

The Plan of I AM
Exodus: The God Who Delivers Series
Exodus 3:1-22
Pastor Jeff Petersen

Wow, what a joy it is to call out to the God who split the sea, so I could walk right through it, because I am a child of God. And words like that stir our hearts to worship Him. But I'm wondering, have you ever felt forsaken by God? Or maybe just forgotten by Him? Perhaps even in a moment of your greatest need, has there been a time when it seemed like God was nowhere to be found? Most of us have had moments like that. So, what do we do with that? How do we trust in a God that sometimes doesn't seem to show up...at least not in a way that makes sense to us. That's what we want to talk about this morning. If you have your Bible, turn to Exodus, Chapter 3.

Two weeks ago, we began our fall series of studying the book Exodus, and wow! it has already been great, with so much for us to learn in chapters 1 and 2. And last week, chapter 2 ended in such an interesting way. On the one hand, it's heartbreak, because Moses flees from Egypt. And he even names his son, Gershom, which means *stranger*. And in chapter 2, verse 22, he said, ***"I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."*** So there is real sadness at this point. But Bryan also reminded us that chapter 2 ends with a glimmer of hope because there are four things that are said at the end of chapter 2 about God. It says: ***God heard, God remembered, God saw, and God took notice of the Hebrews and their bondage.***

And as we begin chapter 3, 40 more years have gone by since Moses fled from Egypt. So, let's just pause for a moment and try and imagine what it would have been like to have been Moses. When you are 40 years old, you step up and try to help your people. You try to help those who are being oppressed and to rescue them. But you completely mess it up and you ruin any potential opportunity that you might have had of influence because you were raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. And now, 40 more years have gone by, and who are you now? What are you doing now wandering around in a desert, following a flock of sheep? Talk about your story not being what you expected or what you hoped! Maybe some of us can relate. But perhaps the story isn't finished yet—His or ours. Chapter 3, verse 1:

Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." (*NASB, Exodus 3:1-3)

So now, 80-year-old Moses is out with the flock, and verse 1 tells us ***he led the flock west***, presumably in search of good pasture. And he comes to the mountain Horeb, called **the mountain of God**. And it is important for us to note that this mountain in verse 1 is *the* mountain that will become so important in the story as this story progresses. Later, it will be called Mount Sinai, and scholars have many thoughts on the differing names. Perhaps the broader region was called Horeb

and the singular mountain, Sinai. But it is also possible that the mountain becomes Sinai because of what is taking place right here in this moment. Moses encounters God in the fire of a burning bush. The Hebrew word used here in verse 2 is not the typical word for bush. It is the word *seneh*, and it is only used here and one other time in all of Scripture. So it is quite possible that the location of the bush of fire leads to the name, which by chapter 19, will be for the mountain covered by the fire of the presence of God. But here, in chapter 3, Moses first encounters the presence of God in the fire of this bush, which is strangely not consumed by the fire.

And in verse 2, we are told **the angel of the Lord appeared to him**. Now, when we read the word **angel**, we tend to read into that word, all kinds of images that would not have been there in the mind of the first reader. Rather, it would be better to understand this **angel** as a messenger of God, who will, in fact, later in verse 4, read **God called to him**. And in verse 6, God is speaking and says, **I am the God of**, so we see that God Himself is actually present here in what is called a theophany, which is a visible manifestation of God to a person. So why does verse 2 say **the angel of the Lord**? It's because of the challenge of understanding the visible manifestation of God. Was God present in and through the burning bush? Yes, absolutely! The text expressly says so. But was all who God is, really manifested to Moses visibly in that moment? No, of course not. For all that God is, cannot be manifested in any theophany, in any visible manifestation. So, the messenger *is* God, but no form can contain all that God is. And that sets the stage for so many important things we're going to learn later in the chapter.

Now note, too, in verse 3, that it is this manifestation that draws Moses toward God. He has been out in this desert for 40 years, and he has never seen anything like this. And he says, **"I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight."** How can a bush be on fire and not be burned up? It is not possible, at least not in the natural order of things. And so God is drawing Moses to Himself, and Moses responds, turning toward this manifestation of the presence of God. And then in verse 4, God calls to Moses, once Moses has turned toward the manifestation of God. Verse 4:

When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

You know, perhaps you and I would experience more of the presence of God if our lives were more attuned to the things that God might be using to draw us toward Himself, and if we made it our practice to turn toward those beautiful expressions of His wonder and His glory. Verse 5:

Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

Now, removing his sandals would have made total sense to Moses because this was the reverent practice in the ancient Near East. And God is using this awareness to underscore the reality of what is happening in this moment. Moses is encountering the living and holy God. Verse 6:

