In fact, you could say that the Book of Exodus is the gospel in the Old Testament. And the gospel is a reminder that God saves sinners. Which ought to make you feel good. You are a Sinner. This is a good thing for you to hear. Why does he save sinners? Because sinners can't save themselves. He saves sinners so that he is glorified. Why does he heal people? Why does he heal a broken heart? Why is it when you get into the depths of depression somewhere you can't get out of, and God reaches down and gets you? Why does he do that? Because you can't heal yourself, and he gets glory. Our God is a God that takes bruised reeds and uses them. In fact, this story is about God and his work. I'm going to say it like this.

God's Work is Perfect, His People Are Not

And yet, the work we're doing is God's work. God does his work through you. So let's pay attention not so much to Moses. Let's pay all of our attention to God and see how he might use Moses. Let's go right to making some points. Here's the first, number one. I want you to see that our...

God is a sending God

You probably already saw that. It's a Great Commission right there in verse 10. Our God is a sending God. What does he say in verse 10 to Moses? ¹⁰ *Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.*” Moses is going to save? No, God is going to save them, but he's going to use Moses to do that. Our God is a sending God. God does his work through people. What did Jesus say? Jesus said it like this. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.

So, if God is working, what is God's work? If he's going to use you and he sends you, what does he send you with? The first thing he's going to send you with is the gospel. You need to know the gospel. You need to understand what the gospel is. The gospel is not that you were in a bad car wreck, and you made it through and you started going to church because you feel like you owe God. That is not the gospel. The gospel is that God is a holy God who created you in this image. But the image of God in you, we can't see it anymore because sin has so covered it. It's like a permanent marker marked you to where I can't see the image of God anymore. The image of God has been so marked up and so covered by your own sin. It is a crime against God that must be punished. God is a just God, and so what he does is he sends his son Jesus, who lives without sin, like me, and you can't. He lives like humans were supposed to. He lives a perfect life, and then, near the end of his life, he goes to the cross and becomes the place of God's justice. God pours out his justice on Jesus. But before Jesus goes to the cross, he drinks the cup in the garden of Gethsemane. He drinks the cup and becomes our sin. And at the cross, God pours out his wrath on our sin that Jesus took. When he's killed, he laid in a tomb for three days, and then God raises him from the dead. Jesus has taken off his robe of righteousness and offered it to you. He reaches out to you to say, I'll take your sinful garment, and you can have my righteous one. But you must trust that Christ and Christ alone will save you. That's the gospel. To believe that Jesus Christ lived and died and was raised for your sin, and to trust that he alone can save you. You need to know the gospel, you need to be able to articulate the

gospel, to be able to have a conversation with a neighbor in despair, and lead them toward the gospel. God has put the people in your neighborhood around you so you can share the gospel with them. Students, God has people in your life that need to hear the gospel. People you work with need to hear the gospel.

You are sent with the gospel. But not only the gospel. The second thing is we are sent as disciples to make disciples. You'll notice that the way we do church here is not like a Billy Graham crusade every Sunday. I love the minister, Billy Graham. Millions of people came to Christ through his crusades. But that's not church coming together as the body of believers. We certainly want people to come to Christ. We also spend time disciplining. Part of discipleship is coming to church and you sing the songs of praise to the Lord. You open God's word. We learn it together. That is a part of discipleship. Gathering is good, but it's not the whole of discipleship. It's why we have our community groups where you gather for more intense learning together with people that are investing in you and you and them. And then, in our D groups, we are getting into genuine sort of one-on-one discipleship, growing in the Lord. You ought to be someone who is involved. You are sent to disciple and to be disciplined.

You know what else we do? We're sent not just with the gospel or discipleship. We are sent to do something. God has called us to be a part of his work. His work is perfect, but his people are not perfect. Our God is a sending God. That's the first point; here is the second one, number two.

God is an empowering God

Let me show where I get that in verse 11. So God says I'm going to send you, Moses, to the people. Moses has a really good question on the table in verse 11. ¹¹ *But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"* That's a great question. Be careful how you interpret this question. This is not Moses doing some sort of introspection, thinking about who he is. This is not Moses trying to find himself. Which, by the way, is a weird thing to say. I'm going to go find myself. Where did you lose yourself? You're not going to like what you find. Pay attention to what God has called you to do. Moses is not saying, who am I? He is thinking about his own inadequacies. Here's a man that's been in the desert for 40 years. Time has sanded him down, and mellowed him out, and made him humble. And he realizes his inadequacies. And it's good for you to know yours. You

may think there is no reason for God to use me. I don't have anything to offer. But we get the mentality that comes from the New Testament where we can say that I am weak, but he is strong.

