

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE** Jesus is Calling

**SERIES**

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**KEY SCRIPTURE** Exodus 3:1-14

**SYNOPSIS** You need a personal encounter with God. He is calling you closer.

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ Jesus is Calling

We've been talking about the Deeper Life. It's all about knowing Jesus more. You need more than a gathering and group experience. You need a God experience. You need to come to Christ and connect with God. You need to see him at work in your life. We talked about Job, who had heard about God, but finally came to really see and know God. You need to experience the power of his presence. Moses was another one who had a personal encounter and came to really know God.

### Exodus 3:1-14

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight — why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." 5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. 7 The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey — the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So now, go. I am sending 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 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." 13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

This is a classic encounter with the Lord which most Christians have read or heard about. It started ☞ with a **Wilderness Experience**. (v.1-4) Moses was in **the far side of the desert**. (v.1) In other words, he was in a dry place and was all alone. We have our moments that feel like this. Maybe you're in a lonely, dry place spiritually right now. God wants to speak to you today.

Often, it's in the down and dry times that we will have an encounter with God. Sometimes it's because we've gotten so low that we finally look to God. Other times, it's that we are isolated enough that God can finally get through to us. And, sometimes it's simply that God sees our desert place and decides to meet us in a special way. We love the mountaintop experiences, but ☞ **God likes to meet us when we're down in the valley**. So, take heart.



While in the desert alone, Moses saw **an unusual sight**. (v.2) The bush was burning, but was not being consumed, and it caught his attention. What will God use to get your attention? It could be something miraculous... you could be in the driest season of your spiritual life when God suddenly displays his power... an answered prayer; an emotional moment.

☞ **When something out of the ordinary happens in your life, it's time to take note** – God may be trying to get your attention. An important question here is this: “Are you paying attention? Does God have to do something extraordinary for you to realize he’s speaking to you?”

☞ Then, for Moses, this Wilderness experience became a **Worshipful Experience**. (v.5-6) Once God had his attention, he cautioned him to **not come any closer**. (v.5a) At first this seems rather odd – God was obviously trying to get his attention, but then tells him to stay back. But God clarified that this was a holy moment and should not be entered into rashly. Our modern theology has largely forgotten about holy moments.

Much of today’s pop theology has painted Jesus as a teddy bear who just wants to cuddle with us. However, we must remember that he is a Holy God. In fact, later in verse 5 God specifically says, “this is holy ground.” This was God’s turf! We should not just lazily and lackadaisically waltz into his presence. Yes, Jesus has opened the door so that we can boldly approach the throne of God, but he is still the Lord. He is still a Holy God.

☞ **It’s a privilege to be able to enter his presence**. There is proper protocol and reverential respect required. Part of the protocol in this case was Moses had to **take something off** (sandals). (v.5b)

*David Guzik... Removing the sandals showed an appropriate humility, because the poorest and most needy have no shoes, and servants usually went barefoot. It also recognized the immediate presence of God. In many cultures, you take off your shoes when you come into someone’s house, and now Moses was in God’s “house,” a place of His immediate presence.*

I think also that sandals were a comfort in the harsh wilderness. And, it meant his feet would be exposed. What comfort might God be urging you to sacrifice, at least temporarily? Are you willing to humble yourself before the Lord and be completely open with him? Or, are there things you want to keep hidden?

☞ **Have you fully opened your heart to the Lord?** What is God telling you to take off or to give up? It may seem like you’re losing something, but it’s not a loss when you get to experience the closeness of God’s presence.

Then, **God identifies Himself**. (v.6a) “God of your father, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” There is consistency here. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8) When God speaks, he will be consistent with who he is.



☞ **Your encounter with God will not lead you to anything which is in conflict with Scripture.**

"God told me to..." He's the same God he has always been and he is true to himself. So, know the Word in order to recognize his voice.

**Moses was afraid.** (v.6b) This was his first encounter with God, which was frightening! A genuine encounter with the Lord can be scary. His presence includes his power, which is unlimited and sometimes overwhelming. His presence also brings light to all the dark places of your heart and mind, which can be uncomfortable. He sees all and knows all, which can be intimidating. But the Lord brings comforting words along with it.

