

HOMILY

August 30, 2020

offered by The Reverend Mary Kimberley

Today the scriptures are about being called by God. We begin with the story of Moses being called to lead the Israelites out of Egypt - one of the Bible's most exciting stories, but also, one of the most violent.

Moses had had a life of privilege (having been raised by the daughter of the Pharaoh), but his life was slowly changing. He was aware that he was not an Egyptian, and he was also aware that his people were now being treated as slaves by the taskmasters in the brickyards. He was so incensed by the harsh treatment given to an Israelite slave by one of the taskmasters, that Moses killed the taskmaster. When Moses found that he had been seen by at least one of the Israelites, and that Pharaoh was now seeking to kill him, he ran away to the land of Midian. There he met a family of seven daughters by a well, who were trying to water their father's flock amidst the chaos of other shepherds driving them away. Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When the girls told their father what had happened, he told them to invite Moses to 'eat bread' with them. So Moses was offered a home where he was also given a wife and a job keeping the flock of Jethro, the priest of Midian.

The Bible says 'In the course of many days, the king of Egypt died. And the people of Israel groaned under their bondage, and cried out for help, and their cry under bondage came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. And God saw the people of Israel, and God knew their condition.

I have given you the setting for the story given to us today. We know that the Pharaoh did not want his slaves to leave. What in deed would Moses say to Pharaoh? What in deed would Moses say to his own people?

Do you remember that Moses was still resisting the call, even after God had given him words to say to Pharaoh and to the Israelites, even after God had shown Moses some magical signs to use. Moses is still saying, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquentbut I

am slow of speech and of tongue". Then the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." But Moses said, "Oh, my Lord, send, I pray, some other person." Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well; and behold he is coming out to meet you ...And you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. He shall speak for you to the people; and you shall be to him as God. And you shall take in your hand this rod, with which you shall do the signs."

SO Moses took his leave of Jethro, and took his wife and two sons and set them on an ass and went back to Egypt.

Moses finally accepted the call from God. Maybe I should say, God accepted the call from Moses. The call didn't go away though some personal adjustments were made. God seemed to lean over backwards to get the man he wanted for the huge task he wanted done. Moses was that man.

Have you ever wondered if God was calling you?

Our second reading, found in Romans, is a list of suggestions - sort of like the 10 commandments, but more like 'ways of life'. Maybe you have felt that God was calling you into some thing like this. Or maybe it felt more like an invitation? I appeal to you therefore, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans12:1) ...For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts given to us that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them with zeal and cheerfully. So, let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another....

These are calls which do not need ordination, but are gifts of a Christian life that we would hope to emulate both personally and in our life together at our home parish.

Finally, we come to the call of Jesus. Or is it more of an offering. “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it

Amen