

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Hearing God's Voice

KEY PASSAGE: Exodus 3:1-5 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Exodus 3:10-22 | Deuteronomy 31:6

► SUMMARY

Would you read the Bible more if you could understand it better?

Sometimes our comprehension is hindered by reading a passage too quickly. At other times, especially when reading narratives, we could assume that since we already know the story, there isn't anything else to learn from the passage. On the other hand, if we read the Word seeking to know what God is saying and how He would have us apply it, Scripture becomes rich and meaningful.

► SERMON POINTS

By seeing how the Lord interacted with Moses, we can gain a better understanding of how we are to listen to God speak to us through His Word.

■ **Surprise.** While Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, he noticed a burning bush and was surprised that it wasn't consumed. However, an even more astonishing thing happened: "God called to him from the midst of the bush" (Ex. 3:1-4).

In a similar way, you and I may be surprised when God unexpectedly applies something in the passage we're reading to our hearts. We weren't looking for it, but His Spirit opened our eyes to see what He wanted us to understand.

■ **Personal.** After getting his attention with the burning bush, God gave Moses a personal message. "Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt" (v. 10). We ought to read the Bible with an awareness that

the Lord is speaking personally to us through His Word, which is always timely and relevant.

■ **Specific.** God's instructions to Moses were not general, but very specific. He had a particular mission for Moses to accomplish—to bring His people out of Egypt (v. 10).

■ **Encouragement.** The Lord encouraged Moses by saying, "I will send you to Pharaoh" (v. 10). This was God's plan, and He would accomplish it. Scripture is filled with encouragement for challenging times of sickness, difficulty, pain, and sorrow if we will listen, believe, and trust the Lord.

■ **Serious.** We must realize that reading God's Word is serious business. The Lord wants us to give Him our full attention and understand what He is saying. If we cooperate in this process, we can be confident that He will guide us through life.

■ **Command.** After hearing the Lord's command, Moses initially objected, saying, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" (v. 11). All he could see were the obstacles to obeying Him. However, God expects us to obey Him even if we feel inadequate.

■ **Inescapable.** Despite Moses' objection, he was not going to change God's mind or His plans, and the same is true for us. Although we may think of all sorts of reasons why we cannot do what God wants, His commands are indisputable.

■ **Frightening.** Since Moses had left Egypt as a fugitive, the thought of returning for such a daunting task must have filled him with fear. Who would he say had sent him? But

the Lord assured him by revealing His name, “I AM WHO I AM” (v. 14). He is the sovereign God of the universe who controls all things.

Sometimes the thought of obeying the Lord can fill us with fear, but we have the same assurance Moses had. When we realize that the one who calls us is the great I AM, it should calm our fears and give us the courage to obey Him.

■ **Promise.** The Lord also gave Moses a promise, saying, “Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain” (v. 12). The Lord promises His assistance, presence, power, and provision to all who obey so we never have to go empty-handed to the task.

■ **Assurance.** In God’s Word we find instructions regarding what to do, insight into His identity, and assurance of His presence with us. Although we may at times feel forsaken because of our circumstances, we must rely on truth rather than feelings. The Lord will not fail or forsake us (Deut. 31:6).

God gave Moses the following assurance: “But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go” (Ex. 3:19-20).

■ **Requirement.** When the Lord first spoke to Moses in the burning bush, He said, “Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground” (v. 5). Moses was to treat the Lord as holy, and so are we. To others, what God requires of us may seem foolish, but this is how we learn obedience—one step at a time. Removing shoes is easy, but going back to Egypt is harder.

■ **Clear.** God doesn’t speak in generalities. He clearly told Moses that He was sending him to Egypt to rescue His people (v. 10).

■ **Circumstances.** The Lord often works through our circumstances in order to teach us to trust Him. The situation Moses was facing required great trust in God. Delivering millions of Hebrews would only be possible because the great I AM would be with him. Today we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us to empower obedience to whatever God says.

■ **Goal.** For Moses, the goal was clear—set God’s people free. The Lord never calls us to do anything for which He does not have a reason, purpose, or goal. When He doesn’t reveal to us what it is, we must trust Him.

■ **Unforgettable.** When Moses was in Egypt, he was running for his life. In order to courageously return, he needed to remember that the Lord was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the great I AM who said, “This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations” (v. 15).

■ **Reassuring.** To further reassure Moses, the Lord promised that the people would not leave empty-handed. He would grant them favor in the sight of the Egyptians who would freely give them whatever they needed as they left Egyptian bondage forever (vv. 21-22). Throughout God’s conversation with Moses, He promised His presence, wisdom, provision, and power, and He has not changed. We can count on these same things whenever we obey Him.

► RESPONSE

- Do you find the Bible rather uninteresting? If so, use the words listed above to help you find personal applications as you read.
- Do you tend to open your Bible more frequently when you need help? Although this is good, what are the advantages of reading Scripture regularly? How would this help you learn to know, trust, and obey God more?

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