

Teaching Plan
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: September 3, 2017
Lesson Title: "Reluctance"
Lesson Passage: Exodus 3:4-14; 4:13-16

ABOUT THIS LESSON

This lesson is based on the account of the call of Moses, when the Lord spoke to him out of a burning bush at Mt. Horeb. In the context of this extraordinary encounter, God commissioned Moses to bring the suffering Israelites out of Egypt.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

- (1) Briefly describe the mission to which the Lord called Moses.
- (2) List the excuses that Moses used in resistance to God's call.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

Begin with these thoughts: Though we tend to associate the presence of God with church buildings and worship services, some of our most significant encounters with God can take place in the ordinary events of everyday life. When Moses met the living God on the occasion described in our lesson passage, he was not seeking an unusual worship experience; he was simply engaged in his daily work as a herdsman. **APPLICATION:** In everything we do, we should always be open to the possibility of unexpected encounters with God.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. Describe the setting in which Moses' "burning bush" experience took place (Exodus 3:1): (1) The land of Midian was located on the east shore of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqabah), the eastern border of the Sinai Peninsula. (*Locate this on a map*). (2) Mt. Horeb (also called Mt. Sinai) is thought to have been in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula. (3) The Midianites were wide-ranging nomads, taking their flocks to wherever they could find pasture. Moses probably was taking his sheep to higher ground, where grass could be found, after lower elevations had dried up.

2. Comment on Exodus 3:2-6: (1) Contrary to our popular representations of angels as heavenly beings in white robes, this "angel" (which simply means "messenger") appeared as the "flame of fire" in the midst of the bush (v. 2). (2) When Moses saw the unusual sight of the burning bush, he responded by saying, "I will turn aside" (v. 3). The Lord called to Moses when He "saw that (Moses) turned aside to see" (v. 4). This suggests that the divine-human conversation that follows would not have taken place had Moses not turned aside. **APPLICATION:** Are we sometimes too busy, too preoccupied, to "turn aside" when God tries to get our attention in the course of everyday life? Perhaps we should cultivate the habit of asking ourselves "What is God trying to say to me?"

when unusual things, good and bad, happen to us. (3) When you consider the extent of God's sovereignty over the world and our vast universe, it is striking that He knows us by name (God called, "Moses, Moses," v. 4). (4) With reference to "put off your shoes" (v. 5), observe that, in Eastern cultures, the removal of shoes signifies respect. Moses was bid- den to do this in recognition of the radical difference between himself and God. NOTE: The words in v. 6, "And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God," convey the same meaning. (5) God let Moses know who He was by linking Himself with Moses' family (read Ex. 3:6). ASK: If your children were to be told, "I am the God of your father or mother, what kind of God would they envision?" (SUGGESTION: If class members have no children, focus on the God portrayed by their parents.)

3. Read Exodus 3:7-10, then share these thoughts: (1) The Israelites in Egypt, suffering at the hands of their taskmasters, might have thought that God had forgotten them. But without their knowing it, God was at work in the land of Midian preparing for their deliverance (Exod. 3:7-9). (2) Call attention to the mission God wants Moses to carry out: The essence of God's plan is stated in verse 10: "bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."

4. With reference to Exod. 3:11-14 and 4:1-16, summarize the excuses offered by Moses, and the Lord's response to them: (1) The question in v. 11 ("Who am I...?") meant, "Why would Pharaoh, or the Hebrews, listen to someone like me, a lowly shepherd?" God's answer: "But I will be with you." (2) "If I tell the people of Israel that God has sent me, and they ask, 'What God?,' what shall I say?" (v. 13). God answers, "I AM WHO I AM." COMMENT: God is so utterly unique that He can be compared to nothing else and no one else. COMMENT: Descriptions like "the Creator," "ruler of the universe," and "the giver of life" are all true of God, but none of these fully describes who God is. The only adequate answer is, "God is God." (3) "They won't listen to me, for they will say that the Lord didn't really appear to me" (4:1). God answers this objection by giving Moses three tangible demonstrations of His power. (Let class members locate these in Exod. 4:2-9). (4) In a sense, Moses questions God's judgment when he protests, "I am not eloquent enough to be a leader" (v. 10). In vv. 11-12 God answers, in effect, "I am aware of your limitations, for I created you. The success of your mission does not depend upon your eloquence, but upon my power." (5) The plea of Moses in 4:13, "Lord, send someone else," implies that he simply is unwilling to do what God asks. This arouses God's anger (v. 14), but he proposes to provide another human resource, Aaron, the brother of Moses, who will be a spokesman.

CLOSING THE LESSON

Close with this final comment: Moses responded to God's call by emphasizing his inadequacies. But our shortcomings simply magnify the power of God. (Read 1 Cor. 1:26-27).

L. Coleman PO Box 2951, Weatherford TX 76086 <luciencoleman@gmail.com>