



Been reading this month from book of Genesis –

Today we come to the second book of the Bible – the book of Exodus
Story of God rescuing God's people from slavery in Egypt
Story remembered throughout the rest of Scripture as a key moment
in the relationship between God and God's people

But wait – how did God's people end up as slaves in Egypt?
Let's review the story – Jacob – 12 sons – Joseph – Egypt – Pharoah – famine
Hebrew people resettle in Egypt
Exodus begins by telling us that the descendants of Jacob prospered in Egypt;
they multiplied and grew strong there.
Then a king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph – makes people slaves
kills Hebrew boys – why Moses ends up in a basket, rescued by princess
Moses kills overseer, flees from Egypt to Midian, marries and becomes shepherd.



And that is where our story today begins

God hears the cries of Israelites, and God looks upon them,
and God knows them, and decides to rescue them
And God decides to use a human – a number of humans, really, but mostly Moses –
to do this.
Moses herding sheep -sees burning bush, turns aside,
whole life is changed yet again

First, God introduces Gods-self as the God of Moses's ancestors,
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - the God of the Israelites
And God tells Moses – You go to bring my people out of Egypt
Moses is not enthusiastic – Here I am, Lord – send someone else!
But God promises to be with Moses.

Then Moses asks, What is your name? Who shall I say sent me?
Now, God could have just told them – the God of your ancestors sent me –
but instead God gives Moses a new name
God says, I am Who I am. Tell them I AM sent you.



Now, let's take a closer look at that name God gives to Moses.

It is written as four Hebrew letters Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey –

don't know how it was pronounced, we sometimes say Yahweh

For later Israelites and some Jews too holy to speak – replaced with Adonai, LORD

Name based on the verb “to be” – not simple to translate

Can mean, I will be who I will be

Ellen Davis – I will be whoever I will be – God will not be limited, boxed in

God's name is dynamic, changes through Exodus

Exodus 33 God says, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”

In Exodus 34 reveals Godself as “gracious and merciful,

slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,

so that God's name becomes a revelation of God's love, mercy and forgiveness.

When Moses resists God's plan to send him to Egypt,

God responds that God will be with Moses the whole time.

Perhaps that is why the study bible I was using Thursday at Bible study suggested another way to translate God's name – I will be present with whom I will be present.

God describes Gods-self as the one who is present with God's people.



God is present in visions, promises and dreams;

God is present in burning bush, in column of wind and column of fire;

and eventually, God present in flesh and blood in person of Jesus.

In the gospel of John, Jesus will pick up this name of God – I Am – sometimes with a noun – bread, water of life, shepherd –

sometimes just I Am – claiming oneness with God,

claiming relationship with people of God through history

God chose Abraham's family to be a blessing to the world

God chose Moses to lead God's people out of Egypt.

Throughout scripture, God uses humans – flawed, uncertain, brave humans –

to speak God's words of love and to do God's work in the world

And you know what?

God still uses humans – imperfect, sometimes reluctant, beloved humans –

to do God's work in the world

Humans like you and me



In our baptism, God makes us God's people,
whose work is to share God's love and blessing in the world
God's work – Our hands – Our voices.

And God promises to be with us –
in scripture, in baptism, and every time we share Lord's supper,
God promises that God is with us.

There is a prayer/poem attributed to St Teresa of Avila which describes our role as people of God

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

God invites us into relationship –
as lasting and intimate as God's relationship with Moses.
God gives us work to do – important work,
sharing God's love and carrying God's blessing into the world

And God promises us – I will be with you.
I will be grace and mercy and love, and I will walk with you always.
Thanks be to God.
Amen