



## **Exodus 3: 1-15**

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." <sup>4</sup> When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup> Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." <sup>6</sup> He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, <sup>8</sup> and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup> So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." <sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" <sup>12</sup> He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain."

<sup>13</sup> But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" <sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" <sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

## **Matthew 16: 21-28**

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. <sup>22</sup> And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." <sup>23</sup> But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"

<sup>27</sup> "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. <sup>28</sup> Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

## **Reflection from Revd. Michael Camp**

Moses vision of the burning bush opened his heart to hear the call of God to work with him and to redeem God's people; to lead them out of slavery and into a new and hopeful life. It wasn't easy though, it was a painful business.

In our Gospel reading Jesus spoke of another painful redemption. He told his disciples that he was to suffer and to die in Jerusalem. They found that really hard to hear, but very soon afterwards they were telling people that in some way Jesus' death had brought about the redemption of the world. They said that because of Jesus' cross humanity had been brought back into its right relationship with God; and because of Jesus' cross there was a hopeful and eternal new future for God's creation.

What's happening here is that God is taking something really awful and painful and agonising and he is turning it to good account; he is making something evil serve his good purposes. That's what redemption is all about. Taking something bad or painful and finding within it a new goodness.

That's the big picture; the salvation of the world, but we are called to work for redemption every day in all sorts of small ways.

The death of George Floyd in America was a dreadful thing and nothing will reverse that but it has led to a new challenge to racism all over the world. Racism is a terrible evil and white people in particular need to learn more about how it works so we can change it. The awful death of George Floyd could lead to a new understanding of what we need to do, at last.

The Covid Pandemic has caused untold problems for all of us but its also made us review our priorities hasn't it? So many people are asking how we can use this experience to make our world better. If we can find some ways of using this time to make our world better, we shall begin to see some redemption.

What about every day redemptions? Where is God is at work in us and around us.

Illness; injury; disappointment; breakdowns in relationships, unemployment. These things all around us all the time. When those we love suffer we want to make it better, but most of the time, much as we might want to, we can't. What we can do though is to seek redemption. Often it won't be visible at the time but we can work for it and seek it and, perhaps, later on we shall spot where it took place. In the depths of difficulty let us keep our eyes open and our souls attuned so we can see where God is working to bring redemption. Let us work with God to bring about redemption in a million small ways and to draw good out of the burning pain.

### **HYMN REFLECTION**

Last week we had an English hymn which the Americans have taken to their hearts and virtually ruined. This week, a hymn which originated in America, which the citizens of Salisbury, no less, took to themselves in 1857 and which was subsequently improved by The Rev. Sir H.W Baker and included in the original 1861 A & M. It is one of my favourite hymns.

The Rev. C. W. Everest of Connecticut wrote the first version, and included it in a book called *Visions of Death*, written in 1833, when he was nineteen years old. In the mid 19th century, back in Britain, all sorts of organisations, dioceses, parishes, schools and individuals were compiling their own hymn books. The 3rd Lord Nelson decided the Diocese of Salisbury needed one. He compiled and edited it, and in November 1857 he submitted it to Bishop W.K. Hamilton. The Bishop gave it his blessing, and 100,000 copies were printed. The Salisbury Hymn Book had no tunes. It is now a rare and valuable volume; I regret I have not seen one, and do not know details of Nelson's version. In 1861 Sir Henry Baker wrote the version we know, and included it in the first A & M. In 1874 Sherborne and Uppingham Schools published their own hymn book, which I do possess. Their version was almost the same as the first five verses below, but without Sir Henry's doxology, and with a very boring version of the tune we know as *Angelus (At even e'er the sun was set)*, dated 1657. The words were said to be "Anon, from the Salisbury Hymn Book".

The tune *Breslau* has an equally interesting pedigree. It started life as a 15th century German folk tune, and was later published in Leipzig in 1630. Two hundred years later Mendelssohn re-harmonised it for use in his oratorio *St. Paul*, and that is the version we usually use, although there is a simpler version. Mendelssohn's version has an absolutely marvellous chord in the second line which I only know of in two other hymns.

We have not even discussed what Mr. Everest's/Sir Henry's words actually say. They are sensible, dignified, confident and easy to follow. This is a very special hymn.

And when you've done that make sure you tell other people where you and God brought redemption.

Take up thy cross, the Saviour said,  
If thou wouldst my disciple be;  
Deny thyself, the world forsake,  
And humbly follow after me.

Take up thy cross; let not its weight  
Fill thy weak spirit with alarm;  
His strength shall bear thy spirit up,  
And brace thy heart, and nerve thine arm.

Take up thy cross, nor heed the shame,  
Nor let thy foolish pride rebel;  
Thy Lord for thee the cross endured,  
And fought the powers of death and hell.

Take up thy cross, then, in his strength,  
And calmly every danger brave;  
'Twill guide thee to a better home,  
And lead to victory o'er the grave.

Take up thy cross, and follow Christ,  
Nor think till death to lay it down;  
For only he who bears the cross  
May hope to win the glorious crown.

To thee, great Lord, the One in three,  
All praise for evermore ascend;  
O grant us here below to see  
The heavenly life that knows no end.