



Crossing Boulevard

with Rev. Rachel

³ HE LOOKED Exodus 3

I forgot to get all worked up about the science. I missed the memo that the truth of this story somehow hinges on playing defense attorney for Moses. Sigh.

Which species could have caused Moses to hallucinate? That's what happened, right? Which bushes on ancient arid mountains would have been able to catch fire and not disintegrate? Some sort of brambles, no? An Acacia tree?

Folks have asked. Others continue to jump in, eager as ever, to keep the wheels on whichever wagon they're comfortable pulling.

I am inclined to ask: Who cares? Because I know it sounds insensitive—belittling, even—I'll wonder differently, here. Might we be getting wrapped up in stuff that suffocates this story of its life force? This is about God calling, y'all! And about Moses discovering that God summons ordinary people through some not so ordinary happenings to be and to do the most improbable things.

Early in Exodus Moses shows us what it looks like to come a little closer. He stays a while. He entertains the charge he might have to keep and expresses his reservations, which then gives God the chance to assure and reassure.

We too inhabit a world of phenomena; natural or supernatural, this distinction matters less than whether or not we stop and inspect, on the chance that God is at work. The angel of God appears in flames of fire blazing out of the middle of a bush. And Moses looked. The rest is sacred history.

It also happens to be the stuff of a sacred present. Holy ground doesn't grow on trees. It springs forth when the likes of a tree on fire gets our attention and we turn and tune in.

I think of liturgical seasons in that light. You can carry on without noticing the Church's calendar. No harm done. Or you can peer in to the oddity of it all figuring that God has appeared through stranger things; in a flame of fire or by boat, to a lakeshore, just to name two.

In any case, God is calling y'all. Don't duck the encounter. There is an aspect of kingdom building and your role therein for which to listen. Best of all, at least for a country girl...we get to figure it out barefoot (v.5).

LOOKING AHEAD LITURGICALLY, with a bit of the civil calendar mixed in:

September 1 (Monday)	Labor Day
September 7 - 28	Season of Creation Fall begins (Tuesday the 23 rd)
October 4 (Saturday)	Feast of St. Francis Assisi Blessing of the Animals
October 5 – November 1	A Season of Saints World Communion Sunday (Oct. 5 th) Laity Sunday (19 th) Halloween (Friday the 31 st) All Saints Day (Saturday the 1 st)
November 2	All Saints Sunday Charge Conference Sunday
November 9	Extended Advent begins
November 23	Christ the King Sunday
November 27 (Thursday)	Thanksgiving
November 30	Year B of the lectionary cycle begins
December 24 (Wednesday)	Christmas Eve
December 25 (Thursday)	Christmas Day
December 31 (Wednesday)	New Year's Eve

The church office will close for Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Eve (1/2 day), Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving Friday, Christmas Eve (1/2 day), Christmas Day, Day After Christmas, and New Years Day.

Matthew 16:21-28 (CEB)

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and legal experts, and that he had to be killed and raised on the third day. Then Peter took hold of Jesus and, scolding him, began to correct him: “God forbid, Lord! This won’t happen to you.” But he turned to Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan. You are a stone that could make me stumble, for you are not thinking God’s thoughts but human thoughts.”

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow me. All who want to save their lives will lose them. But all who lose their lives because of me will find them. Why would people gain the whole world but lose their lives? What will people give in exchange for their lives? For the Human One is about to come with the majesty of his Father with his angels. And then he will repay each one for what that person has done. I assure you that some standing here won’t die before they see the Human One coming in his kingdom.”

Exodus 3:1-15 (CEB)

Moses was taking care of the flock for his father-in-law Jethro, Midian’s priest. He led his flock out to the edge of the desert, and he came to God’s mountain called Horeb. The Lord’s messenger appeared to him in a flame of fire in the middle of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was in flames, but it didn’t burn up. Then Moses said to himself, Let me check out this amazing sight and find out why the bush isn’t burning up.

When the Lord saw that he was coming to look, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!”

Moses said, “I’m here.”

Then the Lord said, “Don’t come any closer! Take off your sandals, because you are standing on holy ground.” He continued, “I am the God of your father, Abraham’s God, Isaac’s God, and Jacob’s God.” Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord said, “I’ve clearly seen my people oppressed in Egypt. I’ve heard their cry of injustice because of their slave masters. I know about their pain. I’ve come down to rescue them from the Egyptians in order to take them out of that land and bring them to a good and broad land,

a land that’s full of milk and honey, a place where the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites all live. Now the Israelites’ cries of injustice have reached me. I’ve seen just how much the Egyptians have oppressed them. So get going. I’m sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

But Moses said to God, “Who am I to go to Pharaoh and to bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

God said, “I’ll be with you. And this will show you that I’m the one who sent you. After you bring the people out of Egypt, you will come back here and worship God on this mountain.”

But Moses said to God, “If I now come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they are going to ask me, ‘What’s this God’s name?’ What am I supposed to say to them?”

God said to Moses, “I Am Who I Am. So say to the Israelites, ‘I Am has sent me to you.’” God continued, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your ancestors, Abraham’s God, Isaac’s God, and Jacob’s God, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever; this is how all generations will remember me.