

St. Margaret's Uniting Church Mooroolbark

Sunday 3rd September, 2017

READING Exodus 3:1-15 *Moses at the Burning Bush*

REFLECTION ON THE SCRIPTURES

Moses does not anticipate a divine call from God. The sun has come up on an otherwise ordinary day. He is just going about his normal duties until he sees something that transfixes him. He notices a burning bush that is not consumed by the fire.

Perhaps this bush has been burning for a long time, long enough until Moses actually notices that God is in this place. It is possible he has passed this point before. It could even be that this bush has been burning before now, but the sign was not noticed. What does it mean for God to appear on an ordinary day while going about ordinary things?

Perhaps this question is not just about Moses. I wonder how it is that God comes to you and me in the ordinary times of our lives? Isn't it true that God is always present in the everyday and seemingly mundane, with bushes burning or other outrageous sign, just waiting until we notice that not all is what it seems?

This disturbed ordinary day sets about a massive change. It calls Moses to grow up, to listen, to have courage and faith. It calls him back to Egypt to face his demons and his foes. It calls him into leadership of a reluctant people, people who like Moses himself, struggle to trust and have courage in God.

The call of God changes us. It must change us. It draws us into a covenant that is divine in its source and encouragement. It helps us open our eyes and notice signs like the burning bush. It welcomes us onto ground that is holy. It invites us into awe as we shed our shoes and all that hinders our reception of the divine way.

And reception reveals the very nature of God to us. I AM who I AM.

God is always calling us, and sometimes we notice. We are always on Holy Ground, and the thin spaces between heaven and earth break through into our very being.

If we are too busy to notice these God moments, how much beauty do we fail to see? How much wonder is robbed from our lives? How much love do we miss, right where we are?

In the West we are particularly poor at taking time to pause, to notice, to open and to yield to divine presence. Is this gathering time for us to do some of those things – with a lack of hurry to take in the presence of God, right here, right now?

There is so much going on right now that many of us feel depleted or pulled apart in all directions. We hear cries from refugees, of folk hit by landslides or storm, of nations posturing with nuclear warheads, of people who defend the honour of our country, of those who grieve the impacts of our history. And of course, much more happens within our streets, our homes, our families.

So now we recognise the call as Jesus has uttered it to us, in order to be like a burning bush, in order to make the way of God clear to us.

*Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.*

*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and lowly of heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.*

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

So now, we take some time. We offer our lament, our struggle, our fear, our burdens to Christ. And we take some time to allow God to touch us.

We begin with breath. Sacred breath from the time of creation. Holy Spirit, ruach, JHWH.

As you breathe, remember the story of God. *Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.*

The breath that you breathe, the very breath of God. JHWH. JHWH.

Remember the story of God. God calls Moses, as he has called many before this moment. Moses was a fugitive. He had run away from his sin, from taking the life of another. Yet God called him, to face up to his sin, to repent, in order to live up to his calling.

No matter our iniquity, or what we run from, God calls us to face our demons, in order to live up to who we are called to be. JHWH. JHWH.

In Matthew's gospel, Peter tried to dictate the terms of the call. And Jesus told him to get behind me, don't try and be out in front, calling the shots. Follow Me!

And St. Paul reminds us in the letter to the Romans, that we have what it takes to be followers of Jesus, if we always allow our love to be genuine.

And this too is the story of Moses. He didn't believe he had what it took to answer the call of God. He didn't think he was strong enough, or smart enough, or good enough or had the words to be a leader. But God simply asked him to be who he was, to love God, to walk in God's way, and to share the love of God.

So it is really very simple. Listen. Respond. Let your love be genuine!

Remember your story of God. You may have personal stories of being called. You may have seen signs. You may have been invited to repent in order to fully live. JHWH. JHWH.

Today we are the story of God. Here, at the table, is an invitation:

Come, all who seek hope.

Come, all who seek new life.

*Come, all who have journeyed far,
following God's promise*

without knowing where it might lead.

*Come to this table,
where all are welcome,
and partake of this feast.*

*Share this bread
and this cup,
and in so doing
know that God, the true light of all time and space,
is ever in our world.*

Our story is the story of Jesus. It is God's story. It is the story of all time and place. It is the story of the saints of history. It is our story.

In every breath. In every sign. In bread. In cup. In Father. In Son. In Holy Spirit. In you.

Listen. Respond. Let your love be genuine!