**June 19 Exodus 3:1-11 Moses: Ask Anyone But Me! Deb Jeanne Petrosky**

Moses is considered one of the greatest leaders of all time and yet the biblical text tells us he never wanted to be a leader in the first place, even asking God to “please send someone else!” How often do we wish someone else would just take care of the things God has called us to do?

Hymns: 1. Red #687 God of our Fathers

2. UCC #572 *When Israel Was in Egypt’s Land*

3. Red #608 *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

**3**Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2**There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. **3**Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” **4**When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” **5**Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” **6**He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

**7**Then the Lord said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, **8**and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. **9**The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. **10**So come, I will send 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?”

Preconceptions:

Times Moses said “but”

1. Who am I that I should go? I will be with you and this will be the sign for when you bring the people out of Egypt you shall worship God on this mountain.
2. What is HIS name? – I Am WHO I AM
3. What if they don’t believe me or listen to me? – Staff Snake and leprosy and pour water from Nile on ground and it will turn blood red
4. I have never been eloquent – Who gives speech to mortals?
5. Please send someone else! -- I’ll send Aaron with you

Moses most prepared man

-Hebrew, mother his wet nurse

-Grew up in Pharoah’s household

-Survived wilderness

-knew mountain of God

What facing in your life? You are prepared, within you, people in life like Aaron, God with you.

True of Tower, Marcia and I impressed way faced it.

Results of cong. Meeting?

People who make it big on reality TV shows, 3,000 hours book? Beatles ready for moment. Have been practicing a lifetime.

People on VOICE, David came forward to offer their skills.

Pres. Clinton M. Ali, 1st half used gift, 2nd given gift didn’t want and worked through it sharing his heart.

Orlando shootings. Young man helped bartender physically, emotionally, spiritually.

What we do if in that situation? Ready for it? What situation in now, ready for it? I believe you are—Moses.

**Sermon June 19 Exodus 3:1-11 Moses: Ask Anyone But Me! Deb**

It has been a rough couple of weeks for Orlando Fla. First the shooting of the singer Christina Grimmie while she was signing autographs and her brother wrestling the shooter to the ground before the shooter killed himself.

The terrorist attack at the Pulse nightclub killing 49 people and injuring over 50 and last but not least by any stretch of the imagination the family that was enjoying their vacation at Disney when their 2 year old son is taken and killed by an alligator.

We mourn for all of those involved in these tragedies and often part of us wonders, “what would be do if we had been in each of these situations? How would we have reacted?”

I was struck particularly by the story of one of the survivors of the Orlando shooting (Joshua McGill). Joshua said he and his friends were out on the patio when the shooting started and they realized what was happening they were able to jump the fence and hide under an SUV until they could figure out where the gunman was. As he was preparing to make a run for it, he came across a man who had been shot in both arms and without thinking he took his shirt off and tied up the wound on one arm and then used the man’s shirt to tie up the wound on the other arm and was helping him to safety when he realized the man had been shot in the back also. He got him to a policeman who took them to his vehicle to transport to the hospital for at that point they were not allowing any ambulances through.

He told the young man to lie on the back seat and then hug the victim close to his chest to try and stop the bleeding as they traveled to the hospital. He did and talked with the victim and prayed with him. The newscaster interviewing him told him he did everything right taking care of the victim’s physical, emotional and spiritual needs. He was the right man in the right place.

As a member of my congregation used to quote to me, “coincidence, I think not!” for I have come to believe that God puts us in situations because of who we are and what we bring to the situation. For me that is highlighted in the life of Moses, the leader we are studying today.

Moses is considered one of the greatest leaders of all time, and yet if you read the biblical text carefully, he never wanted to be a leader in the first place! I am guessing you know most of his story:

He was born into a time when the Pharaohs of Egypt were afraid that someone else might dethrone them. Even though they were supposedly considered gods, coups still took place even in Egypt. Some scholars believe the opening of Exodus where the biblical text tells us, “there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph” possibly meant a coup had just taken place and when the new Pharaohs were looking around to see who could take them out, they saw this huge group of Hebrews living in the Delta region probably minding their own business at that point keeping watch over the flocks.

They began to enslave the Hebrew people and then they decided to weed them out first by asking the midwives to kill all of the new born sons, which the midwives refused to do telling them that the Hebrew women were a strong and hearty bunch who, when it was time to delivered, simply stopped work, had their baby and then went back to work immediately, they didn’t call for a midwife like the weak Egyptian women did.

So the new Pharaohs took measures into their own hands and told his people to kill any newborn Hebrew male child. One family kept their son as long as they could, probably until his cry would give them away, and then the mother took a huge risk to try and save his life.

