

Day Eight

Scripture:

Exodus 3:1-10

Reflection:

When God called Moses out of a burning bush, He calls him out of retirement. Years earlier, Moses had been well positioned to lead Israel out of slavery. Raised and educated among the aristocracy of Egypt, when he was forty years old he was in his prime in physical strength and political influence. He was also profoundly concerned about the plight of the Hebrews. In his outrage over the senseless beating of Hebrew slaves, he attacked and killed a cruel Egyptian taskmaster. Every ounce of common sense would expect that this is when God would raise him up to go and demand, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Let My people go.'" But, nothing of the kind happened.

Instead, Moses is forced to flee from Egypt with nothing but the clothes on his back. He hides out in the desert wilderness far to the east of Egypt. He marries into a local family and spends his days herding sheep and goats. And, he does this, day after day and year after year, until he is what we'd now call a "senior citizen." He is around eighty years old when the voice from the bush challenges him to return to Egypt and make demands of the most powerful man on earth. At this point, Moses is anything but confident. He offers excuses why it will not work. He begs God to send someone else. But, in the end, this eighty-year-old

shepherd obeys the call. And, as songwriter Ken Medema has noted, the “rod of Moses becomes the rod of God.”

God has a long habit of calling the weak to do something even the strong could not do. Whether Isaiah with his unclean lips, Jeremiah with his youthful years, or Peter with his general sense of personal sinfulness, God chooses to move the powerful with the trembling hands of the weak. One day, he will send a child born in a backstreet stable in an unimportant village to be the King of all the earth's Kings and Lord over all other Lords.

God has never waited to find people with the right ability. He has always used people with the right availability.

Family:

Materials: A freshly picked small leafy green branch no more than four inches long. Be careful with some evergreens, since they are very flammable and, even when green colored, can be quite dry. A well-moistened towel. Some clay or other material that will hold the branch upright (do not use Styrofoam). Some rubbing alcohol (50-90% alcohol solution).

Activity: Pour the alcohol into a small cup and completely dip the leafy sprig or branch into the alcohol. Since it will evaporate quickly, wait to do this until just before you plan to light the “bush.” Do not use dried out branches and be very careful with evergreens. It is a good idea to test a branch in a safe place first, and then use another branch from the same plant. With the children present, have someone read the scripture passage. Ask them what it would be like to have God talk to them out of the burning bush. A bush that is on fire, but does not actually burn up. Wouldn't that be

strange? Now, dip the evergreen and set it on a table in the middle of the moist towel. Strike a match or lighter and ask them what will happen if you set the bush on fire. Now, light the bush. [Because alcohol burns at a relatively low temperate, the alcohol will ignite and burn off without catching much of the evergreen on fire. If the branch starts to actually burn, be ready to use the moist towel to put it out, if necessary.]

What would you do if God asked you to do something for Him? What if you were afraid, would you still try? What if you thought you might not be very good at it, would you still try? What if you thought somebody else might do it better, would you still try?

Now, read Ephesians 6:1-4 and ask everybody to talk about what they think it means. Do you think this applies even to Jesus? Read Luke 2:51 and talk about Jesus and his parents.

Finally, using the Jesse Tree ornament showing the burning bush, point out that God sends all of us on special missions. Sometimes He might do this with a miracle like the burning bush and a voice. Other times, He does this through speaking to us from the pages of the Bible. To prepare the world for the coming of Jesus, God will call people like Moses and give them special missions. One day he will use an angel to call Mary and give her a special mission: to be the mother of Jesus. And, just like Moses, Jesus will come up to the Devil and say, "Let my people go."

Prayer:

Pray about how God has chosen to use people to bring carry out His work on earth. Reflect on Moses and how he must have felt standing in front of the burning bush. Talk to God

about things you know He wants you to do that you feel reluctant to try because you do not think you are good enough or brave enough or strong enough. Ask God to help you overcome those fears and follow His special missions for you and your life.