



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

September 11, 2022

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

Moses: The Well and the Bush (Exodus 2:11-22, 3:1-12)

The well and the bush are two important sites that proved to be turning points in Moses' life. The well was the place he met his wife. The bush is the place he encountered the voice of God.

On the page of the Bible, there is but a few paragraphs separating these two events. In Moses' life however, there was 40 years. While Scripture doesn't name exact years, Rabbinical tradition holds that Moses' life could be divided into three 40-year portions.

The first forty are his Egypt years, marked with his rescue from the river, his life in the palace of Pharaoh, and ending with Moses murdering an Egyptian man and fleeing to the wilderness. This forty year period ends at the well, when the fugitive Moses defends a group of women at a well. This chance encounter leads to his marriage and becoming a shepherd with his father-in-law Jethro (or Reuel, the Scriptures inexplicably change the name). The last forty year period is his time freeing the Hebrews from captivity and leading them through the desert.

The well and the bush mark the transition times between his 40 year periods. His first forty years are marked by violence. The murder of the innocents and his own murder of an Egyptian man give way to a time of peace. His middle period begins when he defends the safety and rights of seven women. The rest is uneventful in the Bible, except that he becomes a father, a shepherd, and settles down. This period of peace begins at the well—a place of oasis. The well is his respite, not just from the brutal dry air of the desert, but from a life of torment and violence.

Forty years later, while a father, husband, and toiling as a shepherd, he makes an incredible discovery. He finds a bush that is burning but is not consumed. The very presence of the LORD is found in this bush and the voice of God tells him to do something impossible: Go to Pharaoh and tell him to free Israel. It is an impossible task, and one that is asked of Moses as he enters the final third of his life.

Moses objects. He asks, "Who am I?" There are two things Moses didn't consider when he objects to the mission God



The bush at Saint Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai Peninsula, which monastic tradition identifies as being the burning bush. (Wikimedia)

sets out for him. For one, Moses is exactly the person who is fit for this enormous task. He is a Hebrew. He is acquainted with the Pharaoh and the palace. He also knows the wilderness for he has spent the last forty years of his life as a shepherd in the land in which he is about to lead his people. Everything in his life has led him to this point. Who could possibly be better suited?

More importantly however, is God's answer. The most important thing about Moses is that God is with him. Moses was chosen by God, and that is enough. Moses, despite his age, despite his temper, despite his sordid past and his extraordinary life, was chosen by God. And that makes him enough.

Moses would lead the people out of slavery. He would be given God's Law. He would have a relationship with God like no other human would have. And it started when he was entering the last third of his life. He did all of his best work after retirement. He became a leader, a prophet, a man of God, and finally found his own identity when he was could have settled down and collected his pension.

The well and the bush—two turning points in his life—give us a chance to reflect on our own turning points. Where have our lives turned, and how may our lives still turn? Be open to God's call, no matter which portion of life you may be in. God may still speak to you and call you to an extraordinary mission.