What are your inadequacies? Are you too old? You are beyond the age where God can use you? Moses is an 80-year-old man here. I see great things here at Hickory Grove being done by people that are 50 and up. They obviously don't have small children at home anymore, but they are investing in our children in Awana. What is your excuse? Maybe yours is that you are too young. I don't know enough yet. Maybe you've got some real world-class sins in your background. It doesn't matter who you are. It matters who God is. You understand that God works with bruised reeds. That's when God starts to work.

So, in verse 12, God flips it with the word, with. I love the word, with. You can feel strength when somebody's with you. We might even use that phrase, if we know somebody's hurting, I'm with you. What do we mean by that? What does the Lord say in verse 12? Notice what the Lord says first of all. The Lord says, but I will be with you.

And then, this is an odd thing to me right here, so I'm not going to do much with it, except just to say it's odd. The Lord says, but I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you. So, normally, you're given a sign that God is going to help you, and you get the sign to build your confidence. I can do it because God has shown me the sign. You ask for a sign. You're trying to make a decision, and you are wondering, is this the right thing to do? I need a sign before I take action. But in verse 12, the Lord says. I'll give you a sign but the sign comes after you do what I've told you to do. See what it says, ¹² *He said, "But I will be with you, 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."* I'll give you the sign, but it comes afterwards. I don't want you looking at that as much as I want you to look at the beginning of verse 12, where God says to Moses, I'm with you. Isn't it good that God doesn't send us on an errand that he hasn't empowered us to do? God calls you to do it.

Let's think about it is a disaster. Pharaoh versus Moses is a disaster. What does the Lord say? It's the phrase, I will be with you, that we see over 100 times in the Old Testament, but this is the only time in the Book of Exodus that you'll find it. God tells Moses, I will be with you. It's the same thing that he'll tell Moses' protégé, Joshua. I am with you. It's the same thing he will tell

Gideon: I will be with you. He will tell Jeremiah, the young man called into the ministry, I am with you. This is what David wrote in Psalm 23. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. That's what the Lord said to Isaiah in Isaiah 41:10. *¹⁰fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Our God is a sending God, and he will be with us. And if God is for us, who can be against us? God is a sending God and an empowering God. Here's a third thing to consider.

God is a revealing God

Let's get to the I am statements. Our God is a revealing God; he reveals himself. So think with me for a moment. There are two ways God reveals himself. The first way is general revelation. General revelation is God revealing himself in a general way. So you see the sky is blue, the grass is green, trees grow, storms come up, seasons change, and you realize that in creation, there must be a creator. So we look around and see, that's general revelation. It's like common grace. Common grace is the grace that God gives to everybody. What did Jesus say? That the rain falls on the just and the unjust.

And there is a specific revelation. It's a specific way God reveals himself to people personally. That's what's going on in verses 13-15. There you will find the I AM statements. ¹³ *Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"* 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.'"* ¹⁵ *God also said to Moses, "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.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.* This is unusual because we first saw this name in Genesis. In Genesis, the I AM is a verb which means to be. It's YHWH, Yahweh. That's how we say it in English. Anytime you're reading the Bible, and you come to the name that's all capitalized, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D, the translation is the very same thing as the I AM that's in Genesis. Abraham knew that name. Isaac knew that name. Jacob knew that name, but the generations since then had forgotten. And now the Lord says, you go tell them that I AM the God of their fathers. And the Lord says in verses 14 and 15, I AM. I will be who I will be. I am the one who causes everything to come into being. I AM the

one who has no beginning, who has no end, and the whole message that Moses is sent with is I AM sent you. I am God. This is the same idea that Paul uses when he talks about Jesus in Colossians 1:15-17 says, ¹⁵ *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.* ¹⁶ *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.* ¹⁷ *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* He reached back into Exodus 3 and said you've seen the burning bush; that was me. What did Jesus say when they asked him who he was? Jesus would say I am the door. If you want to get into heaven, you have to come to the door. I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. I am the bread of life. We take the Lord's Supper to be reminded that he feeds our souls. I am the light of the world. Back in Colossians, Paul says that God has delivered us from the domain of darkness. He has transferred us to the Kingdom of his beloved son, who is the light of the world. I am the way, the truth, and the life. Nobody gets to God except through me. I am the resurrection and the life. If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God resurrected him, you'll be saved. Jesus said I am the true vine. That's where you will flourish, in Jesus. When they asked him about who he was, Jesus blew their minds. He said, before Abraham was, I AM.

