

Dear Friends in Christ,

The God we worship, the God who calls us to repent may frighten us. This does not have to be the case. We see this in an unusual fireside chat.

You may or may not know that one of the presidents had what was called “*Fireside Chats.*”

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt recognized that he could reach a wide audience through radio. So he began a series of radio chats during the Depression and then also had them during World War II. These conversations were meant to calm people during difficult times and get them to follow his leadership. These *Fireside Chats* seemed successful.

We are going to listen to another “fireside chat” today. This “chat” is of the greatest importance to us even though it happened about 3500 years ago. This conversation takes place on a mountain in the Sinai desert. This is no president or world leader, this is the LORD God. **The LORD God Invites Us to an Unusual Conversation.** It is meant to comfort, encourage and inspire us.



## 1. THE CALL

When the Lord appears to Moses in the burning bush on Mt. Sinai, Moses is already 80 years old. He had grown up in the palace in Egypt, but has spent the last 40 years a shepherd in the Sinai Peninsula. The Israelites have been slaves in Egypt from before the time Moses was born. The Lord God has appeared to Moses because he is calling him to go on a rescue mission. Before we look at the mission, we need to understand **The Call**. This will help us as God calls us to do things in life.

A. We may think we know why the Lord is calling Moses, but let’s not miss an obvious but important point. When the Lord calls him to serve, Moses is to understand that God has also called him as his child.

1. This becomes important because we cannot pretend to know God or serve him willingly if we are not in a right relationship with him. Notice what happened to Moses when the Lord God spoke to him from the burning bush. We are told that Moses hid his face. We cannot blame Moses, because who

of us would want anyone to see everyone one of our thoughts and deeds. Moses was aware that the being he had come into contact with could see EVERYTHING about him. He instinctively tried to hide. You and I would do the same. Our sins are many and embarrassing.

Moses does not leave, because God is merciful. He says, **“I am the God of your father...”** Even though the princess of Egypt became his step-mother, Moses birth mother nursed him and raised him in his earliest years. She would have taught him about his Father in Heaven and how Adam and Eve had fallen into sin, but that God promised Adam, Eve and their children a Savior. Moses was living in a faith relationship with the God of his father. So he was one of God’s children. Circumcision would mark him as one of God’s chosen people.

2. God is now merciful in giving him a special calling. All believers serve God, their Father in their lives. Moses was being called to lead God’s people out of Egypt to the promised land of Canaan.

B. We live a world today where people struggle with their purpose. This is not the case with you and me. We have a calling from God.

1. Many of us are called to meet the God whose name we were baptized into. He calls to us through the pages of Scripture because he wants us to come near and learn more about him. For some of you the first time you met God is when heard his voice in Scripture. He wants you too to get to know him better.

2. When we hear God’s voice we have the same reaction as Moses. When we hear preaching of judgement, we want to hide. That voice tells us about the wonderful forgiveness he has for us. We don’t need to be afraid. We are his child. In fact he calls us to live for him. He wants us to come back again and again to hear his voice, because he has much to tell us. In Scripture he also guides us to carry out the tasks and work that he calls us to do. We live our daily lives for him, but he may have special tasks for us in the work of the church. Listening to his voice will help us with our calling.

## 2. THE COMFORT

One of the main reasons the Lord converses with Moses is that his people are suffering. He states, **“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.”** (7) There is comfort now for Moses

and the people as the Lord is concerned and he is going to act.

A. The Lord God reveals to Moses that he intends to rescue them.

1. How had they become slaves? The Lord God had blessed the family of Jacob during their stay in Egypt. They had become numerous and they had gained wealth. The Egyptians had grown to fear the Hebrews. They may well have been angry that their own gods had not blessed them like the one God of the Hebrews had blessed Jacob's people. So they enslaved them. God's people were miserable and suffered for a time.

2. The Lord announces his plan to Moses. Moses will go and tell Pharaoh that the Lord God of heaven and earth had commanded that the Israelites be released. The Lord seals his command with a promise. He will rescue them from the hand of Pharaoh and they will worship the Lord on this same mountain that Moses is standing on. In verse 11 Moses expresses humility, **"Who am I?"** This is a great thing God is doing through him.

B. The Lord's voice brings us comfort in the Scriptures as he talks to us about our rescue.

1. You and I and our fellow Americans typically do not see ourselves as slaves. However, the Scriptures are very clear that we are slaves to sin. Jesus says in John 8:34, **"Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."** St. Paul explains to the Roman Christians, **"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?"** (Romans 6:16) He goes on in verse 18 of Romans 6 and says, **"You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."**

2. God had a plan to rescue us from slavery to sin. In Romans 7:25 again Paul writes, **"Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"** St. Peter spells it out, **"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."** (1 Peter 2:24) When we hear the voice of God, we listen not as frightened sinners, but as adoring children. In that voice we hear words of comfort and encouragement.

### 3. THE CONFESSION

Moses is not sure that after he has been gone for 40 years that people will accept him or the fact that God sent him. So he asks, **"What shall I tell**

**them?”** The Lord gives Moses beautiful words to confess. We can also confess the Lord God with these words today.

A. Moses would identify the Lord in two ways.

1. First, **“I am has sent me to you.”** The Lord had always identified himself as “Yaweh” or “I AM”. Our God is alive. He thinks and he speaks. The Scriptures tell us that he was here before the creation of the world.

2. As the “I AM” God, the Lord, had painted himself as the God of free and faithful grace. This God had promised Abraham that the whole world would be blessed through a divine Savior who would take away the world’s sins.

So this God also identifies himself as, **“The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.”** The God who sent Moses is the God of the promise.

B. There is one more thing we have to note about this incident. Something we can confess.

1. The person in the bush is identified at first as **“The Angel of the Lord.”**

This angel is God himself. In the Old Testament, **The Angel of the Lord** appears a number of times. It is the second person of the Trinity speaking.

This is Jesus before he took on human flesh. In John 8:58 Jesus says, **“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”**

2. The Son of God is there getting Moses to go to Egypt and rescue the Israelites. Because if they don’t return to the Promised Land, he can’t be born in Bethlehem. More importantly he can’t suffer and die on a cross near Jerusalem and then rise again. Jesus needed to do this so that he could rescue us from the slavery of sin and bring us into the freedom of the children of God. The Old Testament isn’t a bunch of myths and fairy tales. It is the orchestrated plan of the living God to graciously rescue people for time and eternity. This is something we can confess after hearing the voice of God.

Conclusion: Today political leaders don’t use “fireside chats” but they have television and Town Hall meetings and rallies to speak to people. What a

privilege that God who dwells on high, comes and speaks to us not from a burning bush, but from the pages of Holy Scripture. We don’t have to be afraid of the fact that he wants to talk to us. God has plans for our troubled world and troubled souls. He gives us comfort. He helps us to see Jesus and the plan of salvation. He calls on us to



live for him and confess him as we journey to the promised land of eternal life. Amen.

Exodus 3:1-8b,10-15

1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7 The Lord said, "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. 8 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..."

10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

13 Moses said to God, "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?"

14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"

15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, '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.'