

Pastor T.C. Arnold  
6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity  
Romans 6:1-11  
July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Moses is a great prophet and yet there are things about him that make him very “relatable.” God comes to Moses in a burning bush – that’s not very relatable, at least to me. You probably haven’t had a burning bush experience. And maybe you haven’t been asked to lead a people out of a country and into a desert for 40 years before reaching the Promised Land. Probably not – but I bet you could understand – to relate to – other parts of his life. For instance, when God told him to lead the people, he said, “who am I, that I should go before Pharaoh and bring the people out of Egypt?”

And then came the excuses. I’m not very eloquent with my tongue.” Perhaps he was not a good talker. So, God gave Aaron to Moses, a wordsmith of all wordsmiths. What if they don’t believe me, Moses asks. God gave Moses some signs to show the people that He was with them – he turned the staff into a snake, made a normal hand into a leprous hand and then turned it back again, and God even told Moses to take water and pour it on the ground and it became blood. Moses pleaded with God, “Oh please, get someone else to do it.” And it says in Exodus chapter four that God burned with anger against Moses – because he was being so stubborn. Now, all of us can relate – whether we are stubborn or whether your husband is.

Moses also said, “What if they ask me who sent me to them and I don’t have a good answer?” God told Moses to tell them, “You say to the Israelites that I AM has sent me to you.” That doesn’t sound like a name, but that is what God told Moses to say. “I AM” has sent you.

For the sake of the people, God put himself in the present tense. I AM with you – and that happens to be my name. There was a reason why Jesus said about Himself, I AM the door, I AM The Way, I AM the Truth, I AM the Good Shepherd, I AM the light and whole host of others....

Here’s one more statement – and this one is for you and me: “I AM baptized.” We can say, “I was baptized” but that would not tell the whole story – like the story I just told you about Moses. Today, I AM baptized and you ARE baptized. It’s present tense because we live in that baptism today. Not only do we say it this way, I AM baptized. But we can also say, “I AM has baptized me.” Did you catch that? I said it two different ways but both ways are absolutely true. These things – or this thing – is absolutely true for us.

But what happens when we put our trust in something other than what God told us is “for sure.”? When it comes to these things that we don’t know for sure – There are two dangers. First, when we put too much hope and faith in what “is not for sure” we often times find ourselves bowing before false gods and allowing ourselves to be tossed back and forth by the winds of change. Every time there is a new product on the market we have to try it out and see if it works. We hope it works. And if it works, then we have found the miracle cure – the formula that is going to change our lives. So many new products that promise you will loose weight faster, put you on the fast track to healing your body, your mind, and maybe even your spiritual life often fall flat on their face and don’t really work at all. But when we put our trust in what we don’t know for sure – we can at times become so consumed by the potential we forget that we don’t even know “for sure” if it will help. Sometimes the excitement of the “potential” can get in the way of us focusing on what we really do know “for sure.”

The second danger is the next level -- when we become convinced that what is “not for sure” is what we believe to be the truth – that is, “for sure.” With this we fall into a trap of believing that something is really “for sure” when in all reality it is not. Some put hope in false religions. Some

put hope and trust in what they believe is “for sure” in new age cure-alls and self help. Some people believe that self satisfaction is a “fore sure” thing. That if I’m satisfied, sexually – then everything is okay. That if I’m medicated enough with alcohol or drugs, then everything is okay and that’s “for sure”. Or if that I’m putting myself above the needs of others and doing what I want no matter if God would disapprove – it’s okay – because I’m for sure forgiven anyway so I might as well be about satisfying self rather than God and others.

Romans chapter six verse one and two says, *“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Jesus’ death on the cross is not a license to do whatever it is that we want. God’s law is still ours to keep. He is to be first above all things. We “by no means” go on sinning so that God’s forgiveness in grace abounds all the more. To live without God’s law is to live without God’s Word. His whole Word is for us. To not keep part of it is to not keep all of it. So we bury our sins. We are to live free from putting anything above or in the place of God. We are to live as people who do not sin. That’s what God expects from each of us.*

But because this is not possible – and we still do sin – we have the rest of the story that really is a “for sure” thing. For in Christ’s baptism we have buried our sin with him. In our baptism we have been given Christ and His forgiveness of sins. In baptism we have what Christ offers and something really does happen – for sure – for us. This is why the reading from Roman’s chapter six goes on to say, *“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”*

In Baptism we are buried with Jesus – into His death. That is, all our sins are put to rest in the grave with our Savior when He went to the cross for us. And then just as Jesus was raised through the glory of the Father – we too are raised to a new life in Christ Jesus. We are renewed and restored in that Gospel. Just as Christ is raised from the dead – so are we. We are alive with Christ – a new man or a new woman brought forth with a white robe of righteousness purchased for us on the cross. The glorious resurrection of Jesus is our resurrection as well. We are made pure by the blood of Jesus. Beloved in the Lord, we can be confident that we can know this “for sure.”

We are a people who naturally put our trust in those things that are “not for sure.” That’s the way we are. We are lost as far as God is concerned, straying outside the boundaries of His ranch, far from our Father’s house. But in baptism, Christ makes us His own – present tense. So when we look back on it – It’s as if it was all happening right here and right now – a daily dying and coming back to life.

I wonder if Moses, in his days, had his days of excuses even after God got angry with him and showed him all of those signs. If so, we can relate. We know all this, but yet, we forget and need reminding. So, we go back to this one story that does not change – the story that is for sure – the story of God’s grace through the Son who was given to you. That’s the truth. That’s your life. That’s Jesus for all of us each of our days. During the storms of life, during the days of excuses, we have a Savior who is for sure with us always to the very end of the age. Jesus our Lord. Amen

The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen