



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

Sermon for Lent 3 Midweek

March 15, 2023

Our Ordinary Lenten Exodus: The Creed

Exodus 3:1-6, 13-15; Matthew 16:13-18, 21-23

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Moses did not know God's name. But God knew his. **Moses, Moses**, He called out of the bush that burned with fire but was not consumed. That can be a bit disconcerting. When someone knows you, when they know your name, but you do not know them or their name.

What did Moses know of God? This God who came to him here on Mount Horeb? Moses had been raised in Egypt, in Pharaoh's household. The gods of Egypt that he would have known were small gods, basic gods. Gods of the water, the sun, of animals, and things like that. They were gods with very limited powers. At some point, he learned that he was not an Egyptian, but of Hebrew blood. Did he then learn about the God of the Hebrews? And if so, what did he think of this God? This God who lets His people be slaves . . . or, at least, seems unable to rescue them?

Moses then flees from Egypt and Pharaoh after he killed an Egyptian who was abusing and beating a Hebrew slave. He flees and winds up in the land of Midian, in the household of Jethro, the priest of Midian. We don't know how long he lived there, but long enough to marry one of Jethro's daughters and have a son by her. Perhaps here, at this time, he learned more of the God of the Hebrews from his father-in-law. Of a God who was not just the god of a territory or of elements, but a different kind of God than that - the God of people. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. A God who chose people and saved people. A God not bound but unbounded. A God not limited but unlimited.

And then this day, while Moses was out tending the sheep - for God does tend to have a thing for shepherds, doesn't He? - he sees this sight, this bush that burned with fire but was not consumed. He goes to see it, and gets more than he bargained for. He hears the voice of God. The God of the Hebrews. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And now, the God of Moses. He turns his face away in fear. What he went to see he could no longer look at.

But the God who saw him and came to him in a bush that burned with fire but was not consumed, did not consume Moses, but spoke to him. He had chosen him, *Moses, to rescue His people from Egypt. But what is Your name? Moses asked. Who are You? How do I confess You when I am asked about You? I AM WHO I AM* was the answer. The God who is. The God who doesn't change. The God who is always present. That's how You confess Me, Moses. And after this God named I AM



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acted for them and rescued them, their confession of Him expanded - to who He is and what He has done: **He is the LORD who brought us out of Egypt.**

Many years later the LORD appeared again, and again to rescue His people. A greater rescue, from a greater slavery, to a greater freedom. **But to do the greater, He came even smaller.** He came, this time, not on a mountain, but in a small town. Not in a burning bush but in human flesh. It was the same LORD. An infinite, all-powerful God in a tiny, weak, baby's body, yet that body was not consumed. The shepherds had gone to see that sight.

Then one day, in the district of Caesarea Philippi, the question came up again, this time asked not by man, but by this God in human flesh: ***Who do people say the Son of Man is? Who do you say that I am? What is their confession? What is your confession?*** Peter gets it right: **You are the Christ**, that is, the promised one, **the Son of the living God.** That is important to know. For upon this confession Jesus will build His Church. A Church that not even the gates of hell will be able to overcome.

But as with Moses and the people of Israel, this confession is not enough. **For who God is and what He does always go together.** They don't always for us. Who we are and what we do are sometimes contradictory. What we say and what we do is sometimes inconsistent. But not with God. To know God is to know what He does, and to know what He does is to know Him. He is the God who saves, and the one who saves is God. **He is the LORD who brought us out of sin, death, and hell.**

So, this Jesus teaches His disciples - those He would send out into the world after He accomplished this salvation, to confess, to tell all people who He is and what He has done. He tells them: He must be killed. He must die and rise. He is the Lamb of God and so will be the Lamb of God. He will be the sacrifice to atone for the sin of the world. Who will give His life for the life of the world.

To this, Peter says no. . . . But it must be. There is no other way. No other way for us to be saved. Also there is no other way for Jesus to be who He is. This is who He is, so this is what He must do. For the two always go together. To know Jesus is to know Him as the crucified and risen LORD. You cannot really know Jesus apart from His cross and resurrection. For without His cross and resurrection, He is a Jewish person, a good man, a holy man, a miracle worker, an inspiration, an example, a rabbi, a prophet, or a whole host of other things, but He is not your Savior.

This is what the Church confesses. Not just who God is, but also what He has done for us. It is why the Creed is the third ordinary of the liturgy - the third part of the liturgy that is ordinarily in every service. This is the God who is comes for us and is here for us. The God who speaks to us, who washes us, who feeds us, who forgives us. The God who has created us, redeemed us, and sanctified us. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God of Moses. The God who came to us in the flesh and blood of Jesus. This is our God, we confess. Not because we have chosen Him, but because He



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has come to us. The LORD is His name. The I AM WHO I AM. And who He is is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One God in three persons, and three persons in one God. A trinity. The Father who sent His Son to save us. The Son who came and spoke from a bush that burned but was not consumed, who came and ascended a cross and died our death, and who comes now to feed us with Himself, His own Body and Blood. Our Passover Lamb, so that we will pass over with Jesus from death to a life beyond the reach of death.

So when we confess this God, credo, I believe this, in this God and what He has done, we are following in the footsteps of Moses and the disciples, of Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church. This is the truth. This is who God is. And there is no other. What we believe in our hearts we speak with our mouths. And what we speak with our mouths is for all the world to know, and believe. Credo. I believe. For there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

So, we speak, we confess. And not just for others, but for ourselves. When we are faced with hardship and trouble. When we doubt and fear. When we worry and wonder what the future holds. At just such times, we look back and remember. We look back and confess. This is who God is and what He has done. For He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He is present and does not change. So, what He has done He will do. For me. He is faithful. He who went to the cross, He who did not consume the bush does not consume me either. He has come to save and will save and does save. Me. Credo. I believe.

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.