

PASSAGE: Exodus 3 (NIVUK) *Moses and the burning bush*

3 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,^[a] 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 – the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 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^[b] 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.^[c] 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,^[d] the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob – has sent me to you."

'This is my name for ever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.

¹⁶ 'Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, "The LORD, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. ¹⁷ And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites – a land flowing with milk and honey."

¹⁸ 'The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, "The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a

three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.”¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him.²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

²¹ ‘And I will make the Egyptians favourably disposed towards this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed.²² Every woman is to ask her neighbour and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians.’

LAUNCH

When was the last time you had a surprise encounter with someone?
Why was it a surprise? How did you feel? What did you talk about?

DISCOVERY

What do we learn about God from this passage? (His key characteristics)

What do we learn about Moses from this passage?

‘Politicians seek election. Moses sought to avoid election.’

What excuses did Moses give to avoid being sent?

What excuses do we give to avoid being sent?

Moses was afraid he might be rejected by the Israelites in a rerun of what happened when he was younger. How do you handle feelings linked with the fear of rejection?

What qualifies an individual to be effectively used by God?

APPLICATION

Character formation is central to God’s calling for all of us. Spend time reflecting as a group on the following areas of your life.

- Share one way in which family background has shaped your character
- Share one ability or talent that you can put to good use in building the church
- Share one excuse that you need to avoid giving in order to use that gift more effectively.

Spend time guided by the Spirit praying for one another in these key areas

Refs: Moses Calling and Character: Stephen Eyre & Moses by Charles Swindoll