



Mt Lebanon Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Making and Growing Followers of Jesus

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Dear MLEPC Members and Friends,

This week, as we continue our high-level study of the Book of Exodus, we turn to the story of Moses and the Burning Bush found in Exodus Chapter 3. Exodus 3:1-4 says, “Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and Moses led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire, it did not burn up. So Moses thought, ‘I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.’ When the Lord saw that Moses had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, ‘Moses! Moses! And Moses said, ‘Here I am.’”

The backstory is that when Moses was 40 years old in Egypt, he murdered an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating up an Israelite slave (Exodus 2). Moses was trying to be the deliverer of the Israelites in his own strength and did not trust God. To get away from Egypt and Pharaoh’s punishment, Moses subsequently fled to Midian. In this Burning Bush scene, Moses was 80 years old – forty years had passed since Moses ran away from Egypt. During those forty years, Moses had been a simple shepherd in Midian, far away from his people in Egypt. But, one day – just like all his other days of shepherding - Moses was out caring for his sheep. When, out of the blue, Moses saw a bush that was on fire that was not being consumed. Moses investigated and he came face-to-face with an angel of the Lord. Then suddenly, after those 40 years, Moses heard the Voice of the Lord – “Moses! Moses!” and Moses responded with “Here I am, Lord!”. This little episode marked the beginning of the dramatic deliverance of the Nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. The Lord showed up to Moses in a dramatic way, through the Burning Bush, to get his attention. One day, Moses was a lowly shepherd in Midian and the next day, Moses was called to be the deliverer of Israel from the bondage in Egypt. Moses’ life was transformed, in a radical way, through this Burning Bush experience.

This week we are also reading about the Prophet Elijah in 1Kings, Chapter 19. 1Kings 19:11-13 says, “The Lord said to Elijah, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the Presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’ Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.”

The backstory is that Elijah had just seen the Awesome Power of the Lord when Fire from Heaven came down to defeat the prophets of Baal, the false god of the Canaanites that many Israelites were following (1 Kings 18). In Chapter 19 of 1Kings, Elijah was on the run from crazy, evil, Queen Jezebel who was out to kill Elijah because he killed her friends, those prophets of Baal. Elijah was very afraid! Because of the Power of the Lord that Elijah had witnessed to defeat the prophets of Baal, Elijah was probably expecting the Lord to show up in this Chapter 19 scene in a fierce windstorm or a wild earthquake or a rapidly moving fire; but, instead, the Lord showed up, in a gentle whisper. The Lord surprised Elijah through a gentle, quiet whisper instead of a dramatic Burning Bush-like experience.

When I reflect on the amazing story of Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 2), I am amazed at how the most dramatic event on planet earth – the arrival of God Himself in the form of a human baby – was quiet and lowly in a stable. The birth of Jesus Christ, as most would have expected, was not in a castle with pomp & circumstance. I believe the point God was trying to make through the simple birth of Jesus Christ was that His Salvation was for all humans – not just for the rich & famous.

Sometimes, we modern day Christians look for Burning Bush-like dramatic signs & calls from the Lord that would impact us and re-direct us in amazing ways. But most times, in my experience, the Lord doesn't show up in dramatic & impressive ways but, rather, in the small & simple. A nod here, a nudge there, a wink here, a whisper there. **Here's the key:** we each need to stay connected to the Lord on a daily basis so we can recognize His Voice and His Nudges that push & motivate us. So, whether the Lord shows up in our lives through a Burning Bush-like experience or whether He shows up through a gentle whisper, we can recognize it's Him and we can respond accordingly. The Lord wants us close to Him, with eyes wide open and with ears ready to hear!

See you Sunday!!

Bruce