

“What’s in Your Hand?”

Mount of Olives | August 31, 2025 | Exodus 3:1-14, 4:1-5

Pastor Jim Reynen

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You have gifted each one of us in unique ways in order to serve as a specific part of the body of Christ. You have also assured us that You will guide our paths and empower us as we move to serve You. Help us to be confident in Your word to, indeed, supply our every need, even when we wonder what will happen next. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Scripture Reading

Exodus 3:1-14, 4:1-5

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am has sent me to you.' "

...Then Moses answered, "But suppose they do not believe me or listen to me, but say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.' " The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw the staff on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses drew back from it. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand, and seize it by the tail"—so he reached out his hand and grasped it, and it became a staff in his hand— "so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

Message Notes

Exodus 4:2-3

The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." And he said, "Throw it on

the ground." So he threw the staff on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses drew back from it.

Exodus 4:4-5

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand, and seize it by the tail"—so he reached out his hand and grasped it, and it became a staff in his hand— "so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

Study Questions – Read Exodus 3:1-14, 4:1-5

ICEBREAKER – Getting started:

1. What's the most unusual animal encounter you've ever had?
2. What's an everyday tool or item you rely on the most in your work or hobbies?
3. If you were asked to prove you were trustworthy, how would you do it without using words?

Based on Exodus 3:1-14, 4:1-5, answer the following questions:

OBSERVATION – What does the text say?

1. As you read **Exodus 3:1-14, 4:1-5**, what comes to mind? What stands out? What is interesting to you and why?
2. In one sentence, how would you summarize this text?
3. What lesson or message do you think the author is trying to convey?

INTERPRETATION – What does the text mean?

1. Why do you think God chose to appear to Moses through a burning bush that was not consumed? What might that symbolize?
2. Moses was tending sheep when God called him. What does this setting tell us about how and when God calls people?
3. God told Moses to remove his sandals because he was standing on holy ground. What does this teach us about God's holiness?
4. In verse 7, God says He has "seen the misery" and "heard the cry" of His people. How does this shape our understanding of God's compassion?
5. Moses questioned his ability to go to Pharaoh. How does God's response ("I will be with you") address feelings of inadequacy?
6. When Moses asked God for His name, God responded, "I AM WHO I AM." What does this reveal about God's nature and character?
7. Why do you think Moses was still doubtful even after God's personal call in ch. 3?
8. What might Moses' concern about the Israelites not believing him say about human nature and leadership challenges?
9. God turned Moses' staff into a serpent and back again. What does this sign teach us about God's power and authority?
10. Why do you think God chose an ordinary object (a shepherd's staff) to perform a miracle? How might this relate to how God works in our lives today?
11. In verse 5, God says the sign was given so that the people would believe. How do signs and miracles function in strengthening faith?
12. How can we discern when God is calling us to step into something outside our comfort zone, even when we feel unqualified?

APPLICATION – How can you apply the text?

1. What "ordinary" things in your life might God want to use for His purposes?
2. How can you be more willing to surrender what's in your hands to God's control?
3. When have you seen God use something small or simple to accomplish something big?
4. How does this passage challenge you to trust God's power over your own abilities?

5. In what areas of your life do you need to take a step of faith so others may see and believe in God?