

Who Am I?

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. Exodus chapter 3.
- Exodus chapter 3. And if you read again at verse 10. Exodus 3 at verse 10. Where the Lord says to Moses, Come, I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.
- But Moses said to God, Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? He said, But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you.
- When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain. Then Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you.
- And they ask me, What is his name? What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, Say this to the people of Israel.
- [1 : 1 6] I am has sent me to you. What is his name? I am who I am.
- Remember, remember the 5th of November. Gunpowder, treason, and plot. We see no reason why gunpowder treason should ever be for God.
- I don't know about you, but those words, they always bring me back to my childhood. The childhood of building and burning bonfires. But last Friday evening, I spent the 5th of November at the induction of the Reverend Colin McLeod.
- He was being inducted to Backfree Church. And it was a very enjoyable evening, especially to see Colin being inducted to his new charge there. But as you know, building and burning bonfires on the 5th of November, it dates back over 400 years.
- Because just following the union of the crowns in 1603, it was under the reign of James I of England, or you could say James VI of Scotland, the same James, we became a united kingdom.
- [2 : 3 2] And we had a Protestant monarch. But only two years later, on the 5th of November, 1605, there was a failed and foiled gunpowder plot to blow up the houses of Parliament.
- And it was carried out by many other people besides this Roman Catholic fanatic called Guy Fox. And in order to celebrate the safety of the head of Parliament, who was King James, bonfires were actually lit throughout the nation.
- And since then, for generations, bonfires have continued to be lit. And children have been reminded and encouraged to remember, remember the 5th of November.
- But you know, it was in order to protect, or in order to celebrate the protection of the King. And the King was also the King and head of the Church of England.
- In order to celebrate and commemorate the protection of the King and head of the Church, of the Church of England, the Church added a prayer to their prayer book.

[3 : 39] And it was a prayer that was to be recited every year on the 5th of November. And it was a prayer based upon the opening words of our psalm that we were singing this morning, the words of Psalm 115.

And just to quote part of the prayer, it said, From this unnatural conspiracy, But you know, as we consider the second half of Exodus 3 this morning, we see that as Moses stood in front of what we could call his bonfire, it was the burning bush.

You know, he had the same reaction and the same response as those in the past. He reacted in the same way to the grace and mercy of God.

You could say that Moses, he echoed the words of the psalmist, Not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, e'en for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake.

And you know, this morning, I'd just like us to consider the second half of Exodus 3 under three headings. Because what we see in Exodus 3, in the second half especially, what we see is an insignificant character, an identity crisis, and an important command.

[5 : 49] An insignificant character, an identity crisis, and an important command. So first of all, we see an insignificant character.

An insignificant character. Look again with me at verse 10, where the Lord says to Moses, Come, I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

But Moses said, Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? He said, But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you.

When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain. Now, last time when we were considering the first half of this chapter, we saw that the burning bush, which you can see right in front of you, it has become the emblem of many Presbyterian churches throughout the world.

And as you can see, it's the emblem of our church here in Barvis, where you can see on the front of the pulpit, the emblem of the burning bush, and underneath it, the motto, Nek Taman Consume Bator.

[6 : 57] It was not consumed. Nek Taman Consume Bator. It was not consumed. And as we said last time, the emblem and its motto, it's on the front of the pulpit, so that every time you come into church, you are reminded, and you are reassured, about God's call, God's character, and God's commitment.

God's call, God's character, and God's commitment. Because, you remember last time, we said that, as Christians, God has called us. He has called us to salvation, and He has called us to service.

We are saved to serve. That's what the gospel emphasizes to us. We are saved to serve. But this emblem and its motto, it also reminds us and reassures us about God's character, that God is holy.

The God we worship is a holy God. And we have come to church this morning, not to get, but to give. Not to consume, but to contribute.

Because we are here, whether here or at home, we are here first and foremost, to worship, and to ascribe glory, and honor, to our holy God.

[8 : 14] So, this motto and the emblem, it reminds us about God's character, and also God's call. But then we saw that it also reminds us about God's commitment.

God's commitment. And it's about God's commitment to our unconverted friends, that every time they come into church, and they see this emblem on the pulpit and its motto, they're to be reminded that whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

That's God's commitment to them. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And so, every time we're in church, I want you to remember this emblem and its motto.

