

Beyond Sunday

For groups, friends, families, couples, or individuals to reflect on the message you heard this Sunday.

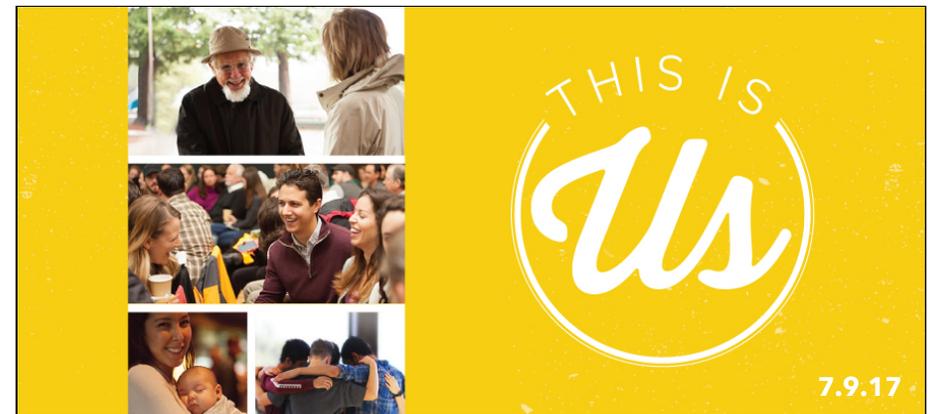
REFLECT on the message heard Sunday, 7/9.

1. Read Exodus 3:1-14. Compare and contrast what you know of the first 40 years of Moses' life from the second 40 years of his life. Why might he have believed that the chance for a significant role in God's work in the world had already passed him by?
2. From a human perspective, you would think Moses was better positioned to deliver the Jews when he was a prince in Pharaoh's household and had much status and power. Yet God chose to use him much later in life after 40 years of obscurity. Gary mentioned that "God's timing is rarely our timing, yet it's always perfect." How do you think this was true for Moses? Have you ever experienced a situation where your sense of ideal timing and God's were different?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. Why do you think God likes to work through imperfect and weak human beings to do His perfect and powerful work in the world? Can you think of other biblical characters that would fit this bill? Have you ever seen God use a weak, imperfect person in an extraordinary way?
4. Moses' first reaction to God's call was to say, "I'm not qualified" and "How will people know You really sent me?" Why do you think he reacted this way? Why do you think most characters in the Bible react this way when God assigned them things to do? How did God reassure Moses? Have you ever reacted this way? How does He reassure you?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7. When Jesus called Peter, he said "I'm too sinful." When God called Jeremiah, he said, "I'm too young." When He called Isaiah, he said, "My lips are unclean." Almost everyone he called in the Bible reacted this way. If God starts nudging you to do something, what's your excuse? How do today's passages speak to your excuse?
6. A common clay vessel filled with an uncommon treasure of God's Spirit within, seems to be God's preferred means to do His work in the world. Do you focus more on your own "clay-ness" or on the the greatness of the God who lives inside you? What could help you see things more like He does?

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Moses: This is Us

God said to Moses, "**I am who I am.** This is what you are to say to the Israelites: '**I am** has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3:14

Big Idea:

It takes someone strong to make someone strong.

"Earth's crammed into Heaven, and every common bush afire with God; but only he who sees takes off his shoes – the rest sit around it and pluck blackberries."
–Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The Strength Moses Discovers is in the God:

Of Perfect Timing

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. Exodus 3:1

Of Burning Bushes

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. **Moses saw** that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So **Moses thought**, "I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up." Exodus 3:2-3

Who Comes Near

When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "**Here I am.**" "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is **holy** ground." **Then** he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." Exodus 3:4-6

Who is Greater than Our Excuses

The Lord said, "**I have indeed seen** the misery of my people in Egypt. **I have heard** them crying out because of their slave drivers, and **I am concerned** about their suffering. So **I have come down to rescue** them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey – the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. **I am sending you** to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." Exodus 3:7-14

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 2 Corinthians 4:7

"In a profound way, our intentionality is a key ingredient determining whether we notice God everywhere or only in church or only in suffering or nowhere. It all depends how we choose to fashion our world."
–Elizabeth Dreyer, *Earth Crammed into Heaven*