He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Do you notice anything unusual about what God just said there? Now, this phrasing is common in the Old Testament, but this is the only place in Scripture where God says, **“I am the God of your father,”** singular, not plural. And then He adds the familiar, **the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.** Why? It's a good question, and it raises another one that will be important in this chapter. Who is Moses? Who is Moses' father? Thus far, his birth father has not been named, but he has been referred to in chapter 2, verse 1, as a man from the house of Levi. And, interestingly, we will see the Levites lead in zeal for God in Exodus, and thus become chosen by God to lead out in the service of the tabernacle and worship to God. Thus, perhaps the Lord is seeking to remind Moses of who Moses is. In spite of his upbringing in the house of Pharaoh, in spite of his failure, and his wilderness wandering, Moses is one of the chosen people of God, fathered by a Hebrew and identified with the people of the promise whose God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses, recognizing he is in the presence of God, hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. God is awesome and holy, and any time in Scripture when people encounter Him, there is a visible physical response to His presence, a recognition that He is the living, Holy God, and we are not. But God has appeared to Moses here on purpose. And in verse 7, He reveals the plan of God, for the people of God. Verse 7:

The LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. (Vs. 7-9)

So here it is, the moment has arrived. Remember what God said at the end of chapter 2. There were four verbs there: God **heard**, God **remembered**, God **saw**, and God **took notice**. But what did God not yet do? God didn't act. And it was 40 years from the time of Moses' birth until the time that he fled for Egypt. And now 40 years after that, God still didn't act. Why? Because it wasn't yet time. It wasn't yet God's time. And that can be hard to hear, because the Israelites were suffering every single day. And when our lives are hard, we want a God who responds now...right now! We would never expressly say it, but sometimes I think the way we act shows that what we really want from God is that He would be the kind of God that when we would say, “Oh, Lord, please jump,” that He would respond and say, “Certainly, my child, how high?” (*laughter*) But God is God...and we are not. And sometimes that is really hard when we're hurting, when we're suffering, when we're oppressed, when we are waiting. I mean, think of David, fleeing from Saul, and literally just trying to stay alive in crags and caves for over 10 years. No wonder the language of the Psalms is filled with, **“How long, oh, LORD?”**

Moses was 40 when he rose up to try to help the Hebrews, and now he is 80, having wandered in the desert for another 40 years. Wow! So, the Hebrews have been waiting 80 years for the fulfillment of the promise of God, right? Yes...and no. Yes, it has been 80 years since the severe oppression began in Egypt. But actually, they had been waiting for what God describes in verses 8 and 9 for far, far, longer than that. In verse 7 God tells Moses He has seen the affliction and given heed to their cry, because he is aware of their sufferings. And in verse 9, He says it again:

Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. Once again, God *heard*, God *saw*, God *took notice*. And now God is about to act because God *remembered*.

And what is it that God remembered? He remembered the promise that He made to His people long ago. Verse 8 tells us, God said He has **come down, to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.** And then He lists the lands of the peoples that are presently possessing that land. And then your Bible—like mine—might cross reference that to another important passage, Genesis 15:13-16. Guess what that is? Genesis 15 is when God cuts a covenant with Abraham, then called Abram. This is when God expressly promises to bless Abraham and to make his descendants into a great nation. But He also tells him several specific things, including verses 13 and 14:

...“Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. (Verse 14): But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.” (Genesis 15:13-14)

Remember the end of verse 14 when we get to the end of our chapter today. And then in Genesis 15:18-21, God says,

**“To your descendants I have given this land,
From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates...”** (Vs. 18)

and then God lists out all the peoples who are possessing that land at that time. Sound familiar? This was the giving of the promise. The promise of both the fiery furnace of Egypt and the deliverance into a land flowing with milk and honey. And when was this promise given? Well, let me try and illustrate it.

We are now approaching in the US almost 250 years as a country. And when we watch the musical *Hamilton*, we look back on those people and those things that were so different from who we are today. And we have an incredibly difficult time even understanding, let alone remembering, what was so important way back then. But now think about this. It was about 200 years before that, when Columbus sailed the ocean blue in the year of 1492. And we can't even hardly fathom what those people were like and what life was like back then, in that presumably flat world. Well, the time from Columbus to you, is about the same as the time of the giving of the promise to Abraham in Genesis 15, to the **“I have come down to deliver them from Egypt and bring them up to a good and spacious land flowing with milk and honey.”** in Exodus 3:8.