Neck tamen consume abator. It was not consumed. And I want you to be reminded and reassured about God's call, God's character, and God's commitment. But, you know, for Moses, as he stood before the burning bush, which was right beside the mountain of God, what Moses discovered was that in comparison to God's important character, Moses had an insignificant character.

In comparison to God's important character, Moses had an insignificant character. Because this meeting at the mountain of God, it not only revealed God's character, that God is a consuming fire, and that he's holy and hallowed, he's pure and perfect, he's righteous and royal, he's glorious and good, he's sinless, and he's also set apart.

[9 : 54] And that we're to approach God cautiously and carefully, not casually or carelessly. But, you know, this meeting at the mountain of God, it not only revealed God's important character, it also revealed that Moses had an insignificant character.

And we've said this before from that D.L. Moody quote, where D.L. Moody once said, Moses spent his first 40 years of his life thinking he was a somebody.

Then he spent the next 40 years learning that he was a nobody. And in his final 40 years, because he lived to 120, he discovered what God can do with anybody.

Moses spent the first 40 years thinking he was a somebody. The next 40 thinking he was a nobody. And in his final 40 years, he discovered what God can do with anybody.

In his first 40 years, we saw that Moses was educated as a prince in Egypt. And he thought he was a somebody. He thought he was up there with the rest of them.

[10 : 59] But during the next 40 years of his life, Moses gained experience as a pauper in Midian, where he learned that he was a nobody. And now, in the latter part of his life, at the age of 80, Moses is learning what God can do with anybody.

And he's meeting God face to face at the burning bush. And we see here that God calls, commissions, and commands Moses to rescue and redeem the Israelites from slavery and bondage in Egypt.

God calls, commissions, and commands Moses to rescue and redeem the Israelites from slavery and bondage in Egypt. But what Moses discovered about God's holy character is that he has an important character.

And he himself has an insignificant character. And you know, it was a life lesson in humility. Because when Moses stood before this burning bush, he discovered that he was a nothing and a nobody in the sight of a holy God.

When Moses stood before the burning bush, he discovered that he was a nothing and a nobody in the sight of a holy God. And you know, my friend, that's what happens when we are confronted by the holiness of God's character.

[12 : 23] We're made to see that we are an insignificant character. We are a nothing and a nobody in the sight of a holy God. And you know, this wasn't just Moses' experience.

Do you know, when Elijah was confronted by the holiness of God's character, do you know, he hid his face in his mantle. In fact, it was actually at the same mountain that Elijah met with God.

And Elijah hid his face with his mantle because he knew that he was a nothing and a nobody in the sight of a holy God. We see it also with Isaiah.

When Isaiah was confronted by the holiness of God's character, what did he say? He said, woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, but mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Isaiah knew that he was a nothing and a nobody in the sight of a holy God. And even for the Apostle John, the New Testament Apostle John, he was given that revelation of heaven, this great vision of what heaven is like.

[13 : 30] And he was confronted by the holiness of God's character. And he said, when I saw him, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

You know what I think to say? When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. He knew that he was a nothing and a nobody in the sight of a holy God. And you know, my friend, that's how God's servants reacted and responded when they were confronted by the holiness of God's character.

And you know, that's how we should react and how we should respond when we see the holiness of God's character, when we come together in worship.

We should see that we are a nothing and we are a nobody in the sight and in the presence of a holy God. Because you know, my friend, without him, we can do nothing and we are nothing.

Without him, we are the worm. Without him, we can do nothing and we are nothing. But you know, with him, and this is the hope of the gospel, with him, all things are possible.

[14 : 47] And you know, that's what Moses was to learn from the Lord. Because when he was called and commissioned and commanded to rescue and redeem the Israelites from slavery and bondage in Egypt, he saw that he was a nothing.

He saw that he was a nobody. And when he saw himself, when he saw his insignificant character, he responded and he reacted by saying, Who am I?

Who am I? Who am I, he says? Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? Who am I? And you know, my Christian friend, that's how we often feel, isn't it?

That's how we often feel when we are reminded of the Great Commission. That we're to go with the gospel. And we're to go to our family and our friends and our neighbors and our work colleagues.

And we're to prayerfully remind them that there's a heaven to be gained, but a hell to be shunned. And we're to compel them to come in and we're to command them to seek the Lord while he may be found.

