

The Two Greatest Questions

Exodus 3:1-15 || Pastor John Wood || 04 October 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What is the story behind your name?

Worship: Psalm 63:5-8 (*Read aloud 3 times, reflect and listen for God's invitation to you.*)

Sermon Summary for Exodus 3:1-15 (*Read the passage before reading the sermon summary.*)

In the past many years, identity politics have gone a long way in replacing traditional political party allegiances. People increasingly identify by ethnicity or sexuality or religion. Though our culture sees this as cause for celebration, it is a reversion to tribalism which the Gospel seeks to cure: *“Neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female...”* And yet, basic questions of identity are crucial, bedrock questions of life. As Calvin said in the opening sentence of the Institutes, “Nearly all the wisdom we possess... consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” Our text is all about these two most basic questions, as Moses looks back on his own story of discovering who he was, and who God is.

Who am I? (Ex 3:11) – What happens when we try to answer that question for ourselves? Moses is a man in search of his identity. In his youth, he attempts to redeem God's people with his own strength... and the results are disastrous. Moses must flee for his life; he ends up spending what he assumes are the “best” years of his life as an unknown shepherd on the far side of the desert. But only then was Moses ready for God to use him. Only then was he capable of the humility and the wonder necessary to give God all glory and praise. And we too must learn that apart from the grace of God, we cannot accomplish anything significant for Him. So, what happens when God begins to answer the question of personal identity for us? It begins when we turn aside to consider something God has done. It becomes clearer when we realize that God is calling us to draw near, and our response is to bow low in worship – when we ask God to tell us who we are. The heart of His answer is: *“I will be with you.”* We belong to God, and He has promised to be with us to the very end. That is the core of our identity.

Who are you? (Ex 3:13) – Who is this God, who has promised to be with us? He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the God of our ancestors – the One who led the patriarchs and made great promises to them. This is the One who is calling Moses, who has promised to be with him. But now God reveals His covenant name – a name that points to the mystery of God's being as the source of all being: I AM WHO I AM. It's a raw assertion of God's authority and power – the only self-sufficient source of all that is. None possess any power that was not given to them by God. Our Creator is telling us that it's illegitimate to expect Him to explain Himself to us beyond what He so graciously does – by acting and revealing Himself in human history and by speaking through prophets and apostles and supremely in His Son, who shows us both who God is and who we are meant to be. God will do and accomplish all He promises... and He will lead us until journey's end. This is the assurance we need to hear and the answers we need to take to heart. May we take to heart (as EB Browning said) that “Earth's crammed with Heaven, and every common bush afire with God; but only he who sees takes off his shoes.”

Discussion Questions *(You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussion.)*

- What happens when we try to answer the questions of our identity ourselves?
 - How have you tried to find your identity apart from God?
 - What or who do you rely on to tell you who you are?
 - What was Moses doing when he saw the burning bush and why does Moses turn aside? (3:1-6)
 - When have you turned aside to see what God was doing? How did He get your attention?
 - What seem to be the biggest obstacles to paying attention to God today?
 - What did God reveal about His identity besides His name? (3:7-15)
 - How did this help Moses understand his own questions of personal identity? (verse 11)
 - How does Moses' response to God reveal great humility? How did Moses learn humility?
 - Discuss this statement: Humility is reality, seeing yourself as you really are.
 - What promises of this passage give you courage?
 - What questions might you still have about who you are?
 - How would you summarize who God is according to this passage?
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Prayer: Moses was asked to remove His sandals because he was on holy ground, an encounter with God Himself. Prayer is holy ground, it is dialogue with God. See this week's prayer guide [Here](#) to prompt you through a time of prayer.

Engage & Experience: Here is the question of the week: What would it look like for you to “turn aside to look” throughout the day so that you might see and hear from God?

When you “turn aside to look” you begin to notice that God is with you and for you. Journal your experiences in noticing “burning bushes” this week.