Wow! You see, God really does work in a very personal and powerful way in each of our lives and our stories. But we must never forget that our stories are a part of a much, much, much larger story that He is writing. And sometimes, often, we cannot understand from our seats exactly what all God is doing and when He will act to end our struggles and bring us in to the fullness of all that He has promised us in Christ. And we must seek to be people who keep that perspective, who understand that in the midst of our day-to-day struggles. But for the Hebrews, this is the time. This is the moment. God has remembered His promise. He has seen, He has heard, He has taken notice

of their suffering, and He is about to move in a powerful way. And in verse 10, he calls Moses to be the human leader of His divine plan.

Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?”

(Vs. 10-11)

Imagine what it would have been like to be Moses in that moment. At this point, he's actually not just trying to get out of the job. Rather, remember how he must see himself. Moses says, **“Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh?”** Well, remember 40 years earlier, Moses fled Egypt because the Pharaoh was trying to kill him, and his, **“Who am I to go to Pharaoh,”** would make total sense from his perspective. But he also says, **“Who am I to bring out the sons of Israel?”** Well, do you remember his last interaction with the Hebrews? Two Hebrews were fighting, and he tried to stop them and help them. But what did one of them say in 2:14? **“Who made you a prince or a judge over us?”** They wanted nothing to do with him as a leader of them. Moses has every reason to question God's choice. “Lord, I tried that whole, ‘be a deliverer thing,’ and it did not go well. And besides, that was 40 years ago. Now I'm just a shepherd who knows nothing but the desert and some sheep. You've got the wrong guy.” Moses had tried to help his people, but he had tried in *his* timing. And he had tried in *his* strength, trusting in *his* power and influence, which makes God's reply to him, so very important. Verse 12:

And He said, “Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.”

God says two things to him. First, notice what he doesn't say to Moses. He doesn't reassure Moses that Moses has the right stuff. He doesn't do what we most often do when someone doubts or questions themselves. We say, “Oh, you've got this, man!” or, “You go, girl!” We try to buoy up the self-confidence of the person. But God seeks to impart true confidence through the promise of His presence and His power. He says nothing about who Moses is. Rather He points Moses to who He is, **“Certainly, I will be with you.”** And then he promises a sign. But interestingly, it is a sign that will require faith, for it will only be fulfilled after Moses has followed the plan of God. **And this shall be the sign to you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.** This *senek* of the presence of God in a fire in a bush will become the Sinai Mountain of God, where God will again meet with Moses in an even more powerful way. And Moses' further response gives God an opportunity to reveal His name, His character, and His nature to Moses, and to all of us. Moses' first question to God was, “Who am I?” But the most important question is never, “Who are we?” It is always, “Who is He?”

Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

(Vs. 13-14)

As one commentator put it, “Rivers of ink have been written on these verses.” And we could literally spend weeks talking about all of the scholarly thought, but I want to point us to just a few important things this morning. First, when Moses says in verse 13, **Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name? What shall I say to them?’** This is not because Moses doesn't know about God. This anticipated question from the Hebrews doesn't spring from ignorance. It's not a trick question to test and see if Moses knows the tradition of his people. Rather, if they were to ask the question, “What is His name?” for them it would be like saying, “If God sent you, describe the nature of God, and what is the new revelation that He has for us through you?” And in verse 14 God responds, saying, **God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM;’ and He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ I AM WHO I AM. Ehyeh asher Ehyeh. I will be who I will be.**

In essence, God repeats the first-person form of the verb *to be*. And interestingly, the Hebrew word repeated here, Ehyeh, is a form of the word that is repeatedly used in the Genesis 1 account of creation. Over and over in the account of creation, we read, “**Let there be,**” and, “**There was**”. This, *to be* essence flowed so naturally and appropriately from this, I AM WHO I AM—I will be who I will be God—that one commentator, J. Alec Motyer, has so aptly said,

“The link between the divine name and the Hebrew verb ‘to be’ is the plainest feature of this passage. This is what Durham calls the ‘is-ness’ of the God of Israel.” In every place, at every point in time, in every circumstance or need, he ‘is’. Unquestionably this verb leans strongly in the direction of ‘active presence’. The old hymn which proclaimed ‘God is here—and that to bless us’ caught the essence exactly. The presence of this God is not, therefore, a bare ‘is’ but a living force, vital and personal. In no situation is he an ornamental extra; in every situation he is the key active ingredient.”¹

So God's answer to Moses, the hope for Moses and Israel, was the active presence and the plan of the God of Israel in all of His is-ness. And this is God's answer for you and for me, as well. There is never a time, a place, a situation, where He is not. For He is the eternally, preexistent, self-sufficient, omnipresent, Almighty God.

