

“THE MOUNTAIN CALLS”
Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: LUKE 6:12-16 / REVELATION 3:20

GOD’S WORD: EXODUS 3:1-4

I – MOSES:

You heard read to you this morning the story of Moses and the burning bush. What I want you to think about now is the fact that before this story, Moses knew about God, but did not know God. There is a big difference.

The first two chapters of Exodus tell us that Moses had been born an Israelite. He was Hebrew by birth. To keep him from being killed by the Egyptians his mother floated him down the river in a basket where he was found by Pharaoh’s daughter who plucked him from the river and raised him as a prince of Egypt. As such he had all the rights and privileges of a son of pharaoh. He could come and go as he pleased. He had the finest clothes, the finest education, the finest food, and was a member of royalty. I imagine he was raised to look at the Hebrews as slaves to be used and abused by his adoptive family. Just property to be controlled.

But somewhere along the line he found out he was Hebrew. The people who were dying just to build the structures of Egypt were his people. We know that he went out and saw them and talked to them because the Scripture tells us such things. I’m sure that during these visits he was told about the traditions and the religious beliefs of the people. He was told about the one true God, the God of his ancestors who was more powerful than all the god’s of Egypt. He knew about this God, but he did not “know” this God. He had not worshipped this God, he had not prayed to this God. He had no intimate relationship with this God...but that would change.

II – GOD CALLS MOSES:

The Bible tells us that Moses grew fond enough of his Hebrew roots that when he saw an Egyptian beating one of the Hebrew slaves, he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. When Pharaoh found out about it and ordered that Moses should be arrested and executed, Moses fled into the desert and ended up in the land of Midian. It is here that his journey towards God would develop.

When Moses arrived in the land he saw some women shepherds being abused by their male counterparts and he intervened on their behalf. Turns out their father was the priest of Midian and Moses ended up a guest in his house and later married one of his daughters. I'm sure that various theological discussions occurred between wife and husband, as well as between Moses and his father-in-law the priest. His knowledge of God continued to grow. He had all the time in the world to think about it as he traveled the area with his sheep.

On the day of this morning's Scripture Moses is deep in the wilderness near a mountain named Sinai. He had been told this was the mountain of God and was a sacred place. On this day as he tends the flock he looks up and sees a strange sight. He sees a bush that is on fire but doesn't burn up. No matter how long he sits there and watches, the bush doesn't turn to ashes and disintegrate, it just keeps burning. He is amazed by the sight and decides he has to go and investigate this a little closer. What he doesn't know is that his life is about to be changed forever. Through this burning bush he is being called by God. Moses gets up, goes up the mountain to where the burning bush is and it's here that his relationship is going to change from knowing about God to knowing God. It all starts when Moses gets close and God calls him by name. "Moses!, Moses!" And a relationship began.

III – MOUNTAIN OF PRAYER:

I wanted to look at the passage of scripture this morning as we start a series on Prayer for the month because I believe it is a story of prayer, in the time of Moses and now. I have no trouble understanding the Hebrew belief at the time that God would be found on a mountain. Isn't God higher than all of us? Isn't God all knowing, all seeing, all powerful? Don't we place God way above us? The praise song says he is "high and lifted up" as it quotes the Psalms. Don't we refer to our extreme spiritual experiences as "mountain top experiences?" So I have no trouble visualizing God on a mountain. On a plane that I must climb up to if I want to reach God and the higher I climb, the closer I get, the more intimate my relationship is with God. So for this month of sermons I want you to visualize God on his holy mountain.

The way we climb that mountain is through prayer. Prayer is the climb. We know it's physically impossible to climb high enough to reach heaven on our own accord. We know there is no ladder high enough to get us there, no ropes that we can use to scale life and get there. We get there through prayer. I climb up to God each and every time I clasp my hands, close my eyes, quiet my heart, and pray. The more I pray...the higher I climb.

If you read the books of Moses, Exodus, Leviticus, numbers, and Deuteronomy, you find that that's what Moses was doing each time he went up the mountain. He was praying...he was talking with God. His relationship to God grew and grew through these conversations. He asked God for help for himself, he asked God for help for the people as interceded on their behalf. He asked God for guidance, for leadership, for deliverance. He did it all on God's Holy mountain, the mountain of prayer.

IV – TEXT:

Moses isn't the only image we have of finding God on his mountain through prayer. Or of being called by God from the mountain. I see Jesus himself casting this vision in this morning's text.

Luke 6:12-16 (NLT)

¹²One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night. ¹³At daybreak he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles. Here are their names:

¹⁴Simon (whom he named Peter),
Andrew (Peter's brother),
James,
John,
Philip,
Bartholomew,
¹⁵Matthew,
Thomas,
James (son of Alphaeus),
Simon (who was called the zealot),
¹⁶Judas (son of James),
Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).

Jesus has had a grueling few days of ministry. Traveling around the region teaching, preaching, healing, and arguing with the Pharisees. The most recent argument was for healing a man's deformed hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath. He needed to get his batteries recharged; he had some major decisions to make and needed to spend some time with God. So he went up a mountain and prayed. He went and did what he needed to do to get the close contact with his heavenly father that he so desperately needed. He spent an entire night in prayer.

Let's stop there for just a moment and see the lesson it gives us about prayer. Have you ever spent an entire night in prayer? Have you ever climbed the mountain from dusk to dawn? Think for a minute, what's the longest climb of prayer you've made? I'd guess that most of us are out of shape and can't climb for more than 15 minutes before we have to come back down the mountain and rest. Even if I'm generous and give you a ½ hour you don't even compare to the prayer life of Jesus. Guess the lesson is we've got a lot of climbing to do.

The second lesson I want you to see this morning is that just as God called Moses to the mountain, Jesus called his followers to the mountain. After he stopped climbing/praying himself, he called all of his followers to the mountain with him. He called his followers to climb too. And on that mountain he called 12 to climb higher than the others. He called 12 to climb into an intimate relationship with him and through him to God.

V – THE MOUNTAIN CALLS:

The main lesson I want you to learn today though is this...THE MOUNTAIN CALLS. God didn't call to Moses and then shut down the mountain of prayer. God didn't call to his son Jesus and then shut down the mountain of prayer. God didn't call the first 12 disciples to make the climb and then close down the holy mountain. God still calls his children to climb the mountain today, to enter into an intimate relationship with him today, and we still climb it through the simple act of prayer.

There is another great image of God calling you in the Bible. It's immortalized by a picture that can be found in most churches.

²⁰“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

Revelation 3:20 (NLT)

The image is that Jesus calls you to climb the mountain of Salvation by opening the door of your heart and inviting him in. How do you open that door...through prayer!

God is calling you to climb the mountain. No matter where you're at in your path of discipleship, God is calling you to climb, to pray. If you're at the bottom he wants you to hear the call of Jesus to open the door and pray him into your heart. If you've already done that he wants you to hear him calling you to pray...to come to the mountain often and to stay a while. He calls you to come to the mountain and pray so you too will know him instead of just knowing about him. Let's climb.

AMEN