



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

June 18, 2023

Pastor James Enderle

3rd Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson/Sermon Text: [Exodus 3:1-15](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 119c

Second Lesson: [1 Timothy 1:12-17](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 9:9-13](#)

Christians Are Called

The Holy Ministry is filled with people who God called out of His boundless mercy.

1. God calls _____
2. We have _____
3. God _____, _____, and _____
 - a. God _____, _____ and _____: _____
 - b. God makes us _____

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

On Father's Day, maybe one of the things you often do is let dad pick what he wants to do. Maybe that's a barbeque or going to play golf. Who knows? Maybe it's putting on one of the favorite movies to sit and relax and enjoy a show. One of the things that a lot of the movies today have, especially the Super Hero movies, is origin stories. The comic books and a lot of the comic book characters are famous because they have these amazing and special origin stories.

Think of Spiderman. He is bitten by this radioactive spider. There is Captain America, Superman, Batman, and Ironman. Ironman was this weapons developer and he goes out to Afghanistan and he finds that his weapons are being used against Americans. He gets kidnapped and he has to build this suit. It's an amazing origin story. Batman is one of the most famous that is replayed over and over in movies where his parents are killed; then he fights crime to avenge what happened and to keep Gotham safe.

When we look at some of the important Bible heroes, they have some pretty special origin stories. I think there is probably none greater than Moses. We see today the calling of Moses. There are other prophets who were called. We have Isaiah, who was called Ezekiel. There was Samuel. He was sleeping and God called him several times.

Finally after going to Eli, Eli tells him that it must be God calling. But here we find Moses' origin story in some ways, his calling.

Think about Moses' background. It's so unique. At that time, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. The Egyptians started getting rid of these firstborn of the men. What did Moses' parents do? They put him in this little boat, this reed boat, to save him. Where did he end up? In Pharaoh's household; Pharaoh's daughter raises him. He is an Israelite but he is raised in the palace with the highest positions.

But then, as he sees his people being oppressed, what does he do? He thinks he can be the savior of the people and rescue them by killing one of those Egyptians. What does he have to do then? He is 40-years-old and has to leave Egypt. He runs away and becomes this herder. He is away from his people, wondering what is next.

Now he is 80-years-old and we see what happens. We see in Moses that God is calling Christians, that we are called. We are called in many different ways, but as we are called, it's not always easy for us to trust and understand what God wants. But as we look at how Moses reacts to this, I think we can see some of our struggles. We also can see how we can lean on God for our help and our purpose.

The first thing that happens to Moses as he is approaching this burning bush that doesn't burn up, he notices this is different. He goes up, and from that burning bush God calls him, "**Moses! Moses!**" He answers, "**Here I am.**" God tells him that this ground is holy ground. As God explains His name to him, what does Moses do? He says, "I can't even look at God." Why is that? Why is this holy ground and why is Moses afraid to look at God? Moses knew who he was, that he was a sinner. How could he stand in the presence of God? He was a murderer! We see that *God calls sinners*. God calls Moses a sinner and He calls us, who are sinners.

One of the best sections for this is that second reading we had. We heard how God calls Moses, how He calls Matthew, but then Paul explains it so well. He says, "**Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.**" He says this right before that: "**The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.**" I think these probably could have been the words that Moses was thinking too. That he is the greatest of sinners and understanding that he doesn't deserve any of this. We are going to see, though, that maybe he thinks he shouldn't be doing this too.

God calls us sinners, so we might say "Who does God call?" We are all sinners, so no one can say "As I hear that word, I'm not good enough, or "I could never do this" because He is calling even the worst of sinners. As we look at Moses' reactions, what

does he do? He doesn't say, "Well, okay, let's go." He has a few questions. When God calls us to do His work, to go out and show love and spread the Gospel, I think *we* often *have questions* as well. As we look at Moses' questions, I think it helps us to think about our objections and our struggles with being called to share the Gospel.

What does Moses first do? He questions and says, "Who am I to go do this task? You are saying to go and bring these people, the Israelites, out of Egypt? I can't do this! Who am I to do this? I am a sinner!" We do that often, too, when God calls. We say, "Who am I? Why are you calling **me**? You've got the wrong person. I can't do any of this." But then God explains that He is going to be with him and he tells him who He is.

Even though God has already told him His name, then Moses asks this second question: "Who are you?" He says (in Verse 13), ***"Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"*** Do you ever feel that you don't know enough, that if people ask questions, "What is this God you talk about?" "What is this Jesus?" that you don't know the Bible enough? Isn't this exactly what Moses is doing? "Okay, you're the God of the fathers, but who are you? I don't know enough. If they start asking questions, I'm not prepared. They are going to think I'm foolish. I just don't have the answers. I can't do it." So God gives a beautiful answer. He says, ***"I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*** We'll get into that a little bit more, but He is saying, "Don't worry. I am the God and it's not about you. It's about me. It's not about how much you know but about who your God is."

The next questions are in [Chapter 4](#), in a section we don't have, but we'll go through them real quick to see how these are important to understanding the struggles that we have and Moses had. In [Chapter 4:1](#), he then says, "What if they don't believe me? I just go and say that God sent me, why should they believe me?" He says, "This will be a sign to you," and He shows that he will be able to do miracles. But think about that. Do we go out and say "They're not going to believe me? As I go share about Jesus, no one is going to understand and believe. Why do this?" We feel that rejection so we don't even want to go and open our mouths.

