**3rd September 2023**

**Scripture Reading 1- Exodus 3:1-6**

**Reflection 1**

(silence)

What an extraordinary thing.

Moses, a fairly normal man with a fairly colourful history, sees something otherworldly while tending his flocks. He is not a priest, he is not a wholly virtuous man- in fact he’s been on the run since killing a man. He’s just trying to live a quiet life.

A tree is aflame, and doesn’t seem to burn up. He draws closer and then, he hears the very voice of God, coming to him from that tree.

He hides his face.

How would you respond? How many holy moments have you been invited into, do you think?

Perhaps none this truly shocking, though who knows? What do you think the voice of God sounds like? Why was it here, in this moment? So intimate, so present, so raw and strange. A glimpse of the divine offered to an unworthy man.

Sometimes I wonder if we forget, that though there is no burning bush for us to draw near, we too have been offered that glimpse. More than a glimpse.

For this is the scandal of our faith- God became human and drew near. Became even more intimate and present to humanity- stepped into skin and knew our lives and our pains and our joys.

Sometimes I wonder if we forget that we pray to a living God. sometimes I wonder if we actually think God is with us. Sometimes I wonder how we would react if the voice of God spoke to us, unworthy as we might feel ourselves. Sometimes I wonder if it’s already happening, and if we can hear it.

**Scripture reading 2- Exodus 3:7-10**

**Reflection 2**

Here God in burning bush form gets to the point. I have seen my people struggle, God says. I know they are enslaved, I know they are in agony and their cries have not gone unheard.

I will deliver them to a place of nourishment and plenty. So come on, you’re the one who’s going to lead them out.

God has heard their struggles. God is moved to help. God will lead them to freedom.

Again we see God present, and intimate. Not only present, but attuned. Listening, longing to intervene and to bring the people God loves to freedom and abundance.

But the way God wants to do this, is through this simple man, trying to live a quiet life.

This is more than a holy moment, witnessed by someone unworthy, it is a calling.

You can imagine the world sort of tilting in the background as Moses realises what’s going on. Not only is GOD speaking to him, not only is God invested in Moses’ people and their suffering, but uh-oh, Moses is suddenly right in the middle of things. He is being asked to leave his quiet life behind and to step into something much bigger.

**Scripture reading 3- Exodus 3:11-15**

**Reflection 3**

This is for me and perhaps for many of you the most relatable part of this story.

Who am I to do this? Moses asks. Who can sympathise with this sort of reaction?

I ask this regularly about my calling to be a minister, let alone if God appeared to me and asked if I could just pop over to Egypt and help liberate a people group.

Moses is flabbergasted, and likely quite scared. He is just one guy. Sure, he grew up in Egypt but he has certainly disgraced himself quite thoroughly through the murder he committed.

Why him?

And, beautifully, God doesn’t justify the choice, or talk about his attributes (or how perhaps being an Israelite himself but having grown up around the Egyptians might make Moses a good choice for this sort of thing), God says instead: I will be with you.

You’re not going alone, I will be with you every step of the way.

Can you hear in that some other messages? “do not be afraid”, or “it’s ok if you don’t know what you’re doing” “I am accompanying you”.

I am so sure you’ll get this done with me, that when your people are free, you’ll all come and be with me in this very spot.

Moses asks what he should say when people don’t understand who he represents.

And God says: I am who I am. The God who is, who is unexplainable but alongside you has sent this man.

What is profound about this is God naming Godself to moses. Again drawing close, revealing themselves to this man, by way of a voice out of a bush.

What God doesn’t say during this speech is “I’ll make it all ok”, or “it’ll be easy”.

But instead offers company, solidarity, presence.

I wonder what we are being called to, both together and in our individual lives?

I wonder if we think we are worthy of it? what might happen if we listened for that call and actually believed God capable of walking alongside us to do this extraordinary thing?

Like, bless the community of Eltham, or grow our community in faith and love? Like be the hands and feet of Jesus in our presence to those who need it?

The God who called to Moses is here with us friends. When we come together and sing God’s name we are invited into a holy, holy moment with the God of the Israelites, the God who died, the God who still calls to us.

I wonder what would happen if we actually believed that, if we realised that if this is true, if God dwells here, if God walks with us, is perhaps attuned to our struggles and our needs, if God longs to call us into something bigger than ourselves, then we are always standing on holy ground.

I’m just going to leave some silence here, for us all to sit in our own holy moments, and to talk to the God who meets us.