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Hungering for Holiness, Part 5

Exodus 3:1-6

I have a friend who is single, female and African American, who says she is looking for a BMW- a black man working.

Here, in our text, is an IMW- an Israelite man working. Moses is tending sheep that are not his own. He is working his father-in-law’s herd. Moses has possibly been doing this for forty years, starting shortly after he murdered an Egyptian (Acts 7:23-30).

Sometimes we expect that the only way God will speak to us is in and through some dramatic event and circumstance. However, the norm is that God most often speaks to us in the context of the ordinary.

Moses is not going up the mountain to hear from God. He is not isolating himself and lying prostrate, waiting for divine revelation. No, he is working. It’s an ordinary day, in which Moses is doing mundane tasks. In that context of the ordinary, God speaks.

The angel or messenger of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire....and Moses looked. Don’t miss this detail. Moses is curious enough to investigate the revelation. God has used fire previously. Genesis 3:24 speaks of flaming swords which were put in place to guard the way to the tree of life. Exodus 13:21 speaks of God leading His people by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire. Moses doesn’t exactly what’s going on. Some scholars who cannot accept the word of God as it is, have tried to explain away the miracle.

* It’s St. Elmo’s fire (a discharge of electricity that causes a glow)
* It’s a gas plant which contains glands of oil and which spontaneously bursts into flames.
* There was a natural gas or volcanic vent beneath the bush. (Colin Humphreys, The Miracles of Exodus)

Moses only knows that in the context of the ordinary, something extraordinary is happening.

Some people exhibit an appalling lack of interest and curiosity about what is going on around them. Moses actually says, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.” (3)

Curiosity leads to exploration. Exploration leads to innovation. Innovation leads to ongoing education and so the cycle continues. The word *education* comes from the Latin *educere,* meaning *to lead forth* or *to bring out.*

Our education system may not be drawing our curiosity out. We might be teaching children to memorize information instead of asking questions. That saddens me.

Every invention, every innovation, every advancement made in our culture is the result of an expressed curiosity.

Curiosity makes us more interesting. To be interest*ing* we must be interest*ed*- in the world around us, in the ordinary and the extraordinary.

**Illus.**

Benjamin Franklin was curious about lightning and electricity. He thought they might be the same thing. This led to experiments with kites to get up close to lightning. This led to the invention of the lightning rod, which takes the potentially destructive electricity from lightning and sends it into the rod on the top of a building rather than into the building itself.

This is Moses in our text- asking questions, expressing curiosity. God affirms that curiosity and continues the revelation of God’s self to Moses (v. 4)

God then instructs Moses to remove his shoes (perhaps because he is a slave? [Luke 15:22]) and God sanctifies the ground. After the sanctifying of the ground, comes the reminder of the identity of this God who would be known. Lest Moses be confused about the deity who is speaking, God says, “I am the God of your fathers(s). I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The Moses whose face was bright with curiosity, whose eyes lit up at the thought of something new, now hides his face, for when we are in the manifested presence of The Eternal, we are humbled and appropriately afraid (v. 6).

**Closing**

Those of us who long for and hunger for holiness, must put ourselves in places where the bush is likely to burn. We seek the places where God is more likely to speak and show Himself. We look for opportunities to shed both our shoes and our pretense. In this text, God sanctifies the physical space Moses occupies. Moses hears the words, “*This* ground is holy”. We have the wonderful opportunity to inhabit holy spaces, made holy by the God who reveals Himself to us. What would happen if we gave every space over to God and asked God to sanctify that space, making it holy, different, distinct? Suppose we were open to the revelation of the eternal, speaking, delivering God in every physical space? Our offices. Our houses. Our cars. Our cubicles. Our desks.

What a life!

Amen