

## **“I AM has Sent Me to You” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Advent Midweek 3 December 14, 2022**

- I. **Exodus 3:1-15; Deut. 18:5** – previously read
- II. **Henry Ward Beecher** was a famous preacher back in the 1800s.
  - a. He wrote a prayer that makes a good introduction to today’s Advent sermon... but I will take the “thees and thous” out of it so it’s easier to understand:
    - i. O Lord our God, we ask that You will give each of us the special blessings we need—strength where weakness prevails, and patience where courage has failed. We also pray that You would help all those who need long-suffering... that they may be strongly supported and sustained. Grant if any are weary in heart or lack hope that they may find rest in You.
    - ii. These thoughts are written long ago, but they still hit home for us today – Many of us go through times (maybe even right now) where we need the will to endure.
    - iii. Sometimes it’s hard to find the strength to keep going or the patience to get through... and what Henry Ward Beecher prayed for is God’s help in long-suffering.
    - iv. I understand long-suffering to be the ability to tolerate, or be patient with, suffering or delays in getting through troubles in life... but especially with God’s support.
  - b. Maybe you’re going through times like this as we speak...
    - i. Even though the world will put Jesus away in a few weeks after Christmas, we don’t just break Him out once a year...
    - ii. That’s why this message is about trusting that God is coming to you at ALL times... and most especially when you are going through rough times.
    - iii. Your heavenly Father knows what you’re going through.
    - iv. Immanuel is with you, not just at Christmas, but every day.
    - v. Not only that, the Holy Spirit will give you longsuffering and you will find yourself “strongly supported and sustained,” as Beecher prayed.
- III. **Today’s Bible story is about God’s rescue mission.**
  - a. Jacob, who we read about last week, had many children – one of them being Joseph.
  - b. Through God’s providence, Joseph ended up in Egypt and saved his whole family and the nation – so they were allowed to live in Egypt peacefully.
  - c. Unfortunately, it says that after many generations, the Egyptian leadership forgot the deeds of Joseph and enslaved the Israelites... inflicting heavy burdens on them for hundreds of years. (Ex 1:8–11, 13)

- d. The people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help.... God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob... God knew they were hurting and in need. (Ex 2:23–24)
  - i. Yet, from what they could see and experience, God was not answering their prayer!
    - 1. However, in the background, God was working on an “advent” to rescue them.
- e. Whether we see it or not in our times of suffering, we can trust our prayers to God are heard and being answered in God’s best way for us.

IV. **God was coming to rescue them... even when all seemed hopeless.**

- a. Moses was an Israelite, one of them, but he had gotten into trouble with the pharaoh....So he fled from Egypt to the land of Midian.... And after 40 years of hiding out and tending sheep for a living, Moses comes across this burning bush.
- b. And God spoke to Moses out of the bush and tells him that He’s seen and heard their trouble and wants to deliver them.
- c. Now, that sounds great until God says it will be Moses who does it... “But who am I?” thinks Moses.... And for that matter, who are You?
  - i. Moses asks God for a name and God answers, “I AM who I AM”
- d. Their prayer for help, our prayers for help when we need long-suffering, are heard by the God who is.
  - i. “I AM who I AM”... period.
  - ii. Everything in life comes and goes... Your suffering is only for a time... We are mortal.
  - iii. Only God always is, present tense forever.

V. **“I AM has sent me to you.”**

- a. In our reading today, who is the “me” God sends?
  - i. Moses... and he goes out and does what God commands by delivering the people out of slavery with the great I AM behind him.
  - ii. The people who spent 400 years in bondage and long-suffering were finally freed by the I AM through Moses.
- b. So, yes, I AM sent Moses, but another person is sent.
  - i. Many years later, at the end of his life, Moses says, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to Him you shall listen” (Dt 18:15).
- c. And there is another prophet, a greater prophet than Moses, the ultimate “I AM” who is sent.
- d. In fact, in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, “I am” many different times...
  - i. “I am the bread of life” (Jn 6:35, 41, 48, 51)...
  - ii. “I am the light of the world” (Jn 8:12).
  - iii. “I am the door of the sheep” (Jn 10:7, 9).

- iv. “I am the resurrection and the life” (Jn 11:25).
- v. “I am the good shepherd” (Jn 10:11, 14).
- vi. “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6).
- vii. “I am the true vine” (Jn 15:1, 5).
- viii. And most significant of all, “Before Abraham was, I am.” (Jn 8:58).
- e. It wasn’t just some random god who spoke to Moses at the burning bush... it was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
  - i. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit – the great I AM.
  - ii. As I’ve said many times before...

VI. **The Triune God is a sending God.**

- a. The I AM sends Jesus to you and me.
- b. Jesus says, “the Father has sent Me” (Jn 5:36)... And remember, Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to Him you shall listen.”
- c. It was even bigger than the exodus and leading the people out of slavery when Jesus came, because He delivered us all from eternal slavery and death.
- d. You and I were redeemed... bought back from sin and bondage by the blood of the Lamb – and through that sacrifice we were delivered.
  - i. The cross became the door posts and the lintel (Exodus 12:7) as Jesus’ blood was spread on that wood so that sin and death would pass over us through our faith in Him.
- e. God sent Moses as a foreshadowing of the greatest rescue mission of all – the rescue mission of Jesus – the great I AM.

VII. **“It is to Him you shall listen.”**

- a. Our faith gives us a different way to listen as the “I AM” comes to us as our “very present help in trouble” (Ps 46:1).
  - i. Jesus promises, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20), and, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb 13:5).
  - ii. Listen to Him!
    - 1. Even though you may be suffering, trusting the promise of Jesus’ that He is always present strengthens and holds you up
    - 2. When we pray for longsuffering in our times of trouble, God comes to bear us up and sustain us.
    - 3. When we spend time in His Word – and in church – and with other Christians, we are again “strongly supported and sustained.”
- b. And make no mistake, the I AM at the burning bush, the I AM who is the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is still coming to us through His Spirit and word.
- c. Advents abound. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from “The Bible, Our Book of Advents,” Copyright © 2021, Concordia Seminary Press, St. Louis, MO, and Dr. Dale A. Meyer