By the way, why was that bush not burned up? Because fire requires fuel, right? Well, not when it emanates from the manifestation of the inexhaustibly, self-sufficient God. He has no need. He is never dependent on anyone or anything, and even energy and matter come from the God who spoke all things into existence. He “is”, and in verse 15, the Lord expands this thought as He equips Moses to speak to Israel on his behalf.

God, furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.” (Vs. 15)

¹ J.A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage* (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic Publisher, 2005).

Now in our Bibles, we read LORD, usually written in all caps, because by about 300 BC, the Jews would not speak or even write this name out of reverence to God. So the Greek word for LORD became what was used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and that carried forward into our English Bibles. But originally, the Hebrews would have read YHWH, likely vocalized as YAHWEH, which is the third person form of the I AM divine name, the *to be* verb.

And thus another commentator in the Expositor's Bible Commentary says:

This was no new God to Israel; for it was the same God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who was sending Moses, His name was Yahweh (LORD). For the first time God used the standard third- person form of the verb "to be" with the famous four consonants—YHWH. This was to be his "name" forever. His "name" was his person, his character, his authority, his power, and his reputation.²

And this name, YHWH—YAHWEH—is repeated 6,828 times in the Old Testament. It is not a title; God has many titles. It is His name and that is important because His name speaks to His nature, not simply to what He does, but to who He is. And in verse 15, He says that ***He is to be remembered by this name forever. It is a memorial name to all generations.*** He is, and forevermore will be YAHWEH, the Great I AM. And what did Jesus say when He was challenged by the Pharisees in John 8:58? He said, ***Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM.*** This is our God. And in verse 16, this I AM God calls Moses to go to the elders of Israel in His name.

“Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, “I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.”’ They will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’ But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians.” (Vs. 16-22)

And so here is the completion of the programmatic statement of Exodus. This is the plan of God, and this is what will unfold in the coming days, as recorded in the coming pages. And each of these things foretold by the great I AM will, in fact, come to pass. And over the coming weeks, we will talk more about them.

² Zondervan (author), Tremper Longman III (Editor), David E. Garland (Editor), (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012)

But today, notice just a couple of things. First, in 3:18, they are instructed to tell Pharaoh that **the LORD, the God of the Hebrews has met with us**. This puts the onus of the request to set the Hebrews free, on God. This is not their plan; this is God's plan. And thus it sets up the struggle as a choice of whether or not Pharaoh will listen to God. The struggle in the book of Exodus will not be between Moses and Pharaoh, as the movies like to depict. But, rather, it will be between Pharaoh who thinks he is God, and YAHWEH, who really is.

Now, second, remember what we read in Genesis 15:14: **God's people will come out with many possessions**. That was part of the promise. Now, more than half a millennium later, what does God say in verses 21 and 22? God will cause the people to look with favor on Israel, and they will literally go from being oppressed slaves to a free-will plundering of the Egyptians. This is the plan of God, in fulfillment of the promise of God, because God always keeps His promises. He is always faithful. But, again, we need to remember that God relates to us on both a micro and a macro level—on a personal level. He meets us; He encourages us; He strengthens us; He comforts us; He provides for us; He abides with us; He sustains us; He enables us; He will never leave us; He will never forsake us! But that does not mean that He will always immediately deliver us. We are a part of an overarching plan of God that is unfolding and has been unfolding for thousands of years. And, in Christ, we are headed toward the ultimate Promised Land—the eternal presence of God with us—when every tear will be wiped away, and every enemy will be no more, including the great enemies of sin and death.

But God's timing is not ours. In fact, God's timing may be incomprehensible to us. But we must understand that fact, and we must believe that He has not abandoned us; He has not forsaken us. He IS. Remember, His name shows His nature without limits, dependent upon no one, and above all power in heaven and on earth. The great I AM will accomplish His purposes, and He will show forth His faithfulness. It just might not be on our timetable. We must learn the lesson of the Hebrews in Exodus. For, as Peter says in the New Testament, ***“With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day.”*** But God has a plan, even when we don't understand. And God's plan is not possible; it's not even probable. God's plan is absolutely certain! Eventually, ultimately, and fully, His will, will be done. And thus, our perspective must come from God's word, not our understanding of our world. And our confidence must be in God's character and God's plan, not in our ability in the middle of our circumstances, to somehow understand.

