

Exodus 3:1-14
Psalm 27:1, 4-9
Acts 8:26-40
Mark 6:6b-13

Sermon January 26th, 2020

God Gives Us What We Need to Participate in God's Ministry

Moses story is one we can resonate with. God invites Moses to participate in God's plan to liberate God's people from Egypt. Moses doubts his ability to follow through on the plan. God reassures Moses that God will be with him. Moses again doubts his abilities. God again reassures Moses by giving Moses the words to speak if questions arise. Moses again doubts. God goes one step further by inviting Aaron to speak for Moses when they approach Pharaoh. Moses story is one we can resonate with.

When God invites us to participate in God's ministry. We doubt our abilities. "I am not equipped enough to volunteer for this ministry." Or "What do I say if they ask this?" Or "I don't know enough." God reassures us during a prayer. We doubt our abilities again. "I don't know if I have enough money to financially support this ministry." Or "What will happen if I increase my giving's? Will I have to give something up that I love? Or will I feel more stressed in trying to pay my bills? I don't know if I can do this." God reassures us by pointing us to a scripture passage that talks about how God takes care of us. Then we doubt again. "I don't know if I will have enough time or energy to give what I need to give to participate in this ministry." God reassures us again by calling on a support person to help us work this out whether it is a good friend in the church or the pastor or a family member or our small group team members.

We keep doubting, and God keeps reassuring us that God has given us what we need to participate in God's Ministry. How often have you doubted, and then felt this reassurance in God's promise? You bear witness to something in your life that shows you that God indeed has given you what you need.

For example, an opportunity for you to support a particular ministry financially comes up. You decide to give a bigger offering even though this might set you back this month. Then you get to the end of the month and you are surprised that you had more than enough money to pay your bills.

I remember hearing a story where someone decided to give one hundred dollars to support a ministry in their church. This was above their regular offering. At this time in their life they were living bill to bill. As the due date to some of their bills came closer they started to really stress about it. One evening this person received a phone call, and it was an old friend that they had lent money to a few months back. The old friend

wanted to settle up. Can you guess what this person was owed? Yes. One hundred dollars.

Or you are sitting with a friend who is in the hospital, and they ask you a question about God. You take a moment and ponder the question. Everything you are thinking is scrambled. If you speak out loud you will stumble all over the place. The silent pause is beginning to get awkward so you start to speak and you can't believe the words that are coming out of your mouth. So fluent. So profound. This must be from God.

When we doubt, God reassures us that God has given us what we need to participate in the ministries of the church. We are invited to trust in this promise. To believe that God will give us the words or the money or the time to help the church reveal God's love to our community.

In this famous story in Exodus, in which we hear only a part of it this morning, Moses is given what he needs to participate in God's plan to liberate God's people, and in the end, God's people are liberated from Egypt.

In our story in Act's, Philip, one of the apostles, is invited to go to a place and meet up with an Ethiopian person. In fact, an angel comes to Philip and guides him to this person. Now, in this moment we don't hear Philip doubting, but we do have to wonder if he was just a little nervous about what he was going to say to this person who is of Gentile origin.

Well, Philip gets there and God has already opened this person's heart as this person is reading Isaiah. This person is happy to see Philip and starts to ask questions about what he is reading. Philip trusts in God to provide him with the answers and eventually the Ethiopian person asks to be baptized.

Throughout the gospels we hear the disciples doubt over and over again. We hear them struggling to make sense of all that Jesus is saying and doing. Jesus constantly needs to reassure them that Jesus' teachings and mentorship is equipping them for ministry.

In this morning's story, Jesus sends out the disciples in groups to finally practice what they have been learning. The disciples are to take nothing with them. To trust that God will give them what they need to participate in this ministry. They trust, and heal many whom they encounter. Changing the communities they enter with God's love.

In all three stories. In our own life story. We see that God does give us what we need to participate in God's ministry. In all three stories. In our own life story. We also see that doubt still finds ways to creep in there. In all three stories. In our own life story. We see that God's gracious love reassures us as many times as we need. Empowering

and equipping us through the Holy Spirit, and through the church, to participate in God's ministry. Helping us reveal God's love to all we minister to.

Let us pray, gracious God, we give thanks that you give us what we need to participate in your ministry. When we doubt reassure us. When we stumble lift us up. When we seek your presence, open our hearts to trust in your promise that you are with us always through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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