

Theme 5- Third Class/ Fourth Class

The Story of Moses – Part 1

The Israelites are treated cruelly in Egypt (Ex 1:8-22)

A new king... came to power in Egypt. He said to this people, 'These Israelites are so numerous and strong that they are a threat to us... We must find some way to keep them from becoming even more numerous.' So the Egyptians put slave drivers over them to crush their spirits with hard labour... They made them work on their building projects and in their fields, and they had no pity on them... Finally the king issued a command to all his people: 'Take every newborn Hebrew boy and throw him into the Nile, but let all the girls live.'

During this time a man and woman of the tribe of Levi, one of the twelve tribes of Israelites, got married, and they had a baby boy. The mother hid the baby for three months because she didn't want him to be killed. This is the account of what happened next:

The Birth of Moses (Ex 2:1-10)

When [the child's mother] couldn't hide him any longer, she took a basket made of reeds and covered it with tar to make it watertight. She put the baby in it and placed it in the tall grass at the edge of the river. The baby's sister stood some distance away to see what would happen to him. The king's daughter came down to the river to bathe... Suddenly she noticed the basket in the tall grass and sent a slave woman to get it. The princess opened it and saw a baby boy. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. 'This is one of the Hebrew babies,' she said.

Then [the baby's] sister asked her: 'Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby for you?' 'Please do,' she answered. So the girl went and brought the baby's own mother. The princess told the woman, 'Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.' So she took the baby and nursed him. Later, when the child was old enough, she took him to the king's daughter, who adopted him as her own son. She said to herself, 'I pulled him out of the water, and so I name him Moses.'

The Story of Moses- Part II

One day while Moses was taking care of the sheep and the goats...he led the flock across the desert and came to Sinai, the holy mountain. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him as a flame coming from the middle of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire but it was not burning up. 'This is strange,' he thought. 'Why isn't the bush burning up? I will go closer and see.' When the Lord saw that Moses was coming closer, he called to him from the middle of the bush and said, 'Moses! Moses!' He answered, 'Yes, here I am.' God said, 'Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, because you are standing on holy ground.' So Moses covered his face, because he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, 'I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated in Egypt; I have heard them cry out to be rescued...Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of the country.'

But Moses said to God, 'I am nobody. How can I go to the king and bring the Israelites out of Egypt. God answered, 'I will be with you, and when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will

worship me on this mountain.’ But Moses replied ‘When I go to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors sent me to you”, they will ask me, “What is his name?” So what can I tell them?’ God said, ‘I am who I am. You must tell them: “The one who is called I AM has sent me to you!”... Tell them that I have seen what the Egyptians are doing to them. I have decided that I will bring them out of Egypt...and will take them to a rich and fertile land.’

The covenant at Sinai (Ex 19:3-8) and ‘The Ten Commandments’ (Ex 20:1-11)

Moses went up the mountain to meet God. The Lord told him to say to the Israelites, ‘You saw what I, the Lord, did to the Egyptians and how I...brought you here to me. Now, if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own people...my chosen people...’ So Moses went down and called the leaders of the people together and told them everything that the Lord had commanded him. Then all the people answered together, ‘We will do everything that the Lord has said’, and Moses reported this to the Lord. God spoke, and these were his words: ‘I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves. Worship no God but me...Do not use my name for evil purposes, for I, the Lord your God, will punish anyone who misuses my name... Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. You have six days in which to do your work, but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work-neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. In six days I, the Lord, made the earth, the sky, the seas and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested. That is why I, the Lord, blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.’

1. In the Bible the word ‘covenant’ is used to describe an agreement between God and God’s people. What would you expect from someone if you made a covenant between you?
2. How do you understand a covenant between God and God’s people?
3. Where have you made agreements and what has it been like to do so?
4. A commandment is something that people are asked to do. God gave commandments to Moses to help his people live according to his covenant. In looking at our present situation of the Covid pandemic, are there commandments/agreements we have to accept for the good of all? Can you name any?
5. What is it like for you having to live by these rules?

Imagine that you are Moses. Having heard the voice of God write a prayer, or draw an image on what it all meant for you and the people of Israel.