

LENT 3

Year C

This Bible study was written by Quincy Hall, a seminarian from Bexley Seabury Seminary.

Exodus 3:1-15

³ Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness and came to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³ Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up." ⁴ When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

¹³ But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am has sent me to you.' " ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites,

'The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you':

This is my name forever,
and this my title for all generations.

Commentary from Quincy Hall

This passage marks Moses' divine calling, in which he encounters God in the burning bush on Mount Horeb. The miraculous sight draws Moses in, demonstrating that revelation often requires attention and willingness to be interrupted. God identifies as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, affirming continuity with Israel's ancestors while also revealing a name beyond human definition—"I AM WHO I AM." This passage highlights God's active presence, as God sees the oppression of the Israelites and calls Moses to lead their liberation. Moses' initial reluctance reflects human insecurity in the face of divine calling, yet God reassures him, not by emphasizing his capabilities, but by promising, "I will be with you."

Discussion Questions

How does Moses' initial hesitation reflect our own struggles with calling and responsibility?

What does God's name—"I AM WHO I AM"—reveal about the nature of divine presence and action in the world?

Psalm 63:1-8

- ¹ O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; *
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for
you, as in a barren and dry land where there is
no water.
- ² Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy
place,*
that I might behold your power and your
glory.
- ³ For your loving-kindness is better than life itself; *
my lips shall give you praise.
- ⁴ So will I bless you as long as I live *
and lift up my hands in your Name.
- ⁵ My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, *
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,
- ⁶ When I remember you upon my bed, *
and meditate on you in the night watches.
- ⁷ For you have been my helper, *
and under the shadow of your wings I will
rejoice.
- ⁸ My soul clings to you; *
your right hand holds me fast.

Commentary from Quincy Hall

Psalm 63 is a deeply personal expression of longing for God, using the imagery of thirst to describe the soul's desire for divine presence. The psalmist acknowledges that true fulfillment comes not from physical sustenance but from beholding God's glory. Despite being in a place of need, the psalmist finds contentment in God, declaring that God's "loving-kindness is better than life itself." The psalm moves from longing to deep satisfaction, illustrating that God's presence sustains even in times of hardship. Lent invites us into a similar journey—where fasting, prayer, and meditation shift our reliance from worldly comforts to divine nourishment. The closing verses affirm that God not only satisfies but also protects, as the psalmist clings to God, trusting that God's right hand holds him fast.

Discussion Questions

How does the psalmist's expression of longing for God resonate with the Lenten journey of self-examination and spiritual hunger?

In what ways have you experienced God's presence as both something you seek and something that holds you fast?

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

10 I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. ⁶Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷Do not become idolaters as some of them did, as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” ⁸We must not engage in sexual immorality, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰And do not complain, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹²So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Commentary from Quincy Hall

Paul warns the church at Corinth against complacency by recalling Israel’s failures in the wilderness, despite their many blessings. The Israelites experienced God’s miraculous provision—passing through the sea, receiving spiritual food and drink—yet many still fell into idolatry, immorality, and rebellion. Paul urges the Corinthians to learn from these examples, cautioning them against overconfidence: “So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall.” This passage is especially relevant for Lent, a time of self-examination, as it calls believers to humility and vigilance in their faith. Yet, Paul also offers hope, reminding them that God is faithful and provides a way through every trial. This balance between warning and assurance encourages perseverance, emphasizing that spiritual discipline and trust in God’s grace are necessary for faithful living.

Discussion Questions

How does Paul’s warning about overconfidence in faith challenge the way you approach your spiritual journey?

What does verse 13 teach about enduring temptation and relying on God’s faithfulness in times of trial?

Luke 13:1-9

13 At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³ No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. ⁴ Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the other people living in Jerusalem? ⁵ No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish just as they did.”

⁶ Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷ So he said to the man working the vineyard, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ ⁸ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Commentary from Quincy Hall

In this passage, Jesus responds to tragic events—the massacre of Galileans by Pilate and the collapse of the tower of Siloam—to challenge the assumption that suffering is a direct punishment for sin. Rather than explaining these tragedies, Jesus redirects the focus to personal repentance, emphasizing that all people need to turn toward God. He follows this with the parable of the barren fig tree, where the owner is ready to cut it down after three fruitless years, but the gardener pleads for more time and nourishment. This parable captures the tension between judgment and grace—God’s patience offers opportunities for repentance, but those opportunities are not limitless. During Lent, this passage serves as both a warning and an invitation, reminding us that repentance is not just about avoiding judgment but about bearing spiritual fruit in response to God’s mercy.

Discussion Questions

How does Jesus challenge the assumption that suffering is always a direct result of personal sin?

In what ways does the parable of the fig tree encourage both accountability and hope in our spiritual lives?