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Sermon Notes

Term – Spring 2020

Series – Guided by the Fire

Gathering & Date – 11.00 Livestream, 5 April

Title – Called to Worship

Preacher – Paul Langham

Reading – As we Journey with God’s Old Testament people in an unknown season and an unfamiliar place, we’re going to consider lessons from the most significant desert journey in scripture. You can read it the story in Exodus 12 – 40. **Our reading today is Exodus 3:1-12**

Questions

In what sense is fear a kind of slavery? In what ways does it restrict us, prevent us being who we were created to be?

How will help you come out the other side of this crisis having advanced in your relationship with Jesus?

GOD IS ALREADY IN THE DESERT

Do you find it hard to believe that God is with you in the present situation? If so, remember: when Jesus says ‘Do not fear’, he’s not setting us homework: ‘You run along and get on with this on your own, and come back when you’ve got it cracked ...’ He’s declaring that he is present – “you need not fear for I am here.”

In what ways / areas do you need Jesus’ help with fear? Ask him to let you know that he is with you.

GOD IS ALWAYS TRYING TO GET OUR ATTENTION

In what ways do you sense God is trying to get your attention at the moment? For what purpose? If you sense any answers to these questions, find someone to share them with and pray for one another.

GOD WANTS TO RESTORE IDENTITY

In Egypt, the people of Israel had become a shadow of the ‘mighty nation’ God had called into being through Abraham and his descendants. In what sense has the church become a shadow of the world-changing movement that we see in the book of Acts?

One of the great markers of the identity of God’s people is **worship**

4 times Moses asks Pharaoh to let the people go ‘in order to worship.’ Each time Pharaoh blocks this request. The passages (with Pharaoh’s answer) are

- Exodus 8:1-25 (‘You can worship provided nothing changes’)
- Exodus 8:26-28 (‘You can worship provided you agree to my limits’)
- Exodus 10: 3-11 (‘You can worship provided you agree to my limits’)
- Exodus 10: 24-27 (‘You can worship provided it doesn’t involve the rest of your lives e.g. possessions, wealth, work, career etc.’)

SOME THOUGHTS ON WORSHIP

Note the link between ‘worship’ and ‘sacrifice’ in these passages. What sacrifice is the Lord asking of you as your **worship** to him?

Worship is first and foremost obedience: not a summons to submission ... but an invitation to ignition. In the Old Testament, sacrifices were burnt. Today, followers of Jesus offer themselves as living sacrifices – God wants to set us ablaze, the bring his warmth and light to those around us. ‘You were born to burn’ (Bill Johnson)

Satan loves the present crisis because it locks human hearts into fear. If we succumb to fear, our Christian lives will be ineffective ... and **worship** is key to resisting the Enemy’s scheme to make us ineffective. ‘The issue of **worship** is the

defining issue of human history' (Bill Johnson)

We were created to worship, and we become like the one we worship: so a good question is: Who am I becoming by what I am doing?

Jesus died to restore us to communion with God in worship; so the Enemy will always make every effort to stop us worshipping. Today is Palm Sunday, the day we remember Jesus entering Jerusalem as King. The crowds give him an ecstatic welcome, but the religious leaders ask Jesus to keep them quiet. 'I tell you,' he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.' (Luke 19:40)

FOR PRAYER

This series takes its title, 'Guided by Fire' from the pillar of cloud through which God led the people of Israel through the desert at night.

New Testament followers of Jesus are also guided by fire – but no longer an external fire. We are led by the internal fire of the Holy Spirit, just as John the Baptist declared:

'I baptise you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Luke 3:16

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and set you ablaze to the glory of God.