

YOUR BURNING BUSH

(Based on Exodus 2:11-3:12)



Burning Bush Melani Pyke

You can be sure that Moses had been a religious man all his life. Though he was raised in Pharaoh's palace he was a Hebrew, and he never forgot that he was a Hebrew. But in those early days, Moses' religion, like the religion of so many of us, was mixed with a thousand impulses of his own flesh.

He killed an Egyptian for abusing a Jew and figured he had done a religious thing.

It was a blundering religion that got him into trouble and finally drove him into exile in Midian.

It was a mixture of faith and doubt.

One can imagine that Moses alternated, as so many of us do, between moments of deep piety as he stood on those wild semi-desert slopes, and moments of excruciating doubt.

"Where is the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

Why does he not hear the cries of his children?

Why am I spending my life out here in this wilderness away from my people, cut off from my own soul?"

One can imagine that there were entire days when he did nothing but pray as he looked out over those flocks, whole days when he did nothing....

but brood,
and wonder,
and question, as the years of his life kept slipping by.

Then came the day when Moses met God personally at the burning bush.

"Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

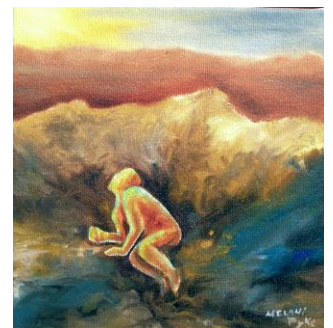
Now a clear road is opened up before Moses and God says,

"Take it!

Walk in it!

Do what I tell you!"

Moses' days of standing around brooding and guessing and wondering are over.



Overwhelmed

Now it's either "Go and accomplish the work that I've sent you to do", or "Take your own road and the consequences it leads to".

Like Moses, in those early days, we too may be religious and still not be getting anywhere. We say our prayers at night, and think about God, but deep within is the question;

- Is God really there?
- Are things really the way I want to believe they are?
- Does it make any difference whether I believe or don't believe?

Sometimes you seem to have faith – strong faith – you feel as though you could move mountains. And sometimes there's nothing but doubt. Gradually you bring your faith and doubt into balance.

Now you have what they call sane, "reasonable religion."

You have enough faith to quiet your uneasy conscience when it starts jumping.

And you have enough doubt to keep you from turning into a fanatic.

And so you walk down the road with other decent, sensible people doing your bit for humanity and taking your share of this world's delights.

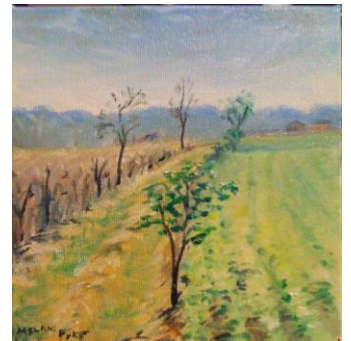
But then one day you come to a place where the road divides.

- The branch to the right arches up into the mountains.
- The branch to the left bends down toward the mud flats.

As you stand at that fork in the road, God speaks to you.

"Take the branch to the right", He says.

"No", says your flesh. "Don't be a fool, take the one to the left."



Inheritance

Now you've come to your burning bush, the days of your neat little compromise are over. Now it's either the way of faith or the way of doubt. One or the other.

There may be some reading these words who have already passed that fork in the road – you've made that crucial choice. Your life has now begun to ascend or to descend, as the case may be.

But there are many who have yet to reach that place of decision. You are travelling on your merry way – a kind of dual citizen. You have a claim on heaven, and a claim on earth. But soon, you too will come to your burning bush.

No one can tell you when or how it will be.

- It may happen while you're sitting in your kitchen drinking a cup of coffee.
- Or when you're standing by the lifeless body of a loved one.
- Or when you hear the crack of gunshot piercing the night in your quiet neighborhood.
- Or when you're sitting in a chair reading the New Testament.
- It is even possible that you might arrive at your burning bush this very hour.

But when it comes, everything that happened to Moses on Mt. Horeb will happen to you.

Some ordinary thing of this world will begin to burn before your eyes like the bush which was enveloped in flames but remained green.



- It may be the face of a child in the newspaper one day that will somehow burn in your mind all day long. You won't be able to forget it.
- Or a passage of scripture that flashes upon you with glory and brands itself on your memory.
- Or a word someone speaks to you that turns on a light in your mind.

And out of that fire – out of that light – God will begin to call your name even as he called, "Moses, Moses".

Suddenly you'll forget all your questions about whether there is a God or isn't a God. And all your questions about whether the Bible is right or wrong, or whether fanatics are crazy or not. And you will know, without the shadow of a doubt, that right then and there God is calling you by name, not Preacher Jones telling you how it is – –

–God Himself calling you to open your ears and listen to what He has to say.

99 times out of 100 there will be no audible voice, no vision, no bells ringing, no angel choirs, but you will know that it is God.

***"Don't come any closer. Take off your shoes,
for the place where you are standing is holy ground"***

And now you will begin to know what it means to be standing on holy ground. Whenever you are in the presence of God, in such a way that God is speaking to you, you're on holy ground...

- you take off your shoes,
- you get down on your knees,
- you bow your head,
- and you confess your sins.



The soldier who watched Christ die,

- beat his breast,
- walked away with a shudder running through his body,
- knew that he was on holy ground!

God the Spirit was speaking in his heart as God the Son laid down his life for that man's sins, and he was filled with awe.

Pity help the people whose eyes are open and they see that Cross and what it means, but they refuse to take off their shoes!

Pity help the people who see their Redeemer and hear His word of forgiveness, yet they stand there as if they're at a carnival!

When God brings you up on Mt. Horeb and reveals Himself, and manifests His glory, take off your shoes and bow down before Him! Humble yourself in His sight even if it makes you look like a fool in the eyes of men.

And now, God begins to tell Moses what He wants him to do.

"Come, I will send you to Pharaoh.... there is work for you to perform, by my power."

God doesn't reveal himself to you so that you can sit down and write a book about your mystical experience. He reveals Himself to you to tell you what He wants you to do – to put you to work.

"You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you." (Matthew 20:4)

"You didn't choose me, I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bring forth fruit." (John 15:16)

If it were merely a matter of saving your soul, God would have wrapped your soul in plastic and whisked it off to heaven long ago.

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12)

....and they live the life of children of God,

....and they do the work of children of God.

"Occupy till I come!"

"Prepare the earth for my return!"

Now if you haven't been to the burning bush, you may still be able to sit around and be pious. But once you've been to the burning bush you're going to have to get out there among those people and work.

Your job is to bring them out of bondage. Get them out of the clutches of Pharaoh. Take them through the waters of remission. Show them the way to the Promised Land.

"Who am I Lord, that I should do such things?"

"What do you mean 'who are you?' If I say I'll be with you it doesn't matter who you are. Go and do what I command you!"

When Moses walked down from Mt. Horeb he was no longer a citizen of Midian, or a citizen of Egypt, or anywhere else.

- He was a citizen of Heaven.
- He belonged to a city that cannot be found on this earth...
- Whose builder and maker is God.

And for the rest of his life and forevermore,

his eyes are on Heaven,

his mind is on Heaven,

he gets his orders from Heaven,

he lives in the dimension of Heaven,

he grapples with earthly problems as he never grappled with any problem before, but he solves them with the power of Heaven.

And when you walk down the mountain from your burning bush, you too belong no longer to this earth.

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior..." (Philippians 3:20)

And, if our citizenship is in Heaven, that's where our minds are, that's where our eyes are.

"Our Father who art in Heaven....."

The proof of whether or not a person is really in Christ is,

where's their citizenship?

where do they belong?

what country are they living for?

"For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ----even though they claim to be Christians.

"Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things."

Philippians 3:18 & 19

They're not citizens of Heaven. Their minds and their bodies are chained to the earth.

When you walk away from your burning bush a citizen of Heaven,

.... keep your citizenship alive

.... by keeping your mind where it belongs.



Rocky road to Jesus

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

Colossians 3:1-4

One thing is sure: Every single soul reading these words has either come to the burning bush, or will soon be there.

If it hasn't happened to you yet, it will.... soon.

When it does,

- May God help you to take that road that rises up toward that heavenly city in the distance and stay on it.
- May God help you to walk right through the troubles of this world with your eyes on Him.
- May God help you to stand before Pharaoh and his magicians and every high thing that exalts itself against God....

That you may do the work that God put you in this world to do,
by the power of the Spirit he gives you to do it with.

So when the end comes for you and for this age,
you may be able to stand before Him without shame.

"Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:10)

"Go, make disciples of all nations....."



The Great Commission

Precious, Holy Lord bring us to our burning bush. Bring us to the place where we prostrate ourselves in the midst of your Holiness, the place where we hear you calling us by name. May we choose to do what you call us to. Help us to take the high road, keeping our minds on Heaven and living like your sons and daughters as we face our own troubles, as we grapple with darkness, as we bring people out of bondage, and as we stand up to our own pharaoh's. May we carry our burning bush as we journey through the days of our lives so we may stand before you without shame because we were humble and obedient to your call.

Original 1973, REB, edited 2016. Also part of the booklet "Spiritual Power for the Underground Church". This booklet is now available for mailing. The manager is unsure if it has ever been offered in the past.

Art: All by the kind courtesy of Melani Pyke... at melpyke.com

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THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