That deals with the next question where Moses says, "I'm not a good speaker. I'm not eloquent." God says He will be with him. He will help him. He will provide for him. But notice how he is getting more specific. "I don't have the gifts to do this. Send someone else." That's his last objection. He is saying, "I can't speak. I can't do this." And finally he just says "God, send someone else." Is that how we feel? When we've given all the objections and God says, "No, I have given you gifts"? Finally in this last one (and before) he is saying, "I'll even give you Aaron. I'll give you other people to help you do this, to support you, encourage you, and you'll do this together. You're not alone in sharing the Gospel." We're just like "Nope, send someone else."

The struggle is when the prophets are called, they question it. They say "Who am I to do this? It's true. We shouldn't think so highly of ourselves to be like "Oh, yeah! I got this!" But we also shouldn't think so lowly of ourselves, especially when God is giving us all the tools. He has given us blessings and gifts. People point those out and we know that God is with us.

That's really what the answer is when Moses asked, "Who are you?" God uses that unique answer and that name that people now refer to Him, "Yahweh (***"I AM WHO I AM."***)". What does it mean that He is who He is? ***"I AM WHO I AM."*** I think one of the best ways we can think about it is that *God is, was, and will be*. He has always been there. He was there before Creation. He is there now. And He will be there in the future. An important thing is that is in contrast to what?—to other gods. Those other gods are nothing. They maybe promise things or people worship them, but they aren't real and they can't do anything. But *God is, was, and will be*.

If you hear those words, you might hear some familiar words to what Jesus said. In fact, when we hear about God appearing in this burning bush, it says it is ***the angel of the LORD***. Most Bible scholars say that angel of the LORD is that pre-incarnate Christ, that it is Jesus talking to Moses. In the New Testament, we hear that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. He is, He was, and He will be. When the Pharisees were questioning Jesus about who He was and talking about Abraham, Jesus says, "Before Abraham was, I AM." ([John 8:58](#)) He is referring directly to this, saying "I am God." The people knew that, because they got stones to stone Him. They wanted to arrest Him for blasphemy. So this is God, this is Jesus, our Savior, who is, was, and will be.

What does that mean for us as well, that He is, was, and will be? God, as He speaks to Moses, explains that. When He tells him that he is going to go and who He is, He says this: ***"I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey..."*** When Moses is so afraid of what to do, did you hear what God says? He says these things. He says "I know, and I'm going to go with you, and I'm going to deliver." For you, *God knows, goes and delivers*. An important thing is He delivers from a place and to a place (*from→to*).

What does it mean that God knows? He tells the Israelites, "I know what you are suffering. I know what you are going through. You may think I'm absent and I've been gone for hundreds of years, but I know and I hear your cry." God knows what you are going through. God knows the sadness. God knows the pain—the pain of being deceived, of people not following you or not loving you. If you think about Jesus, who came to be one of us, He says that He experienced all the things that we did. He knows what it is like to lose a loved one. He knows what it is like to be tempted, like us.

Your God knows you, but He doesn't just sit there. It's this intimate knowledge. He comes and He goes with you and He doesn't just stay up in heaven. He comes to be among us. We see that especially with Jesus. But as He does that, as He goes, He also delivers. Moses, yes, He was going to be God's agent, the messenger, but he wasn't going to do all the plagues and free the people. God was. All of these things, the Passover, the Lamb, and going through the Red Sea, the salvation of the Israelites, all are pictures of what Jesus would do for us. Jesus comes to us. He came to this world to deliver us, to save us. And as the Israelites are moved from captivity, they are brought to the Promised Land; from a place to another.

That's true for us. You have been brought from being slaves to sin to being set free from Christ. We will have a baptism in the second service where we are reminded of God's work of saving us and redeeming us. As we know what Christ has done for us, we live in that peace and forgiveness now. God has brought you from a place to a place. While we know that is true now, there is a greater deliverance coming. As we live in this sinful, broken world, God will deliver us from this place to heaven, to the final Promised Land. As God explains His name to Moses, "I am the God of your fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob," He doesn't speak about them as speaking past tense, that "I WAS," that these people are dead. He speaks about them as being living and that our God is the God of the living; that our loved ones are with Him in heaven now. That's what we await; being taken from a place where we know we will struggle and have sin still in our life, to a place of eternity with our God. This is what God has done for us and what He will do.

Because He has done all of these things and He has revealed this to us, we go back to the beginning. God has called sinners and yes, we are His sinners, but while we might feel unqualified, like Moses, *God makes us qualified*. He has redeemed us. He has washed us. And He has given us everything that we need. As we go forward, yes, we sin, but He has made us righteous. He has given us the words to go out and share.

Today in that holy ministry video, as we talk about it, yes, God calls some to the holy ministry, but God calls us all. What did it say that the word "ministry" means?—to serve. God called you to serve and to love your neighbor, to share that Word and the Gospel with your friends and family. He has. I think today we remember how God has called each and every one of us and how we can serve and love. We also remember the blessings of the holy ministry; to encourage people to serve fully. We are thankful for those who have. For Mr. Muchka, as we'll celebrate later today. For Pastor Ott, as we'll celebrate later this summer. For faithful ministers that have served our congregation for nearly 40 years. So we encourage everyone to serve.

But we also encourage people, that if you've been blessed by Called Workers, like Moses, who was 80-years-old, who knows what you can do and when you can serve. God can use your origin story; the things that you might think are your weaknesses or your struggles, for His service.

We know that we struggle with who we are and what God has called us to do, but we don't have to worry about that. We know that God has equipped us and loves us, to make us those who go out. God calls us. God doesn't send us out on our own. He will go with us and HE is the one who really saves and redeems. We get to share that beautiful message. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.