

“God of the Past, Present, and Future”- Exodus 3:1-15

Over the next three weeks as I complete our time of ministry with you I am going to preach three sermons based on the hymn, “Walk with Me”. Many of you might not remember nor were a part of us then, but we sang this the first Sunday I was here. Over the past three years we have brought out the walking stick when people joined the church or were baptized and confirmed. Each time I have reminded the new folks and all of us that we walk in ministry together.

So, we will soon close out our walk together so I want us to again sing this hymn each of these last three Sunday as a way of remembering where we have been together, where we are today, and where God might be taking all of us in the future. As the title of the sermon reads, “God of the past, God of the present, and God of the future.” To look at this this morning, we are looking at the first verse of our hymn that talks about the calling of Moses. Moses understood the God of the past, the present, and the future.

There are life-changing events that happen to all of us from time to time. These life-changing events can happen to us on an average day doing our jobs and other activities. Doing the routine of life. Take Moses’ life from our lesson this morning. In verse 1 he was tending the flock of sheep as was his routine every day. Second, life changing events can also happen in out of the way places. In verse 1 again Moses was tending the flock at the back of the desert. Not exactly in a business park, or downtown, or in the public eye. Third, life changing events are rarely expected. In verse 2 we read that an angel appears to Moses in flames of fire from within a bush. What was going to be life changing was that the bush did not burn up. So, like most of us would do if we saw something on fire that was not be burned up, Moses went over to see what was going on. It was from this burning bush incident that God called Moses into life-time service and ministry.

It is from this calling of God to Moses that we learn some things about the nature of God and his work in our lives. In verse 5 God has Moses’ attention and he reminds Moses that God called him by name. He reminds Moses first, that he was a personal God. God looks. God sees. God knows. Second, God shows Moses that he was the God of the past. “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” As

Moses was being called through the burning bush, God reminds Moses that God was attached to Moses' past. God was the same God to Moses' forefathers as he is the God of Moses today. Moses had heard the stories of how God had done great things to and with his ancestors. How he was the God who was slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, always keeping his promises and covenant. Therefore, he is the God that can be trusted to do the same today.

It is good to remember the God of the past because it helps us to look at the present and the future. If God has done good things in our lives in the past, he is the same God yesterday, today, and tomorrow, so he will do good things today and in the future. It is also, however, important to not live in the past. I have served churches where people do not live in the present nor do they look to see where God might take them in the future. They live for the "usta". We "usta" do this and we "usta" do that. Do you remember when we ... and so forth. History and tradition are important. We certainly need to remember the past and learn from the past but we cannot spend too much time in the past. Peace Church has great memories of ministry of the past. The wall of pictures in the social hall depict much of the past. However, I challenge you to look at where you are now, and where God might be taking you in the future. In Moses' case and in Peace Church's case, God not only work in the past, but he has a plan for each new generation. He works in the "now".

Therefore, God is the God of the present. In verse 7 he tells Moses that he has come in the present because he has seen the misery of God's people and heard them crying out because of their suffering. God is in our present as we the church live in the now. What are we inviting God to do through us right now? What are the priorities of ministry for Peace Church right now? How can Peace Church be vital for God in this day? What is God calling this church to be doing right now? You need to take the time to in prayer ask God what I might be doing for you and what is the church being called to do and to be.

God is the God of the future. In verse 8 Moses' future is told by God that God was going to use Moses to rescue his people from the Egyptians and bring them into a land filled with milk and honey. Moses is to be the key person in

fulfilling these plans. Moses reaction to God's calling was to want to run away but God wants Moses to sit and hear the voice of God and wants Moses to know what God's eternal purposes to be known. Don't miss this Peace Church. Although Moses was very reluctant to answer the call he did and God changed his life and history forever. God wants that for our lives.

God called Moses and he calls us to step out in faith. As I mentioned a moment ago, Moses tries to squirm out of his calling by using excuses. He doesn't believe that he is the right man nor does he believe that he has the ability to do what God called him to do. But God has been equipping Moses for this moment all of his life. God knew what was in Moses better than he knew himself. God knows what Peace Church is capable of doing and being. Listen to the voice of God. Be open and available. God is waiting to have you respond to his call for your life and for this church. It will make the biggest difference in your life and in the life of Peace Church. Let God take you with confidence into the future.