You know the story in John 18 when they came to get him that last night, the soldiers surrounded him. When they came to get him, he stepped forward, and looked around, and said who are you looking for? And they said to him, we're looking for Jesus of Nazareth. And Jesus said to them, I AM he. And when he said that, they fell on their backs. It's the power of Jesus. Brothers and sisters, let's not forget who it is we're dealing with. God has revealed himself as a triune God, God the Father. God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It's good for you to remember that the triune God is involved in your salvation. God the Father planned your salvation from the foundation of the earth. God the Son accomplished your salvation through his life, death, and resurrection. And God the Spirit has applied that salvation to your heart when you believed. Here you have this picture of our personal God. He is giving Moses a name, introducing himself, reminding us that we can know him. You can know him in Christ. Not only that, in verses 13-15, you'll see the phrase over and over again that God tells Moses. Let me show it to you. ¹³ *Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"* 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.'” ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “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.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. God says, say this to the people of Israel. Don't interpret. Don't come up with your own little cute saying. Don't tell stories. Don't describe what you see. Here's my word. This is why we do what we do here with church on a Sunday morning: we open the Bible. It's important that in this time together, we see what God says. As he has revealed himself to us, he speaks. It's good that our God speaks. It's food for our souls and drink for our souls and foundation to stand on. He is the revealing God. Let me give you something else, number four. I appreciate that.

God is a gracious God

Let me show why I say that God is gracious. I heard a preacher do this one time, and I think he's right. Look at what the Lord says in verse 15. ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “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.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Look how he singles out each one. The God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. Now, the reason I say he is a God of grace is because, just take those three men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Okay, Abraham is kind of legendary. We might even see why he would say that about Isaac. Isaac was kind of a romantic. I can see why it would be Isaac. But to say he is the God of Jacob, have you read the story about Jacob? He is a terrible person. He lies to his brother. He manipulated his father. He is not a good guy. And yet God puts his name on the Marquis. With Jacob, he is a God of grace.

You take that understanding and remember that God sees everything about you, all that you've done and thought he knows. And yet, God would come to you and save you, and forgive you, and restore you not because of what you've done but because of who he is. It's that prayer in Colossians. Where Paul tells us to give thanks to God, who has qualified you, That's what he did when he saved you. He qualified you to share with the Saints in the inheritance. God is a gracious God. Let me give you a fifth point, number five.

God is a consistent God

God says, go and tell this to the people of Israel. He gives them the message. I AM the God of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He repeats the same message in verses 16 and 17. It's a reminder that the message doesn't change. He is the same God. It's the same gospel. It's what we preach here: God is holy, and Man is a sinner in need of a savior. Christ is that savior. If you put your faith in Christ, he will save you. It starts with God and takes us to deliverance in Christ. Let's go on to number six.

God is a powerful God

Our God is a powerful God. This is why we pray. This point is for those of you who have felt weak in your prayer life. Don't forget our God is powerful. So he tells Moses what he's going to do, and then verse 18 is a little description. Let me call your attention to it. The Lord says in verse 18, *¹⁸ And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, '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.'* I know that the King will not let you go unless he's compelled by my mighty hand. And God is going to compel him. I'm pointing out to you to show that no purpose of God will fail. God has a purpose. God doesn't try, he just does. What did Daniel say in Daniel 2:21? *He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;*

All of this to say, this is why we pray for people. We pray for people because we believe God is able. He can make it happen. Be specific in your prayer. Ask God to do something. You know the story in Acts chapter 16 where Lydia, the rich woman, that's how the Bible describes Lydia. The Lord opened her heart so she could respond to the gospel. Look, you know, somebody who has a hard heart, somebody you've been praying for, don't quit praying. We believe that God is powerful and that God could open their heart to respond to the gospel. Let me give you one more, number seven.

God is a providing God

I don't know why this caught my eye, but God is doing so much more than taking his people out of slavery. It's enough that he did that; slavery was terrible. It's enough that God saved your soul. It's tremendous that he would do that, but there are so many things God does and

provides. Notice what he says in verses 21 and 22. He is going to give his people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. ²¹ *And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty,* ²² *but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.*” Think about the hundreds of ways God has provided. He didn't just save you. He's clothed you, many of you he is giving you good health, cars to drive, food to eat, homes to live in, and friends to walk with you. There are so many thousands of ways that God has provided for you. It reminds us that our God is able to do far more abundantly than we could ever ask or imagine. This is a picture here of God delivering his people out of slavery and that picture of God delivering his people out of slavery, in Egypt points us directly to the deliverance of Jesus Christ on the cross. It's why, on a day like today, before we even get to the Passover, we can celebrate the Lord's Supper. God's work is perfect. His people are not. But we trust a perfect savior.

(Pastor prays)