[15 : 50] But my friend, if you're anything like me, and if you're anything like Moses, then your response and your reaction to the Great Commission and the command of God is, well, who am I?

Who am I? Who am I that I should go with this gospel message? Who am I? But you know, I love what the Lord said to Moses.

Because he says it to me and he says it to you this morning. He goes on in the next verse, verse 12, but I will be with you.

I will be with you. And you know, was that not the personal promise of Jesus when he issued and instructed that Great Commission? He said, go, but lo, I will be with you always, even to the end of the world.

And we'll see more of that in a moment when we come to the end of the chapter. But you know, the thing is, the world doesn't need to know our identity. The world needs to know the identity of Jesus.

[16 : 56] Because, as you know, the gospel, it's not about us. It's never been about us. The gospel is about Jesus. And for Moses, he saw himself as such an insignificant character that he had an identity crisis.

He saw himself as such an insignificant character that he had an identity crisis. And that's what we see secondly. An identity crisis.

So, an insignificant character and then secondly, an identity crisis. Look at verse 13. Then Moses said to God, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, what is his name?

What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, say this to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you.

Do you know, in the day and age that we live in, identity is important to so many people. Because how they identify themselves, it describes and defines who they are as a person.

[18 : 09] And we hear so much about identity in our day and age, whether it's to do with gender or skin color or nationality or occupation or religion or social status or political affiliation, what football team we follow, or even our sexuality.

Identity is important because how people identify themselves, it describes and defines who they are as a person. And we see it so often with the Black Lives Matter movement, we see it with political parties, we see it with football teams, we see it with the LGBT community.

Their identity is important to them because how they identify themselves to those around them, it describes and defines who they are or who they feel they are as a person.

But you know, what the gospel says to us is that our identity needs to be in Christ. Our identity needs to be in Christ.

Because as those who have been created in the image and likeness of God, whatever identity we claim and whatever identity we confess to have, our identity has been marred and messed up by sin.

[19 : 26] And the gospel says that regardless of who we are or what we've done or how we identify ourselves to other people, our identity needs to be in Christ.

We need to identify with Jesus. The gospel says that regardless of who we are or what we've done or how we identify ourselves, our identity needs to be in Christ.

But for Moses, when he stood before the burning bush, he saw his identity as a nothing and a nobody. He saw that he was a nothing and a nobody in the sight of a holy God.

So much so that he responded and reacted to this great commission and command of God by saying, who am I? Who am I? Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Moses saw himself as such an insignificant character that he has this identity crisis. And he has an identity crisis not only about himself but also about the God who's speaking to him.

[20 : 29] He says, well, who shall I say sent me? What's his name? What will I say to Pharaoh? What am I going to tell these people when you're sending me to them? And you know, my friend, you look at Moses.

You look at this man at the burning bush and he's meant to be the superhero of the story, isn't he? But you know, what we actually realize and what we recognize is that he's not superhero material at all.

He's a man who's very anxious, very apprehensive. He's reserved and reticent. He's stammering and stuttering. He's a shaking and shuddering servant. That's what Moses was.

He was a shaking and shuddering servant. But you know, that's what all of God's servants are like. They're all anxious and apprehensive.

They're all reserved and reticent. They're all stammering and stuttering. They're all shaking and shuddering servants because they know that they are completely out of their depth.

[21 : 34] You know, and I'll be honest with you, that's how I often feel on a Sunday morning. I wake up on a Sunday morning and I'm anxious. I'm apprehensive. I'm stammering and stuttering.

I'm shaking and shuddering. You might think, Myrtle, you're talking rubbish. It's true. It's true. And you know, I find so much comfort in the way that Moses responded, in the way that Moses reacted at the burning bush.

Because my friend, who am I? Who am I that I should stand in a pulpit and preach the gospel? Who am I that I should tell you that you're a sinner in need of a savior?

Who am I that I should tell you to go out and speak to your unconverted friend about Jesus? But you know, like it was for Moses, the world doesn't need to know who I am.

The world doesn't need to know who I am. The world doesn't need to know my identity. Because like Moses, I'm just an insignificant character. The world needs to know the identity of Jesus.

[22 : 37] Because the gospel is not about the servants of God, whether in a pulpit or in a pew. The gospel is not about the servants of God. It's all about the Son of God and the Savior of sinners, Jesus Christ.

And that's why God said to Moses, I am who I am. And say to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you.

And you know, this title that the angel of the Lord uses here to identify himself, the I am. It literally means the self-existent one. The self-existent one.

I am who I am. You could unpack it by saying, I am infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. I am the one who transcends space, time, and matter.

I am the creator and sustainer of the universe. I am from everlasting to everlasting. I am without beginning and without end. I am alpha and omega.

[23 : 40] I am the Lord. I change not. I am who I am. And you know, don't you find it amazing that when Jesus here, it's actually Jesus who's appearing because whenever we see the title the angel of the Lord, that's referring to Jesus.

He is the angel of the Lord. He is the covenant king. He's the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't you find it amazing that when Jesus appears on the stage of history, he reveals himself as the I am of God.

You know, that's why we have those seven I am sayings in John's gospel. Because he is, Jesus is, the great I am. He's the I am who revealed himself here to Moses.

He's the I am who revealed himself throughout history, but he's also the I am who has revealed himself in the person of Jesus Christ in the gospels. And you know, when we actually compare the four gospels, we see that the question which arises from the first three, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the question that arises is, who do you say that I am?

That's what Matthew, Mark, and Luke are asking us. Who do you say that I am? And you'll remember that that was the question Jesus asked his disciples on the road to Caesarea Philippi. Jesus wanted to know what public opinion had to say about his identity.

[25 : 11] And Jesus asked his disciples, well, what do people say? Who do people say that I am? And the disciples explained to Jesus. They said, well, some say you're John the Baptist who has risen again from the dead.

Others say you're Elijah who's returned from heaven. Others say you're just one of the prophets, one of many prophets who are around at the time. The truth is, people don't really know who you are.

And it was with that that Jesus, you'll remember, he turned the question, and he made it very personal and very pointed, and he asked his disciples, who do you say that I am?

Who do you say that I am? But when we come to John's Gospel, this is why I love John's Gospel, John doesn't ask us what public opinion says about Jesus.

John doesn't even ask us what our opinion is of Jesus. He doesn't ask us for our personal opinion. Instead, John just tells us who Jesus is. John tells us because his greatest concern, John's greatest concern was making sure that we get the identity of Jesus right.

[26 : 22] because if we get the identity of Jesus wrong, we'll misunderstand the Gospel, and we'll fail to see that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. And John does this by using those seven I am sayings of Jesus.

Because in John's Gospel, Jesus doesn't ask, who do you say that I am? In John's Gospel, Jesus says, I am. I am the light of the world.

I am the door. I am the good shepherd. I am the bread of life. I am the resurrection and the life.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the true vine. And with each of these seven I am sayings, Jesus is indicating and insisting upon his identity, that he is the great I am.

He is the Son of God and he is the only Savior of sinners. Do you know my unconverted friend here this morning or watching at home online, do you know the reason you are still an unconverted friend?

[27 : 42] It's all because of this identity crisis. you need to get the identity of Jesus right. You need to get the identity of Jesus right because when you get the identity of Jesus wrong, you misunderstand the gospel and you fail to see that he is the Son of God.

He is the Sovereign of Heaven. He is supreme and he is the only Savior of sinners. And you know as Jesus says in the gospel, he says, unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.

That's how direct Jesus was. Jesus said, unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins. And you know it's so important to get the identity of Jesus right.

It's so important to come to this Jesus, to call upon this Jesus, to confess your sins to this Jesus, and to commit your life to this Jesus, because he is the great I am.

He's the one who met Moses at the burning bush, and he's the same Jesus who is meeting you this morning in the gospel. And he's saying to you this morning, unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.

[29 : 07] And so we see an identity crisis. So there's three things this morning, an insignificant character, an identity crisis, and then lastly and briefly, an important command.

An important command. Look at verse 15. God also said to Moses, say this to the people of Israel, the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.

This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey, and they will listen to your voice, and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us, and now please let us go three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord your God, but I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand, so I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it, after that he will let you go.

And you know, what we ought to see repeated throughout these concluding verses is a personal pronouncement is followed by a powerful promise. A personal pronouncement is followed by a powerful promise.

The Lord gave a personal pronouncement to Moses, you go, that's what he said to him, you go. But that personal pronouncement was repeatedly followed, as we read there, by a powerful promise, I will.

[31 : 14] I will. A personal pronouncement was followed by a powerful promise, you go and I will. You go and I will.

