

Exodus 3.1-14

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?" ¹² He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." ¹³ But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

The God We Can Know: Knowing the Great "I Am"

For our Lenten journey we are learning about - The God We Can Know: Exploring the "I Am" Sayings of Jesus, by Rob Fuquay. The main message is presented via a DVD. These are very brief notes.

God wants to be known to God's children; wants to be recognized as the God who created the world, and everything in it. The Scriptures relate an unfolding drama of

God's self-revealing. That self-revelation came first from the Law and the Prophets. Exodus 3.13-14: "

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The grandest self-revelation, of course, is in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus, himself declares "I Am", identifying with the God of Moses. The God called "I Am" can be fully known in Jesus.

The Gospel of John records a collection of "I Am" statements by Jesus – "I Am the Bread of Life" (John 6.35), "I Am the Light of the World" (John 8.12), "I Am the Good Shepherd" (John 10.11), "I Am the True Vine" (John 15.1), "I Am the Way, the Truth", and the Life" (John 14.6), "I Am the Resurrection and the Life." (John 11.25). Jesus uses earthy, everyday items – bread, light, shepherd, vine – to help us identify with his self-identity.

What the "I Am" statements tell us about ourselves –

- Jesus said, "I Am the Light of the World"; but in another place: "You are the Light of the world" (Matthew 5.14).
- He said, "I Am the Good Shepherd" but also: "Feed my sheep" (John 21.17).
- He said, "I Am the True Vine but as well: "You are the branches" (John 15.5).
- Jesus said, "I Am the way, the truth, and the life", but later his followers were known as belonging to the Way (Acts 9.2).
- He said, "I Am the Resurrection and the Life", but equally promised us life abundant (John 10.10).

A note on a few words Fuquay uses in the video to describe God. Each community speaks its own language. Those of us in the Church may forget that not everyone knows the meaning of some of those "churchy" words. God is "Omnipotent" (all-powerful); God is "Omnipresent" (always-present); God is "Omniscient" (all-knowing).

Video

Ponderings

Have you ever asked "God/Jesus, if you are really there...?"

Has God ever given you a tough assignment you felt you couldn't live up to?

Making Application

If the symbols of the "I Am" mean God can be experienced in the ordinary world, what does this mean for us? Sometimes we talk about experiencing God as an intentional decision – a choice we make – in that God won't draw near unless we seek God. But what if it works the other way around? What if God is already part of our world, and we are simply invited to see and experience God's presence? There is a Latin saying that translates, "Bidden [whether we ask] or not bidden [even when we don't make the request], God is present." How are the "I Am's" an invitation to enter into the is-ness of God, the God already here, the God who is I Am?