

Lenten Devotional March 17, 2024

Scripture

Exodus 3:16-4:12

16 "Go and assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying: I have given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. 17 I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.' 18 They will listen to your voice; and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; let us now go a three days' journey into the wilderness, so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' 19 I know, however, that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders that I will perform in it; after that he will let you go. 21 I will bring this people into such favor with the Egyptians that, when you go, you will not go empty-handed; 22 each woman shall ask her neighbor and any woman living in the neighbor's house for jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing, and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters; and so you shall plunder the Egyptians."

1 Then Moses answered, "But suppose they do not believe me or listen to me, but say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'" 2 The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." 3 And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw the staff on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses drew back from it. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand, and seize it by the tail" - so he reached out his hand and grasped it, and it became a staff in his hand - 5 "so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

6 Again, the LORD said to him, "Put your hand inside your cloak." He put his hand into his cloak; and when he took it out, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. 7 Then God said, "Put your hand back into your cloak" - so he put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored like the rest of his body - 8 "If they will not believe you or heed the first sign, they may believe the second sign. 9 If they will not believe even these two signs or heed you, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

10 But Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." 11 Then the LORD said to him, "Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak."

Devotion

The Rev. M. Catherine (Kay) Day '97

We know the story of God's call to Moses and Moses' reluctance. We understand Moses' hesitation. This is asking more than he believes he is capable of. God clarifies his name and credentials when God says to tell them, "I AM has sent me to you" (3:14). Then God gives him instructions call the people to follow him to leave Egypt.

But Moses voices concerns. What if the people do not believe him? God gives him an object lesson of his power by turning his staff to a snake and then back to a staff and of covering his hand with leprosy and then healing it. God has the power do these demonstrations and so much more. He invites Moses to trust him.

But Moses' self-doubt takes control. He is not eloquent, is slow of speech. God challenges him about who gives speech or sight? God himself has this power. God promises to give Moses the words to say.

We all shake our heads at Moses for being so untrusting, so unwilling to follow God's instructions, so afraid to be faithful and take the step of trust. We can do this because we know the full story and the power of God to deliver his people from captivity in Egypt. It is easy to trust when you know the outcome. But Moses didn't. He had to live through it. We many times are in the same place as Moses and have many of the same questions and reservations for the same reason. We don't know the end of our story or the outcome. We question God's power. We doubt our own abilities for the task at hand. We really don't want to do what we are being asked to do. We want God to find someone else. God says to us the same things he said to Moses. I AM is sending you. I have power to deliver. I will give you all you need. I have chosen you.

Are we willing to trust as Moses ultimately was?

Prayer

All powerful God, we are fearful to follow you, but you are more than able to lead us and empower us. Enable us to trust you for all you call us to do. In Jesus' name, Amen.