

Dear fellow baptised saints of God, grace, mercy, and peace be yours in the name of Jesus, our Lord, our Deliverer, and our Saviour. Amen. The title for today’s sermon is “A Living God” and is from the Old Testament reading, Exodus chapter 3. Let us pray . . . Amen.

In today’s Old Testament lesson we see something amazing to say the least. Moses, a Jewish exile from Egypt, and now shepherd, is found by God. As Moses tends the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro, an angel of God “**appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a burning bush.**” (Exodus 3:2) Wow, You can image Moses stopping in his tracks and saying to himself ‘now this is something you don’t see every day.’ Then, “**When the LORD saw that Moses turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And Moses said**” what anyone would say hearing God’s voice calling them by name from a burning bush “, “**Here I am.**”⁵ **Then God said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”**⁶ **And God said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.**”(Exodus 3:4-6)

And can you really blame Moses for being afraid? Moses heard God speak to him. Moses was in the presence of God and standing on holy ground. God almighty, the God of his father, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the One true and Living God, was speaking to him, and him alone.

But God did not just come to shoot the breeze. God came to speak to Moses for a reason. God told Moses, “**I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings,**”(Exodus 3:7)

And what suffering and affliction they had. Exodus chapter one tells us how the children of Israel had “**taskmasters set over them to afflict them with heavy burdens... the Egyptians ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves**¹⁴ **and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work the Egyptians ruthlessly made them work as slaves...**²² **Pharaoh even commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.”**(Exodus 1:11, 13-14, 22)

Can you imagine being invited into a land only to be later forced into bitter slavery years later. Then on top of the slavery, to have your infant children slaughtered for no other reason than they were the wrong race? But God did not forget about His people, nor did God ignore their situation. Instead God saw His people’s afflictions, God heard their cries, God knew their sufferings. God was not just some distant God who didn’t care about His people.

This is why God came to talk to Moses from the burning bush. God was sending Moses to do something Moses was not very comfortable doing: God was sending Moses to Pharaoh.

But God was not sending Moses to a death sentence. Hear again God’s Word to Moses, “**I know their sufferings,**⁸ **and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey,...**⁹ **And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me,**

and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." It was God who was going to deliver Israel and He would work through Moses to do it. God gave Moses the power and the means to deliver Israel. When Moses asked, God told Moses His name; "I AM WHO I AM." God's name is more than just a simple word, God's name is life and it gives life. Moses' father and fathers in the faith, though physically dead for 400 years or more, were still alive in God.

Who exactly is this God? He is the unchanging God of heaven and earth. If God was not clear enough for Moses in the burning bush, the whole heavenly host proclaim in the book of Revelation; "**Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!**"(Revelation 4:8) God is a living and active God, present throughout all human history.

Today's Old Testament reading was setting up the salvation event of the whole Old Testament; Israel's deliverance from their mortal oppressor the Egyptians, or more specifically Pharaoh. Israel had virtually no chance for escape or freedom. They were in bondage to Egypt and could not free themselves. God's deliverance of Israel through Moses was the foundation for the nation of Israel knowledge of Who God was and is, and for their faith and trust in Him.

Yet more impressive is that Exodus salvation event was nothing compared to what was to come. Scripture reveals a greater description of Who is "I AM". Scripture reveals the Godhead as something more than the Father. We also hear of a greater Saviour than Moses in the God-man Jesus Christ. When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees more than 2000 years after the death of Abraham, Jesus boldly told them, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.**"(John 8:58) The Book of Hebrews tells us how "**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**"(Hebrews 13:8) and Jesus Himself declares in the Book of Revelation, "**I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.**"(Revelation 1:8)

God was not just living and active in the Old Testament times or just with the people of Israel, rather the whole of the Old Testament was pointing ahead to the One Saviour who would get intimately involved with all of us and who would deliver the whole human race, namely Jesus Christ.

Christ Jesus needed to come because, though the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, they still had mortal problems. They, and all people, still had lethal afflictions, still cried out, and continued to suffer. While we don't necessarily have a physical enemy like Egypt, yet we have one much more deadly and sinister; sin, death, and the devil. While Egypt could kill the body it could not touch the soul, yet with sin, death, and the devil directly attack the soul to condemn it eternally. Sin earns condemnation and eternal death, and the devil is there to encourage everyone to sin. Just as the Israelites could not save themselves from Pharaoh, it is humanly impossible to escape the wages of sin, death, and the power of the devil.

But as God sent an earthly redeemer for the people of Israel to deliver them from their earthly oppressor, God sent Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, to deliver you from sin, death, and the devil.

God sent Jesus to do what was humanly impossible to do; God sent His only Son on our flesh, God sent Him to carry our sin, He sent Him to suffer our rightful punishment, and for Christ to die our death. Christ Jesus died in our place and then rose on the third day to give us life. Even more remarkable is Jesus did not just do it everyone; Jesus did it for each of you.

Christ delivered you, and your assurance lies in the fact that He found you spiritually blind, dead in your sins, and an enemy of God. He then carried your corpse to the font where He washed you and breathed His life giving Word into your rejecting, condemned, and dead soul, to bring you faith, trust in Him, and to everlasting life, just as Christ did this very morning with Mila and Paxton. There at the font God breathed His Holy Spirit into your moral bodies, opening your eyes, forgiving you all your sins, and He continues to lead you by His Word to eternal life.

But, Baptism is not just the beginning, in those waters you live, move and have your life. You daily return to those waters of Baptism to receive the forgiveness of all your sins and be comforted with God's promises 'for you'. God's Word resounds in your ears from those waters saying, 'your sins are forgiven, you are released from your bondage to sin, from the shackles of the devil, and are released from death as you have already been given eternal life in Christ.

In Christ you are not told to back off from God, quite to opposite, you are called to come near, invited to His table, encouraged to eat His meal and receive Christ Himself-eating His body and drinking His blood-for the forgiveness of all your sins.

You do not have a hidden or distant god. You have a living and active God, involved in human history, and intimately involved in you and your history and eternity. Christ lived, died, rose, and eternally lives from you! Jesus will never die again. He continues to come to you, find you, and deliver you from yourself, from sin, death, and the devil. Christ Jesus is also the One who through the Holy Spirit is personally leading and guiding you to eternal life. Thanks be to God. Amen.

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