

Introduction: A truth many of us overlook is that God is calling people all the time. There are three general ways God calls people. *** First, God is calling all people everywhere to turn from themselves and their ways to come to Him and to be saved by knowing Him (Isaiah 45:20-24; 1 Timothy 1:2-8). *** Next, of those who have been reconciled to Him by His goodness and faith, He still calls them to shun sins and wicked acts that tempt all people even His people (Ezekiel 33:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21). *** Finally, God calls some people to lead His people, even those who seem unlikely to succeed. Gideon was the least in the weakest clan of Israel. But God called him to save Israel from the dominant oppression of Midian (Judges 6:9-12). Jeremiah was a young teenager when he was called to give strong words of warning and judgment to God's people and to all nations (Jeremiah 1:4-10). And, Saul of Tarsus was killing followers of Jesus when he was called to tell people of all nations to turn from darkness to light to be forgiven by faith in Jesus (Acts 26:9-23). *** This morning we have heard the story of how God called Moses to go to Egypt and lead over one million Israelites out of bondage. Every time God calls someone to a task, the task is overwhelming and impossible for anyone to do in his or her own strength. For this reason, the people who God called doubted and questioned His call and were on the verge of giving up and walking away. We heard Moses object to his call four times, the last time telling God: send someone else. I have had the same response to some of the calls God has given me. *** So, as we go through this part of the long story of the life of Moses, of how God called him in the first place, let us all ask God to show us the ways we need His help so we can give Him a wholehearted yes to what He has called us to do, just as Moses eventually did. And, The Bible tells us that Gideon, Jeremiah and the apostle Paul also all said yes to God and were used by Him to accomplish His purposes.

I. Israel is oppressed in Egypt and God calls Moses to send him to Pharaoh to take His people out of Egypt.

(Exodus 2:23-25; 3:1-10)

- A. Israel is oppressed and cries out to God who hears them and calls Moses from a burning bush as he tends his father-in-law's sheep. *(Exodus 2:23-25; 3:1-4)*
1. In time, the king of Egypt died and the sons of Israel sighed under bondage, then their cry came up to God from their bondage. *(Exodus 2:23)*
Died and bondage: It is three hundred fifty years since Joseph died. Over that time the kings of Egypt had subjected the Israelites to hard service.
Sighed: The hard service caused the Israelites to sigh and cry out to God in distress.
 2. God heard their groaning and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and He saw the sons of Israel and knew. *(Exodus 2:24-25)*
Hears: God heard with a spirit of compassion, and He determined to do something for His people.
Remembers Covenant: God remembered His covenant to give them the land and to multiply them.
Knows: God knew what their situation was and what He needed to do to deliver them out of Egypt and into the land of which He first spoke to Abraham.
 3. Moses was shepherding his father-in-law Jethro's flock and he led them behind the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. *(Exodus 3:1)*
Shepherd: Like many of God's people Moses looked after sheep.
Horeb-Sinai: Horeb means desert, but its other name was Sinai, or thorny.
 4. Then the angel of Yahweh appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush; then Moses looked and behold, the bush burned in fire but was not consumed; then Moses said, 'I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed'. *(Exodus 3:2-3)*
Fire in bush: It was not unusual for a bush to burn in a desert environment.
Bush not consumed: However, the bush was not consumed by the fire.
See great sight: Moses called this a great sight because it goes against the creation order of things, and all common sense, that a fire would not consume a dry bush.
 5. Then Yahweh saw that he turned aside to see, then God called to him from the midst of the bush, saying, 'Moses, Moses!'; and he said, 'Behold me'. *(Exodus 3:4)*
God's call: God calls Moses by name twice from the non-consuming fire in the midst of the bush.
Moses' response: Moses answered, behold me, or here I am ready to listen to You.
- B. Moses is on holy ground so he must remove his shoes; then, Yahweh says He has seen the affliction of His people, and He will send Moses to bring them out of Egypt. *(Exodus 3:5-10)*
1. Then He said, 'Do not come near here, you must put off the shoes from your feet because the place upon which you are standing, it (is) holy ground'. *(Exodus 3:5)*
Holy ground: The place has been made holy because God is visibly present there, appearing as fire.
 2. The He said, 'I (am) the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob'; then Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God; then Yahweh said, 'I have seen the affliction of my people who (are) in Egypt, I have heard their cry because of their oppressors, for I know their sufferings. *(Exodus 3:6-7)*
Fear: Moses had a healthy reverential fear of Yahweh God.
Seen affliction: Yahweh responds to Moses' fear by saying He has seen the afflictions of His people under the current king of Egypt.
Knows sufferings: Further, He says He has experienced the sufferings of His people along with them.
 3. 'I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of [six nation-states]'. *(Exodus 3:8)*
Deliver out: Yahweh God now gives His word to deliver His people out of Egypt.
Bring in: Moreover, He says He will bring them into a good land with good food, even though the land is currently occupied by people who are not His people.

God will bring His people into a good place

4. 'Now Behold! The cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me and I have also seen the oppression which the Egyptians oppress them; now, you must come and I will send you to Pharaoh and you must bring My people out from Egypt. (*Exodus 3:9-10*)

Hear and see: God has heard and seen the cries of His people from the oppression of the Egyptians.

