

Sunday 28th February. Jim Raistrick Sermon notes.

Prayer from Saint Ambrose of Milan (339-397AD):

O Lord, teach us to seek You, and reveal Yourself to us when we seek You. For we cannot seek You unless You first teach us, nor find You unless You first reveal Yourself to us. Let us seek You in longing, and long for You in seeking. Let us find You in love, and love You in finding. Amen.

Exodus 4:1-31 What God Wants...

Context of the passage – 3,500 years ago. The Bronze Age. Egyptian civilisation, Israelite slavery and Kenite nomad tribes. Consider the people God calls and why (1 Cor. 1:27). God is in control and He will do what He says He will do.

1-9 They will not believe me. 40 years' earlier, Moses had tried to help but had failed. He is still feeling the consequences of that rejection. A 'wonder' is something that will cause people to stop and stare. A 'sign' is something that causes people to look for some meaning behind what is happening. A wonder astonishes, a sign instructs.

10-12 I am slow of speech. God reveals Himself as the creator and enabler of the world. He made everything, and everything is empowered by Him.

13 The begrudging acceptance by Moses. More of a: 'Okay, if I have to' type of attitude.

14-28 Into the arena. This is the preface of Moses stepping into his called ministry. He is appointed Aaron to be a spokesperson for him, visits Jethro for his consent for him to go, and journeys to Egypt. This portion shows the providence of God, in providing Aaron (3 years older than Moses) who is already on his way to meet him at the mountain of God. Although angry with Moses, God reassures and guides. Moses must be aligned to the covenantal promises of God, as will need to be those who follow him.

29-31 Accepting the mission and ministry of God. Moses and Aaron are accepted by God, after performing the signs and wonders as instructed by God. The people are amazed and delighted that God was concerned for them and had seen their misery, and – appropriately – they worshipped Him there and then.

Questions to consider:

The insecurities of Moses; his being 'fit for purpose' or 'effective', are articulated here. Moses, dejected rather than enthused, eventually comes to the place of asking God to choose someone else. If we peek ahead we'll find his justification appropriate: Pharaoh makes things harder, not easier – at least in the shorter term. God is the one to be trusted in, not appearances of purpose or effectiveness. What does it take to maintain that confidence in God?

Why does God seem to always choose those who aren't the best for the role? God seeks, and prizes, obedience of His will above all else. 'I will harden Pharaoh's heart' – is God more *just* than *good*? Does Zipporah, together with Moses' sons, depart from verse 26, and not follow Moses into Egypt? (see Ex. 18:2)

What can we Christians expect from God, and what should we expect to be called to do – and be – in His service? Is our worship a pleasing aroma to Him? What is the purpose behind our being filled with Spiritual water?

Prayer from Saint Ambrose of Milan (339-397AD):

O Lord, who has mercy upon all, take away from us our sins, and mercifully kindle in us the fire of Your Holy Spirit. Take away from us the heart of stone, and give us a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore You, a heart to delight in You, to follow and enjoy You, for Christ's sake. Amen.