

Trinity 16 (2020)

Last year the world marked the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

It was the largest taskforce launched in the history of the world. Its purpose, to liberate a suffering humanity, the people of Europe struggling under Nazi tyranny.

In this morning's Old Testament reading, we find another taskforce being launched to liberate a suffering people . . . the enslaved Hebrews in Egypt.

But there is an important difference between these two operations. The one on D-day had around 160,000 participants; the one launched at the burning bush, just one . . . that amazing man Moses. Never underestimate God and one. That is an unstoppable force.

I want to speak to you this morning on the subject of **The God Who Reveals Himself.**

“Religion” as it is often conceived, is about man's up-reach to God; Christianity (and before it the faith of the Old Testament) is about God's down-reach to us. And this is what we find in today's passage. God coming down to where we are. God revealing Himself.

This morning I want to highlight three facets of the God who reveals Himself, who reaches down to us.

The first is: **He is a God who cares.** Thus, not a distant, impersonal, indifferent deity.

We learn as much in verses 7 and 8. Here we find God saying to Moses:

“I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.”

Notice those three statements describing God's action regarding His suffering people: *I have seen . . . I have heard . . . I have come down.*

If we look further, there is a fourth statement: *I know their sorrows*. These four go together to say, God cares. God cares for you.

Perhaps you are going through a rough patch in your life and are asking, where is God? Perhaps you are wondering, does He care?

Well, here's your answer.

Words of an old Gospel song come to mind:

*Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath his wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.*

And then the refrain:

*God will take care of you,
Through ev'ry day,
O'er all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you.*

Breathe in these words. Let them inform everything you think and do, for they have certain Scriptural warrant.

God cares. That is the first facet of the God who reveals Himself. A second is: **He is a God who IS . . . 'IS' in capital letters.**

He is not just the highest of beings, but the ground of being. He is the great I AM THAT I AM.

In these simple words, God reveals the inner meaning of His most holy name Yahweh, sometimes transliterated Jehovah in our English Bibles.

From them, we learn that the God of revelation is free like the wind. He cannot be pinned down or put in man's neat categories.

A failure to understand this -- putting the living God in the wrong category - - might well have led the Russian cosmonaut Yury Gagarin—the first human

launched into space — to say upon his return to earth: **“I looked and looked and looked, but I didn’t see God.”**

God is not a giant man in the sky. He is beyond the measure of man’s mind.

What this means to us in practical terms is that because He IS and is like none other, we don’t have to be fearful about life. Why and how come?

We find our answer in God’s words to Moses as He prepared to send Him on this campaign to liberate His people: **“I will go with you.”** It is not just anybody that is going but the One who knows no limitations.

If you and I have been linked in faith and baptism to the One who is the visible image and the exact representation of the great I AM – Jesus the Messiah – God says the same thing to us.

“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (age),” Jesus, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, tells His disciples and by extension us in His Great Commission. That is why we don’t have to fret and be fearful about life.

What challenges are *you* facing in this coming week? Know you are not alone. Hear the living God say: “I will be with you, every day, every step of the way.”

But there is a third and final facet of the living God that merits our attention.

The God who cares and IS is also the God who uses humans to bring about His purposes in the world. God’s work, our hands.

How happy Moses must have been when God told Him that at long last He was preparing to liberate His captive people.

It was only after God told him that he was the one who would be doing this thing, going before Pharaoh and all that, that Moses began stammering and making excuses.

More than that, guess how old Moses was at the time? /// Eighty! He had been drawing Social Security for the past 15 years and was now looking into assisted living communities, but God had another plan for his life.

Surely there is a lesson here for us. God can use people no matter their age. Never say, 'I am too old', or for that matter 'I am too young', to be of service to God. God does not discriminate according to age.

D. L. Moody, the great American evangelist, once said that:

“Moses spent his first 40 years thinking he was a somebody [his time in Pharaoh’s palace]; his second 40 thinking he was a nobody [his time in the desert tending his father-in-law’s sheep]; his last 40, seeing what God can do with a nobody.”

In Moses’ case those first two sets of 40 were not wasted years. They were years of vital preparation. In Egypt he learned to write, count and no doubt how to organize and lead men.

In the desert, he learned survival skills and the terrain of the land through which he would later lead the children of Israel.

God’s providential hand was over both periods in his life . . . just as it would be over his last 40 years as the leader of God’s people.

Maybe you find yourself this morning in period not unlike that of Moses’ desert period. One thing has ended, perhaps a job or a relationship, and life does not seem to have much purpose. You feel washed up.

Don’t despair, the same providential hand that was over Moses when he was seemingly a ‘nobody’ just marking time in the desert is over you.

The God who cares, the God who IS, the God who uses men and women, has yet work and a purpose for you. ///

In closing, let me urge you to say yes to God call and to do it today.

“My hands, your work. Lord: I am ready to go where you want me to go.”

May this be our prayer as we head into a new week.