**Moses meets ‘I am who I am’ Exodus 3:1 to 14**

This is clearly a massive moment in Moses’ life. It’s not everyday you see a burning bush which doesn’t end up as ashes. It is no accident that Moses winds up at ‘Horeb – the mountain of God’ (v1) – a sort of trial run before the 10 commandments. Israel’s deliverer is driven further into the desert as he is prepared for the task ahead and having fled from justice having killed an Egyptian overseer. He is involved in shepherding his father-in-law’s flocks. Soon he will have a much larger flock who can all talk.

Moses arrives at the mountain and is confronted with the burning, but not consumed, bush.

1. Why was this meeting important at this stage of Moses’ life?

Think about what had gone before and what was to follow.

Share any experiences you have of God bringing you to a place where decisions have to be made or a new direction is needed.

The precise identity of the ‘angel of the Lord’ has been much debated. What is certain is that Moses sees this as a clear revelation from God. He is serving his apprenticeship in the land of Midian but he needs to face the issues that will shortly become the focus of the rest of his earthly life. This meeting is not something you can explain in rational or scientific terms. It is God calling his ‘saviour man’ as he so often does.

1. God’s first words to Moses are his name. You can find that so often when God calls (e.g. Samuel in 1 Sam 3:10; Jacob in Genesis 46:2 and Abraham in Genesis 22:11) This is almost certainly when Moses receives a divine revelation.

Are we aware that God knows us by name? How does that change how we respond to God? Share any experiences of you sensing God’s call to you.

Moses’ response is rather abrupt. (‘Here I am’) Does he know who’s speaking to him? Is he expecting a divine encounter when he approaches the bush? God makes it very clear from the outset that this is no ordinary encounter. Meeting God is not like a cup of coffee with a mate. He is told it is holy ground and he must respond appropriately – shoes off and no closer.

1. What is the right way to approach a holy God? Are we sometimes too matey – after all God is our friend?

Have we lost that sense of awe and wonder as we approach God?

Do you think some of our worship songs get it wrong?

God gives himself an historical context. ‘I am the God of your father’ or ‘I am the one you’ve heard about’. This is not a ‘new God’ person. It’s the same God who created the world who led Abraham from his home and who blessed Joseph in Egypt. Moses has moved from the curiosity of verse 3 to serious awe and reverence in v6. From verse 7, God makes clear the nature of his business with Moses. He is aware of his suffering people who were promised a future in a land God chose for them. They are now living a subservient life in a foreign land.

1. God refers to Irael as ‘my people’ (v7). His relationship with his people has a long history so he wants to ‘come down’ and ‘rescue them’ (v8).

What does this tell you about the character of God and his attitude to his people?

How does this change how we see God’s feelings for us?

God has a plan! Doesn’t he always? There is a promised land and God’s commitment to deal with the Egyptian oppressor. Both of them must have looked daunting to a man who could be up for a murder conviction if he ever returned to Egypt. Predictably Moses doubts his ability to carry out the plan (v11). God has to remind him who he’s talking to and tell him he will be back to this spot to worship with close on a quarter of a million other people.

1. How easy it to under-estimate God’s power?

Do we always pray in faith?

Do we sometimes pray ‘hoping’ rather than ‘trusting’?

Do we believe God has the power to intervene in the everyday of the 21st century?

Moses is given the most massive assurance from God. ‘I will be with you’ (v12) and the great word play on the simple phrase ‘I AM’. This is one of the great statements of the Bible. One commentator writes

 ‘This is God refusing to dignify Moses’s question with an answer’.

God is always an ‘I AM’ – he is always in the present and always has been and always will be.

1. J.B. Phillips famously wrote a book called ‘Your God is too small’.

Is he?

Have we tried to contract God down to our level?

Do we need to allow ourselves an expanding view of God’s power?

**Try reading a few Psalms where God is described in expansive terms**

**Spend some time thanking God for who he is and the fact that, although he is magnificently glorious, he is also our Loving Father.**