

SUNDAY STORIES

Life disrupted / Exodus 3:1-15 / Matt. 16:21-28

QUICK NOTES

Last Sunday we covered the story of baby Moses being placed into the Nile and rescued by the Egyptian princess. The future savior of the Hebrew people is brought into the midst of the enemy and raised as Egyptian royalty. As an adult he kills an Egyptian who is beating a Hebrew slave. Later he tries to break up a fight between two slaves and one says, “Are you going to kill us too?” In fear Moses runs. He becomes a shepherd in Midia.



A LIFE DISRUPTED

Moses has settled nicely into his new life as a husband, son-in-law, and shepherd in the land of the Midianites. This new life is a far cry from the life he knew as royalty, but he seems happy. He probably rarely thinks about the Egyptian he murdered. Like most humans, when thoughts of what we’ve done arise to haunt us, he probably did all he could to hide those thoughts away or even to justify his actions to himself. Moses never expected his life to change so suddenly, but there it was; a burning bush, a curiosity he could not resist. And when his name was called he answered, “Here I am”. From that moment on Moses’ sweet pastoral life was at an end. No longer would he be shepherding sheep, but herding people into a new life and new community. Moses was reluctant, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh? Who am I that I should lead these people out of Egypt?” Loaded question for a man who had murdered one of Pharaoh’s subjects and had left his own people behind because he was a coward. No way did Moses really desire or think himself qualified for the job. He made lots of excuses, but God always had it covered. “I’m going to be with you in this Moses, all the way.”

“God, interrupt whatever we are doing so that we can join You in whatever you are doing” –

Francis Chan

The Choice for Disruption

Q: If my life is peaceful why should God disrupt that?

A: Here’s a fact for you. Bury your head in the sand and when you come up for air nothing above ground level will be the same as when you left it. Life changes and if we are a people who love then we understand things change for those we love too. When it’s good we celebrate. When it’s bad we wish we could change things. For Moses it wasn’t just a whole nation of oppressed people he left behind, but also his immediate family. How many of us would choose to let that happen? If God presented a way to help our family wouldn’t we just about do anything to let that happen, even if it meant walking towards danger?

Q: What’s my role in this story?

A: Many of us are happy just taking care of our family, but the whole of humanity is our family and our responsibility. What we left undone often

flows into the lives of our children and our children’s children. Every choice we make affects the rest of our lives and other people’s lives too. We can choose to let life disrupt our lives and be miserable or we can let God disrupt us so that we can head off the trouble, or we can let God take the disruption and turn it into something glorious down the road.



TURNING ASIDE TO LOOK OR AVERTING OUR EYES

Rabbi Yael Levy writes a poem reflecting on the story of the burning bush. As she walks through gardens with bright colors and sweet smells she is happy to turn aside to spend time in that place. But as she walks through subway and catches a whiff of urine and sees people covered with poverty, even as she passes on a dollar she averts her eyes away. As she continues to walk she sees a bright red wheel chair. She wants to turn away but the color pulls at her and she turns aside. She sees a man with one leg but a willing and beautiful smile who gives her a thumbs up. She recognizes in that moment Moses' dilemma and reward for turning towards challenge *"Brokeness in Beauty-The cracks of Divinity that allow for the light to shine through- a radiant glory permeates all of creation- will I risk the pain and joy of a broken heart to turn aside and look?"* When we avert our eyes from things we are afraid of we just might miss the beauty and glory that's hidden there.

CHRIST OUR BURNING BUSH

Jesus was the burning bush for the disciples. They turned aside from the lives they were leading and began to follow this burning bush from which the Word and Actions of God was alive and flowing. But in today's reading Peter wants to avert his eyes from the truth and disrupt God's plan of salvation for the world. "Don't go to Jerusalem Jesus, it will be your end." And Jesus replies, "Get behind me Satan." Jesus doesn't want to head towards the cross and all it represent, but he must. If Peter had decided to avert his eyes and leave the path he was on he would never have witnessed a Resurrected Christ. He would have missed the Glory of God that was presented in something.

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly..."

Romans 12:9-21.

OUR OWN PERSONAL BURNING BUSH

In this letter to the church Paul merely reflects the words and actions of Christ. God has always been asking us to be brave enough to let our lives be disrupted, to turn aside for the daily routines of life to take a look at what God is seeing. This disruption of seeing as God does two things: we are made aware of those who cry out to God out of oppression, but these lowly places and people is where we see God at work so clearly if we do not avert our eyes. Look to Christ and He will teach you how to see as God sees, not as humans see.

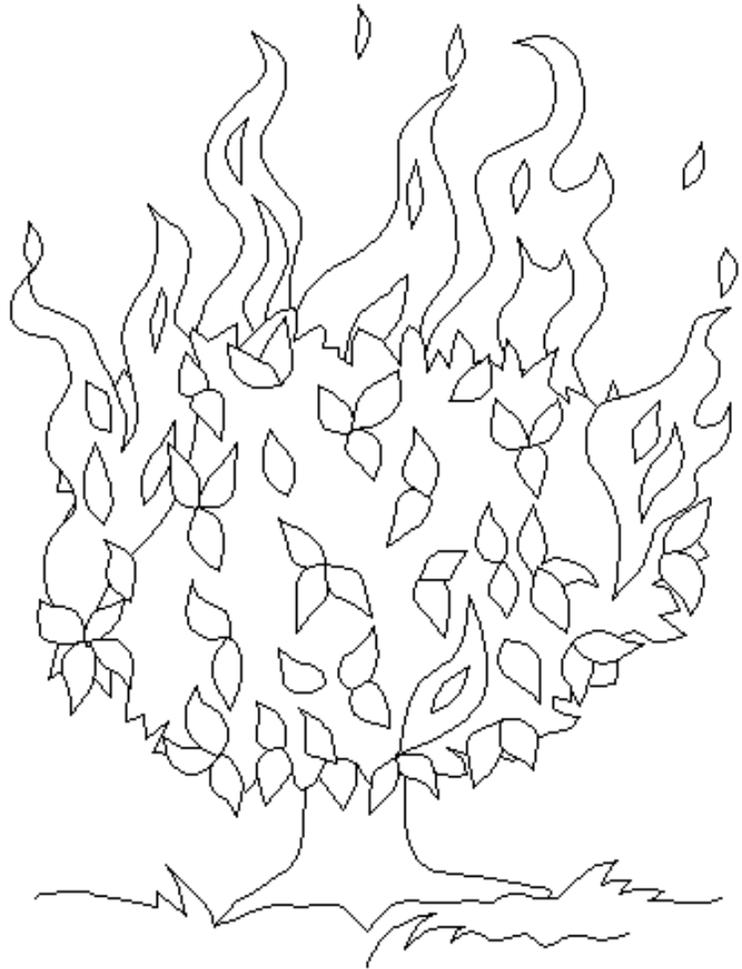
PRAYER

Lord be our burning bush, keeping us in the light of curiosity and hope. Help us to remember that light shines brightest the darker the place. This is your glory and our call, to be a light to those who live in darkness. Give us courage to follow you as Moses and Peter did. Amen

Children's Section

SHARE THE STORY WITH YOUR CHILDREN

God appeared to
Moses in a burning
bush. Read about it
in Exodus 3.



Directions to decorate your bush.

1. Get Red food coloring or red water color and a brush
2. Drip red dots onto the tree where leaves would go.
3. Get a straw and blow the red dots towards the top of the page.
4. Let dry and hang in bedroom. Let this tree remind you that God is always nearby.

Prayer: Dear God. When I am afraid of the dark remind me that you are my light and that you will guard me in my sleep and in my waking. Amen