And finally, from Exodus 3, as we think about the great I AM and His plan, there are three things I want you to hold on to this morning. First, our failures are not fatal. Moses failed miserably at trying to help Israel. But watch and see as he learns that strength comes not from himself or his pedigree, but from his God, he will end up as an entirely different person and leader. Second, our credibility comes from His nature and His calling, not from our credentials. As God declares in chapter 3, Moses will come to see God's true power—His true credibility. For great influence is found in who God is and our learning is to surrender to Him and to walk with Him. It's not in our strength and seeking to be great or to make a name for ourselves. He is great, and true greatness is found in walking with Him and being an instrument to accomplish His plan. Finally, third, the wilderness is not worthless. Like Moses, God may allow or even appoint seasons in your life where it seems like you are accomplishing absolutely nothing for the glory of God. But He just might be working *in* you and *on* you, to prepare you for what lies ahead. We will see that 40 years of being

a shepherd in the wilderness will make Moses the ideal leader to lead and shepherd God's people in their own desert journey. Remember, your wilderness wanderings are not worthless.

Church, we have every reason to have hope, to have confidence, to have purpose, if we will trust that He is God and His plans will be accomplished. We can even be a part of the amazing plan that He is writing, if we will turn to, and trust in Him, for He is the great I AM and He has a good, good plan. Let's stand and worship Him.

Jesus, we come before You and we thank You, oh our God, that You are the great I AM, that you forever more will be. You were, You are, and You always will be, and there is never a moment when You are not. You will never forsake us. You have never abandoned us. We can trust in You. Oh God, we come to You, this morning, to thank You, not for who we are, but for who You are, and to express our faith, our hope, and our joy in the great I AM. In Your name we pray, Amen.

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FALL 2023 // WEEK 3

Life Group Questions

Exodus - The God Who Delivers // September 23-24, 2023

The Plan of I AM // Exodus 3:1-22

Introduction

In Exodus chapter 3, God appears to Moses in the form of a burning bush to inform him that He has heard the cries of the people of Israel, still in bondage in Egypt, and has resolved to send Moses back to make an appeal to Pharaoh for their freedom. In this chapter, we find themes of deliverance, identity (both God's and Moses's), and God's relationship with His people.

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

- 1) If you wrote a book, what would it be about?

- 2) What are a few words your closest friend would use to describe you?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
 - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you

- 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.

Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) What were some key points that you remember from Pastor Jeff's message this past weekend?

- 2) In *Exodus 3:7-10*, God acknowledges the suffering of His people in Egypt and declares His promise to deliver them to a new home, and He makes it clear that Moses will be His chosen instrument of this liberation. **What do these verses tell us about God's character, and the way that He interacts with His people?**

How do these qualities of God take shape elsewhere throughout the Bible? (Feel free to go back to *Genesis 15* if you need a place to start.)

What is one of God's attributes that you personally connect with or appreciate? Why does it resonate with you?

- 3) *Exodus 3:14-15* This is the first and only place in the Old Testament where there is any explanation of the meaning of the name YHWH. He is called by many titles throughout Scripture, but this name encompasses all that God is. **What does the name I AM WHO I AM mean? Why is the name of God significant compared to all of God's titles?**

Moses asks God's name so that he can tell the Hebrews who sent him to be their liberator. **Why is it important for Moses' actions to be backed up by the authority of the "I AM" God?**

- 4) Moses approaches the burning bush with reverent curiosity, and even some fear when he realizes that the voice coming from it is God Himself. God even calls Moses by his name, expressing that He knows him, and therefore knows that Moses is the one to task with freeing

the Hebrews. **Identify one or two moments in your life when you've felt truly seen and known by God, and share them with your group.**

Based on what we learned about Moses' last attempt to deliver Israel (see Ex 2:11-15), **why do you think Moses is wondering, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" (verse 11)**

Put yourself in Moses's shoes (or sandals). **How would you react to being given such an important task?**

Identity plays a key role throughout this chapter, both in identifying God and Moses. **What makes identity such an important factor for God's people?**

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

Scripture Focus: God gives all kinds of good gifts. One of them is the identity that He gives freely to each and every one of us. For Moses, it was the identity of the deliverer of God's people. This week, search through the Bible for who God says that YOU are (*Ephesians 1:1-14* is a great place to start). Write down 3-5 passages that you find and take time each morning to remind yourself of their truth.

Prayer Focus: God expresses to Moses not only His intimate understanding of Moses, but also His divine plan over his life. Consider praying the prayer below each morning as a way of asking God to help you trust in His plan for you.

Lord, here I am.

I come before you to be loved and guided,

To be transformed and given a purpose.

I want to trust in your plan for my life

And to see the path you've set before me

Even when I don't understand it.

I praise you for being a God who sees me and knows me well

As you've seen and known all your people through the ages.

Let me put my confidence in your character and your plan,

Not in my own works or qualifications,
And allow me to rest in your glory
Knowing that you are He who was, and is, and always will be.

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?