

Today we start a sermon series. We will take a deeper dive into the Book of Exodus. The Psalm, Epistle and Gospel readings continue to be as our lectionary prescribes for us. But as those of you who have been around Trinity for a while now know, I sometimes like us all to think about some passages we don't usually hear on a Sunday morning. Today's passage from Exodus is one of those. Our lectionary would have us jump straight from the call of Moses by God to the Passover.

But Moses didn't just suddenly rise to prophetic heights of speech, or sure and certain leadership. Like any human being Moses had his doubts and difficulties. Today we hear a little of that. It took quite a while to get from Moses saying to God, "here I am" to the Passover. In the next few weeks we'll explore together some of the events in the lives of the Hebrew people in Egypt before we get to the Passover and the Exodus.

If you think that you really can't identify with Moses because you haven't had a call like his, I encourage you to think again. We aren't our own Higher Power. God is the One who leads us and guides us in the way we should go. We just have the choice to either except or reject God's guidance. A call can seem to be solely a personal choice at the time,— to take a particular job, to marry, to go into the military, or have children. In all these choices that we have made in our lives...can you see God at work through them?

Then, as Moses shows us, we probably have come to a moment, after being sure of the decision to answer a call – to choose a particular path – that we begin to rethink what we are doing. Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

As an example this morning, I'll choose the experience of our own vestry members. For those of you who are on the vestry now at Trinity Church, you have answered God's call to help your fellow Christians in this place and at this time. You are lucky enough (if you want to put it that way) to be church leaders in a very challenging year. Just like Moses, you may have enthusiastically asserted, "Here I am" when you were asked to take on this leadership role. But who knew back in January that we would be where we are now, which is to say, not worshiping in the building because of the pandemic? Have you had a moment this year when you thought, "What did I get myself into?"

When Moses complained that maybe he really wasn't up for this job, what did the LORD say to him? "Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak." But Moses said, "O my Lord, please send someone else."

Do you remember when Randy Orzano was the Senior Warden here? That was from 2014 – 2016. When he began his three year term of service we were all enthusiastic about possible plans to make a few small changes to building's interior and to the nave of the church. And then disaster struck. Our

well failed completely and only silt ran through the pipes. Randy thought his call had been to make some improvements to our worship and working spaces. And now that all had to be abandoned to work on the very difficult task of re-drilling the well, or re-siting it completely. It was a time consuming and very challenging undertaking.

It wasn't just the church that was without water, Gordon and Christine depend on the church well too, over in the rectory. Our neighbors on the other side of the rectory, were very kind and let us run a hose from their well to the church so that we could at least have a little water.

This was not the call to serve that Randy expected or wanted. I can imagine that he might have prayed like Moses did, "Can you please find someone else, Lord? I'm not sure if I'm up for all this difficulty."

I hope that now Randy, who hung in there despite the trials and tribulations, can now see that God put him in this position for a reason. He was the right person at the right time to see our parish through the challenge of a well gone bad and plumbing in the church full of silt. God called Randy to this, and Randy answered the call and saw it through.

Let's remember how Jesus spoke to the members of his group, the ecclesia (the community of faith) that was beginning to be formed. Jesus instructed the members how to get through difficulties with one another. He didn't say, "Oh, just ignore that. It will go away." Instead, Jesus told the community to lean in – to walk together with a person, or a situation to do the best we can to reconcile, and to come through the tough time with grace and camaraderie.

In church we often use the phrase from Matthew's Gospel, "When two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, our Lord is in the midst of us." We may not know what next week or next month will bring, or how our God-given call will change us and change the church we've been given. God will be with us, to give us the strength we need to see us through. What we do now will make sense, we hope, when we can look back on this time. And meanwhile the Trinity vestry will do the very best we can with God's grace leading and guiding us.

Our world needs you and me. Our God needs you and me. We must all, as the faithful of the Lord, commit or recommit ourselves to our calls to do God's work of justice, reconciliation, peacemaking, and empathy in the church and in our lives.