

Sermon Title:
“God Has Big Plans for You”
Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington
Week of March 6, 2011

Sermon Based Small Group Discussion Guide

Icebreaker

Have you ever been asked to do something that you did not feel qualified or able to do?

What was your response? How did it turn out?

Big Idea:

In order to live an effective and useful life, you need to seek to do God's will God's way and be ready when he calls you.

Sermon Text:

Exodus 2:23 -3:11 and 4:10-13 New International Version

²³ During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Exodus 3 Moses and the Burning Bush

¹ Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, “Here I am.”

⁵ “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ Then he said, “I am the God of your

father,^[a] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

Exodus 4

¹⁰ Moses said to the LORD, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”

¹¹ The LORD said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

¹³ But Moses said, “Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.”

Digging Deeper Learning more about the lesson

In verse 2 it says, “²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.”

1. Do you think God had previously not heard their cries and forgotten about his covenant?

Moses' life in the Bible was divided into three 40 year spans. The first 40 years he spent in Egypt as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The second 40 years he spent tending sheep for his father-in-law in Midian. The last 40 years of his life was spent leading Israel out of Egypt. In Exodus Chapter 3 Moses begins the third 40 year segment of his life. God's purpose for Moses' life was not revealed to him until he was 80 years old.

Verse 3:2-3 ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not

burn up. ³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

2. What would have happened if Moses had chosen not to inspect the burning bush more closely?

***It was only after God saw that he had Moses' attention that spoke to him and called him by name.**

3. Have you ever had a "holy ground" experience in which God spoke to you in a powerful way? If so, consider sharing that experience with the group.

4. Have there been other times in your life when you knew that God had something to say to you, but you did not take time to listen? Perhaps there were times that he invited you to step out in faith and join in his work, but you declined. What might have been some reasons for that?

5. How can you do his will if you don't "look more closely" when he tries to get your attention?

Verse 3:5 ⁵ "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

6. Do you think people today approach God with that degree of reverence and respect? Why or why not?

In verses 7-9 God tells Moses who he is and what he is going to do.

7. Why do you think God identified himself as "the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" rather than just as God?

8. What is Moses' first response?

9. What sorts of excuses do we make when God asks us to do certain things?

10. In verse 11 what was God's reply to Moses?

In verse 12 Moses still asks God to send someone else even though God told him that he would help him. Knowing "the rest of the story", what can we

learn from this?

Taking it Home

How will I live it? Apply it?

1. Reflect on the fact that God calls each of us according to his purpose.
2. Make the decision to listen closely for what God is saying to you.
3. Think about the truth that whatever God asks us to do, he will help us do it.

The following Third Day song speaks to us about making ourselves available to him.

Offering by Third Day

Magnificent Holy Father
I stand in awe of all I see
Of all the things You have created
But still You choose to think of me
Who am I that You should suffer
Your very life to set me free
The only thing that I can give You
Is the life You gave to me
This is my offering, dear Lord
This is my offering to You, God
And I will give You my life
For it's all I have to give
Because You gave Your life for me
I stand before You at this altar
So many have given You more
I may not have much I can offer
Yet what I have is truly Yours
This is my offering

Looking Ahead

How can I prepare for the next small group meeting?

1. Text and theme for next week. Joel 2:12-18 "Returning to God."

Prayer Requests and Praises: