

Good morning! One of the characters in the Old Testament who fascinates me is Moses. His was an unusual life, to say the least. Born during a time of ethnic cleansing, he survived and was raised in Pharaoh's palace, as an adopted son, where had every advantage; the best food, the best education, freedom of movement. Moses was an aristocrat. When he was forty years old, he killed an Egyptian overseer and had to flee Egypt. For the next forty years he lived the life of a tenant shepherd in the wilderness. This life could not have been more different from the palace life of luxury in which he was raised: extreme temperatures, sparse vegetation, searching for his own food, and expecting at any moment that he could be found and killed. Moses had to learn a completely new way to live. Let's keep that in mind this morning as we read today's passage together:

Moses accepted the invitation, and he settled there with him. In time, Reuel gave Moses his daughter Zipporah to be his wife. Later she gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, for he explained, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land." Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites continued to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for help, and their cry rose up to God. God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act. One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. "This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it." When the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

Ex. 2:21-Ex. 3:4

In today's reading, Moses joined this nomadic family as a hired hand and he eventually married the daughter of Reuel, a Midianite priest. Moses found himself far from the life in which he had been raised, and with a pagan priest as a father in law. We can only imagine what he was thinking: "Is this all there is? Is this going to be my life from now on?" His great education and aristocratic upbringing seemed completely wasted. Moses spent 40 more years in what seemed a wasted life. There are many people in our day wandering in some wilderness of

their own with similar questions. They are wondering, "Is this all there is? Does my life have any real meaning?" At the end of today's passage, Moses was 80 years old. On this day, he was in that vast desert wilderness, approaching Sinai. There wasn't anything special about Sinai to Moses; it was just another mountainous wilderness place like the rest of what he had been looking at for the last 40 years. He saw a burning bush and then a voice spoke to him out of the bush--- and changed Moses' life. From that moment, Moses' life began to make sense! The 40 years he had spent in Egypt and the 40 years in the wilderness were all preparation for the 40 years of leadership which would come next. It is that way for us, too! Meeting God can bring meaning to what may once have seemed senseless. Check this against your own experience; it has certainly been true in mine. It was meeting Jesus that gave my own life meaning and mission. God had been preparing me and I didn't know it. God has been preparing you too, whether or not you know it. Let's face it; Moses wasn't perfect---in fact, he wasn't even a good candidate! He had a bad temper. He had a speech impediment. He had a violent streak; he was argumentative. But it was God's idea to call him, and in spite of your flaws, God is calling you, too. He has been preparing you for whatever is next in your life. This morning, let me encourage you to be ready; be open...you never know what God might have for you to do!