In our society today the paparazzi keep track of all of the movie stars so we know where they eat and when they go out on the town and where they vacation. In this time period it would have been the Pharaoh and his family people would have watched and wanted all the news on. Some scholars believe this mother knew exactly where Pharaoh’s daughter bathed in the Nile and placed the baby’s sister Miriam in the weeds and the baby in a water proof basket hoping the daughter of Pharaoh would find him, and she did.

Even though she knew he was a Hebrew child she kept him and then Miriam popped up with her rehearsed line that she knew a wet nurse who could care for him and Moses’ mother got to raise her own son in the house of Pharaoh.

We know she did a reasonably good job for when he was approximately 40 years old he one day saw an Egyptian slave driver beating a Hebrew slave and Moses killed the slave driver leading us to believe he at that point identified with the Hebrews. When he tried to break up a fight the next day between two Hebrews they asked him if he was going to do to them what he did to the slave driver and Moses realized he was in serious danger of word getting out about what he had done so he ran into the wilderness and made it to Midian alive.

He went right to the well and met the daughter of the high priest of Midian and married her. He settled down, found himself a new life there, had two sons and was probably around 80 years old. I just want to highlight the age here, he was 80 years old when God called him. You are NEVER too old for God to use you.

Moses was out watching the sheep minding his own business when suddenly he saw a bush that was on fire but was not being consumed by the fire. He went over to take a closer look when God spoke from the bush to Moses telling him to take off his sandals for he was on holy ground.

He told Moses that he had seen the oppression of the Hebrew people and was going to send Moses back to help lead his people in freedom to come back and worship on this very mountain. Moses asked him, “Who am I that I should do this?” At which point God said, I am with you and I will go with you and together we will accomplish this.

Now I don’t know about you, but if I had been in my 20’s and heard God calling me telling me to do something, I’d have probably had the audacity of youth to say, “here I am Lord, send me!” But now that I’m in my late 50’s I identify a little more with Moses at this point whose now so sure about the whole thing even though God has assured him God is with him.

Moses asks his next question, “but what if they asked who sent me, which god are you?” God answers Moses by telling Moses God’s name, “I AM WHO I AM”, pretty nifty name, but still not enough for Moses who then asks, “What if they don’t believe me?”

So God tells Moses, take your staff and throw it on the ground, and it becomes a snake. Then put your hand in your cloak and bring it out and it becomes leprous. Put it back in and it comes out healthy. Pour water from the Nile on the ground and it becomes like blood. That will show them I AM WHO I AM is with you!

Thennn Mmmmoosssses ttells Gggod he can’ttt spppeakkk pproperly. And at this point you can tell God is starting to lose his patience with Moses for God erupts and says, “Who made your mouth to begin with?” And Moses erupts back and says, “Please, just send someone else!” And God says, “NO! It is you who I have called but I will send your brother Aaron with you to help talk for you, now GO!”

What I don’t think Moses understood was that he was perfectly trained for the job God was now calling him to. He was Hebrew, circumcised, raised to identify with the Hebrews and understood their language. He was raised in the house of Pharaoh and knew them as people, not gods. He understood their language and customs and ways. AND, he had survived in the wilderness. He knew how to survive in the wilderness and would need to be able to do that for 40 years (which he doesn’t know yet). God called Moses because Moses was equipped for the job, even if he didn’t realize it yet.

And so I tell my students, whatever church or ministry setting you are called to, God has called you there because you already have within you the skills needed; you just need to trust God to lead your way.

Whomever the search committee brings before you for you to consider as your next pastor will have the exact skills for this next phase of First Baptist Church’ life, tower and all, provided you trust God to lead your way.

Marcia has already told you how impressed we are with the leadership of this church and how they are facing the tower issue, and how each person has a different skill and understanding needed to address this problem and their willingness to work together and allow God to lead.

So the question becomes, do you trust God has you in the exact place God needs you because of who you are and the skills you have? Do you trust that God has prepared you for this time and place and situation, whatever the situation you are in right now? For all our doubts and fears do you trust God to lead you? Do you trust God to lead the search committee? Do you trust God to lead FBC?

Let us learn from Moses and be willing to take our doubts and fears and questions to God. It is one of the things I like most about Moses, his relationship with God. Moses is not afraid to tell God exactly what he thinks and he expects God to answer, and God does.

Whatever your situation today, the situation the world is in, the upcoming election, the tower, the next pastor for FBC, let’s take it all to God in prayer…(segue to pastoral prayer).