☞ Now, this Wilderness, Worshipful Experience, became a **Wonderful Experience.** (v.7-10) God replied with the following responses:

"I have seen the misery" (v.7a) and "the oppression" (v.9) No matter what you're dealing with, ☞ God is aware. **He knows.**

"I have heard them crying" (v.7b) If you've been crying out to the Lord, praying and seeking his help, he has been hearing you. He's not ignoring you. He is paying attention.

"I am concerned about their suffering" (v.7c) This is his heart for you. His timing may not seem ☞ like it, but **he cares** a lot about what you are going through.

"I have come down to rescue" (v.8a) and "I will send you" (v.10) Here is the partnership that we ☞ consistently see in Scripture. **God partners with people.** He enters our situation to rescue and save, but he also partners with us to help others.

When you've been feeling alone in the wilderness, it's comforting to know that God still cares and is fully aware of your situation.

☞ Finally, this encounter for Moses became a **Wakening Experience.** (v.11-14) Moses responded with "**Who am I?**" (v.11) In essence he said, "You want *ME* to go to Pharaoh? This is clearly a declaration of feeling inadequate, which is an okay place to be.

God will often ask us to do something that seems beyond our ability. That's part of the reason the modern idea of just following your heart is not biblical. Our hearts are deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9), and God's calling is likely to be more than what's already in our hearts.

☞ **His calling may even seem impossible.** Actually, I think having a sense that something is beyond your ability is a good thing. It means you will have to rely on God rather than your own abilities. And, he's far better than you could ever hope to be. And, here's the really good news...

☞ God says, "Don't worry, **I'll be with you.**" (v.12) **Whatever God calls you to do, He'll go with you ALL the way.** This is the assurance we have as we step out in obedience to the Lord. He never leaves us nor forsakes us. (Joshua 1:5)

Then Moses asks, "**Who shall I tell them sent me?**" (v.13) This is almost humorous. Moses is basically asking, "What is your name, in case they ask me? It's good to know that God is always



with us, but what exactly does that mean? Does it mean automatic victory in all situations? Does it mean I won't have to do anything because God will do it all? Does it mean that I do it all, but God just makes me feel okay?

And God replies with, **"I AM WHO I AM."** (v.14) Jesus used these same words to the Jews in John 8:58. The phrase means: I Am the One who causes things to be. This reminds us that nothing is impossible with God.

☞ **It may seem impossible to you, but nothing is impossible with God.** (Matthew 19:26)

I think this also means that God will be and do whatever is needed in each and every situation. Sometimes he does a miracle; sometimes he teaches a lesson. Sometimes he calms the storm; other times he calms us as we walk through the storm.

*He Calms Me--The McKameys*

*Troubled waters came my way; the angry storm grew near  
I prayed for God to speak the words to make it disappear  
It seemed the waves would not obey the master's call for peace  
But then the Lord spoke to my soul; reminded me He had control  
And said this time His words were meant for me  
Sometimes He calms the storm; sometimes He calms me  
Sometimes the storm still rages on but I feel the sweetest peace  
It's such a joy to know that my Lord knows just what I need  
Sometimes He calms the storm; sometimes He calms me*

☞ **(music starts) Jesus is calling.** Perhaps you've been in a storm of life recently, or maybe you feel like you've been in the wilderness. God is speaking to you today. Are you paying attention? Have you noticed any unusual happenings in your life? What is God saying to you? Are you willing to humble yourself before the Lord and perhaps give up something in order to connect with him? Will you still worship him in any case?

God is reminding you today that he hears you and he cares about your situation. He has not left you, but is always with you. In fact, he wants to partner with you to deal with your situation and to even reach out and help others in their situations. Will you partner with God? Will you trust him to be with you and carry you through it all? He is calling.

*Jesus is Calling by Vernon Hill*

*Jesus is Calling; Hear Him Call You; Feel Him Draw You  
For Healing, Come; For Salvation, Come; For Deliverance, Come; For Mercy, Come; For Grace,  
Come; For Favor, Come; For Love, Come; For Forgiveness, Come; For Rest, Come; For Power,  
Come; For Freedom, Come; Come, Just as you are; Lay it all at his feet; Jesus is Calling*