

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

Sunday, April 22, 2018

Scripture: Exodus 3:6-16 New International Version (NIV)

6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. 7 The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So 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 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." 13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, '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, the name you shall call me from generation to generation. 16 "Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt.

Congregational Prayer: "Our Father"

Our Father, Which Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven. Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread, And Forgive Us Our Trespases, As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil. For Thine Is The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory. Forever And Ever. Amen

Message: "The 3:16 Trail: God Watches"

Introduction:

- In 1985 Julie Gold was having a tough time in her life. Julie was struggling at work and with trying to become a successful songwriter. She felt very low about a number of issues in her life. Then her precious piano came as a gift to her New York City apartment and when she sat down with her beloved instrument for the first time she immediately wrote a song in less than 30 minutes. And yet it was the story of her 30 year life also. In 1990 Bette Midler picked up that song, and it went gold - and earned Julie Gold a Grammy for Song of the Year in 1991. The middle verse says: "From a distance we are instruments marching in a common band. Playing songs of hope, playing songs of peace. They're the songs of every man. God is watching us. God is watching us. God is watching us from a distance."
- How many of you remember that song? Did you know that I never completely liked it? Why was God always at a distance? Why was God always over there somewhere? Why was God not right here, right now, caring for His beloved people in this song?
- This is our second stop on the 3:16 trail. We started with Genesis 3:16 and we saw God as a God of love and hope and salvation. Today, let's see if it is true that God only watches from a distance, or if God is truly

watching and caring for us in our lives.

Part 1: Exodus 3

- Let's jump into Exodus chapter 3 by looking at what happens in the previous chapters. Exodus chapter one begins with a retelling of the children of Israel, and the 70 descendants of Jacob [otherwise known as Israel] who grew into a huge multitude of people as generations came and went [verse 7]. Verse 8 tells how the people of Egypt forgot about how Joseph had saved the people, and verse nine is about how the Egyptians became concerned about the growing number of Israelites. So, in verse 11, the Israelites were enslaved by the Egyptians. And yet, as verse 12 says under this oppression they multiplied even more. Things became so bad that the Pharaoh ordered the death of all Israelite baby boys [v. 16], and this leads to the chapter 2 well-known story of the birth of Moses, who was rescued from the Nile by the daughter of Pharaoh (verse 5). Moses had a great start to his life, growing up in the royal palace under his adoptive grandfather, the Pharaoh, until he realized his heritage, and fled Egypt having killed a man [verse 12]. He ends up in the land of Midian, at as relative's house (through Abraham). If we take a quick jump over to Acts Chapter 7:30 records Moses was

living in Midian for the next 40 years. So, let's just pause, think about this. What has your life been for the last 40 years? Have you been running away from something? What was it like for Moses to know that he left his relatives back in the land of great sorrow and oppression when he ran to save his own skin? Do YOU feel that maybe you have some unfinished business some place that's never going to get healed? 40 years is a long time for Moses to hold onto the truth of what he did back in Egypt – but God is about to give him a second chance. Know this – our God is the God of the second chance. Know this – our God opens up doors so that they can be properly closed. Know this – our God loves you so much, and His perfect plan for you is written so clearly that He wants to direct your steps in all things in your life.

- So, as Exodus 3 opens, we have Moses about to receive that second chance. It began on an ordinary day. A day just like every other day. A day that was about to change the life of Moses for all eternity. And God speaks directly to Moses through a bush that burned but would not be consumed with fire.
- How is God trying to get your attention? How is God speaking to you today? Are you hearing His voice? When God talks to you, know this:

you are about to be sent on an amazing adventure, just like Moses!

Part 2: God Watches Us

- Our 3:16 trail therefore takes us next to Exodus 3:16 which says: “*Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done in Egypt....’*” Last week’s first 3:16 verse was from Genesis 3:16 which showed us the salvation trail – a thread that is through the whole Bible that leads to the path of life. Today’s 3:16 verse from Exodus reminds us of three important things:
 - 1. God has a plan for us all: Lord said to Moses: “*Go...*” God has a plan for us all. Jeremiah 29:11 has become a favourite to many: “*For I know the plans I have for you,*” declares the Lord, “*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*” Nothing is left to chance, to random, to circumstance. God has a plan for all of us. It’s here on the 3:16 trail.
 - 2. God is the God who has watched over those who have gone before us. God is the God of our parents and grandparents, of our ancestors. He has watched over them, preserved them, blessed them, and is still

providing for them in glory. This has not changed, and will never.

- 3. Third: and I think this is the most important one: our God is watching. God does not miss anything. The Lord said to Moses in Exodus 3:16: “*I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you...*” God watches and He sees. God sees all, and misses nothing. It is important to say this over and over: God watches us - not from a distance, but from deep within our very souls.
- God does not force Himself on anyone. For those who do not want God in your lives, know this: God is still there. God is always watching over you. God will never leave you nor forsake you. God is watching.
- But also know this: things happen in life. Hurt happens. Accidents, pain and strife still happen. Airplanes have engine damage at 30,000 feet that lead to an emergency landing. Ice and snow and sleet and hail and wind come over a peaceful land in mid-April turning our highways into treacherous skating rinks. And where was God when that truck rammed into the bus of Hockey players a few weeks ago?
- The answer: God was there. He is watching it all. He was guiding and directing and caring for all those that were involved. God is watching us: God is always watching us.

- Let me read to you Psalm 121 (NIV), and as I do count the number of times we hear of God watching us: *“I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you— the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”* The Lord is watching.

- There is one more thing about this wonderful 3:16 verse from Exodus: Here is a reminder; a promise; and a foretelling. A reminder; I was with your fathers. A promise; I have been watching. And a foretelling: I have great plans for you, so go.

- Do you know that God is making a reminder, a promise and a foretelling to you too?. He has been there in the past – both your past and past that led you to being here. And he has made a promise that He will be watching over your every step. And He’s got your back for the future as well. It’s all here on the 3:16 trail.

Conclusion:

- Julie Gold may have won awards for her song about God watching over us all “from a distance,” but the truth is that God is watching over us all directly, clearly and personally.
- As you walk down the pathway of life, when the trail before you seems to be rough and uncertain, remember this: God is always watching over you. God is watching us.