Send: He is telling Moses that He is sending him and he must bring God's people out. Tall order!

II. Moses raises four objections to God who answers each one and finally gives Moses his brother Aaron to speak for him. (*Exodus 3:11-15; 4:10-17 & John 8:58*)

- A. Moses' first two questions are about himself and God, to which God says He will be with Moses and then reveals His Covenant Name: I AM who I AM. (*Exodus 3:11-15 & John 8:58*)

1. Then Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt'. (*Exodus 3:11*)
First objection: After forty years with his father-in-law, long removed from Egypt, Moses feels his inadequacy to do what God has called him to do.
2. And, He said, 'Because I will be with you; and, this will be the sign that I have sent you: When you bring forth the people out of Egypt, you all will serve God on this mountain'. (*Exodus 3:12*)
Yahweh's gracious answer: The greatest promise God gives His people is to be with them. And, it was on Mt. Sinai that God gave all who came out of Egypt His instruction (Torah) for living.
3. Then Moses said to God, 'If I, coming to the sons of Israel, say to them: The God of your fathers has sent me to you and they ask me, "What is His Name?" what will I say to them?'. (*Exodus 3:13*)
Question of doubt: Names are important to Middle Easterners. With this question Moses transfers his doubts to who God is.
4. Then God said to Moses, 'I will be who I will be'; and He said, 'Thus will you say to the sons of Israel: I will be has sent me to you all'; God also said to Moses. 'Thus you will say to the people of Israel, "The God of your fathers ... has sent me to you all, this is My Name forever" this is my memorial generation to generation'. (*Exodus 3:14-15*)
Name-future: The Hebrew is in the future tense. Not 'I AM', but 'I will be'. The Greek translation the rabbis did in the second century before Christ uses the present tense, 'I Myself am being'.

God's covenant name is I AM

John 8:58: In our verse from John's Gospel, Jesus quotes the Greek translation, 'I Myself am being'.

Kevin Doyle: When Kevin Doyle, whose mother is Jewish and who lived in Israel for much of each year, played 'The Way' Café, he told me some rabbis take YHWH as an acronym, which translated is: He will be, He is being and He has been, meaning God is future, present and past all at once. In other words, He is eternally existent.

God's covenant name is I AM

Yahweh sent: Moses was sent by Abraham's covenant God. If Moses had his way, he would not go.

My memorial Name: God tells Moses His people will always remember Him by this name.

God's covenant name is I AM

- B. Then Moses says he is not a man of words and please send another; and Yahweh burns with anger against Moses and gives him his brother Aaron to speak for him. (*Exodus 4:10-17*)
1. Then Moses said to Yahweh, 'Please, my Lord, I (am) not a man of words, neither before nor since Thou spoke to Thy servant, because I (am) slow of speech and slow of tongue'. (*Exodus 4:10*)
Third objection: Moses' third excuse is that he is not good with words so he cannot convince Pharaoh, king of Egypt.
 2. Then Yahweh said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth, or who makes (people) mute, or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I – Yahweh? Now you must go and I will be with your mouth, and I will teach you what you will speak'. (*Exodus 4:11-12*)
I made you: The first part of God's reply to Moses is: I made you and I know what you can do!
Instruction: Then, He says he will instruct Moses. The verb is the root of the noun 'torah', which is what Yahweh will give to His people through Moses after He delivers them from bondage in Egypt.
 3. Then Moses said, 'Please, my Lord, Thou must send, I beg, another. (*Exodus 4:13*)
Send another: Moses' fourth objection is a refusal to obey and a request to call another to this task.
 4. Then the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Moses and He said, 'Is there not Aaron your brother, the Levite? I fully know he speaks well; and, behold! He is coming out to meet you, and has seen you and is glad in his heart; and when you have spoken to him and have put the words in his mouth, I will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will instruct you both what you will do'. (*Exodus 4:14-15*)
Finally anger: Moses has gone too far in his objections and doubts. He is not trusting the God who has called him. This results in God getting angry with Moses because of his lack of faith.
Brother Aaron: God sent Aaron to help Moses in the early phases of his mission. And, God will graciously instruct both of them according to His covenant with Abraham and His covenant name.

God's covenant name is I AM

5. 'He will speak for you to the people, and he will be for you a mouth and you will be for him as God; and you will take this rod in your hand with which you will do the signs'. (*Exodus 4:16-17*)
Signs with staff: Actually, God did the signs through the staff He gave Moses. And, by working through Moses, God eventually brought His people into the good land He spoke about to Abraham.

God will bring His people into a good place

Conclusion: When His oppressed people call out to The True God, He hears them and calls Moses to obey Him in faith and to be His instrument of deliverance. But, no one is adequate in himself or herself to do the task God has assigned, so people question God and doubt themselves. Both in grace and anger, God eventually convinces those He calls to trust Him and His powerful presence so He will work through them to accomplish His purposes. He IS always everything; and, because He IS, we can trust God to fulfill His covenant IN The Savior.

God's covenant name is I AM