Moses, he had to be obedient to that personal pronouncement by stepping out in faith, by following the Lord's command, and leaning upon that powerful promise of God.

Because, you know, when you read through those verses again, you'll see that the Lord says, you go and I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt. You go and I will make sure that the elders listen to your voice.

You go and I will compel Pharaoh to obey your voice. You go and I will do wonders and signs in Egypt. You go and I will give the Israelites favor in the sight of the Egyptians.

Moses had to go and he had to be obedient to this personal pronouncement. He had to step out in faith, leaning upon the powerful promise of God.

[32 : 18] You go and I will. You go and I will. And you know, my friend, that's what we are reminded time and time again in the gospel.

At the empty tomb of Jesus, that first Lord's Day morning, there were women there. What did the angel say to them? He exhorted and he encouraged them.

He said, come, see, go, tell. Come, see, go, tell. And the great commission of Jesus, right at the end of Matthew's gospel, where the disciples were exhorted and encouraged, when Jesus said, you go, make disciples of all nations, and I will be with you to the end of the world.

You go, and I will. You go, and I will. And you know, like the burning bush, that commission and that command, it's still burning brightly. You go, and I will.

You go and speak to your unconverted friend about Jesus, and I will be with you. You go and invite your neighbor or your work colleague to come to church with you, and I will give you the words to speak.

[33 : 37] You go and visit that person who is lonely or housebound, and I will bless you. You go and encourage that young mother in her walk with the Lord, and I will strengthen you.

You go and leave your job and become a minister or a missionary, and I will provide for you. You go and commit your life to Jesus Christ, and I will be with you every step of the way.

You know, there's a personal pronouncement, and it's followed by a powerful promise. You go, and I will.

You go, and I will. You know, my friend, when Moses was called, commissioned, and commanded to rescue and redeem the Israelites from slavery and bondage in Egypt, he saw himself as an insignificant character.

He saw that he was a nothing and a nobody in the sight of a holy God, so much so that he reacted and he responded by saying, who am I? Who am I? He had this identity crisis, which led to the Lord revealing his identity as the great I am.

[34 : 50] I am who I am. But it was then followed by this important command. You go, and I will go with you.

And that's the promise. You know, that's what the Lord says to us every time we leave church on a Sunday morning and a Sunday evening. You go, and I will go with you.

You go into your new week, and I will go with you. You go back to your workplace, or to your home, or to your family, or to your friends, and I will go with you.

You go, and I will. And you know, it's no wonder that when Moses stood in front of the burning bush, that he confessed, and this should be our confession this morning, the words of Psalm 115, not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thou glory take, unto thy name, in for thy truth, and for thy mercy's sake.

You go, my friend, and the Lord's promise is I will go with you. But may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray.

[36 : 08] O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for the hope that the gospel gives to us, and that wonderful reminder that we are those who are not to sit down and to sit back, but we are to strive and to set our minds upon the things that are above, that we are to keep looking to Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, and that we are to hear his command and his call to us.

You go, and I will go with you. Lord, help us, we pray. Help us first and foremost to respond to the gospel, but help us, Lord, we pray as thy people, to go with the gospel, to live out the gospel, to be people who are living epistles, seen and read of men and women.

Oh, Lord, keep us, we pray, for we cannot keep ourselves. Do us good, we ask. Bless us, we plead, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing the words of Psalm 119.

Psalm 119, we're singing from verse 16 down to the verse Mark 20, it's on page 401 in the blue psalm book. Psalm 119, it's the longest psalm in the Psalter, and it's a psalm that reminds us about the importance of God's word.

[37 : 41] Psalm 119, we're singing from verse 16, upon thy statutes my delight shall constantly be set, and by thy grace I never will thy holy word forget.

With me thy servant in thy grace deal bountifully Lord, that by thy favour I may live and duly keep thy word. We'll sing down to the verse marked 20 of Psalm 119 to God's praise.

Upon thy statutes my delight shall constantly be set, and by thy grace thy holy word forget.

With me thy servant in thy grace deal by deal holy Lord, but by thy favour I believe and to keep thy word.

What am I by sat of thy love the wonders I may see.

[39 : 38] I am a stranger on this earth, I know thy boast from thee.

My soul soul within me breaks thy love, much faint is still endure, through longing thine hath all times, unto thy judgment you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen.