

Dear Friends,

Exodus 3: 11-15

So far it hasn't been much of a conversation. God has been doing all the talking. There has been space for Moses to have his say, but he has been too awestruck and has remained silent. That is, until the moment when God says "Go, I send you to set my people free". It's one thing to hear that God is about to do a great work, it's quite another to discover that you are the one through whom that great work is going to get done.

Moses replies, "Who am I to face Pharaoh and to bring the people out of slavery?" Throughout the Bible God calls people and they reply "Who am I?" That may be what you say, "Why would God call me? What do I have to give?" Know this, you may sometimes struggle to believe in yourself, but God believes in you.

God answers Moses with the answer that God always seems to give, "I will be with you".

And Moses says, "But when the people ask me for your name, when they ask who sent me, what shall I say?" Moses presents a picture of the people asking for the name of the one who sent him, but maybe it's his question really. He is the one who wants to know the name of God. The name sums up the person, it reveals their character. Moses wants to know what God is really like, what God's nature is.

When Jacob wrestled with God, he pleaded with God saying "Please tell me your name".

God replied by saying "Why do you ask my name?"

No name was given to Jacob. A name is given to Moses, but it is a mysterious name. There are a number of different ways of translating it. Here are some, but by no means all of them.

I am who I am
I am what I am
I am the one who is
I will be who I will be
I will be what I will be
I am now the one who I shall be
I am that which I wish to be

It is appropriate that God and God's name should be way beyond what our minds can grasp. You would not want to worship a little God who is easily understood, whose every truth you can nail down. No, a God worthy of worship has thoughts and ways far above your thoughts and ways. But a God worthy of worship also reveals enough. Enough so that God may come to be known and so that we may enter into a relationship with God.

One of the possible translations of the name of God is "I will be who I will be". As though God is saying, "just put your hand in my hand, come along with me and you'll find out who I am as we travel along together. Just, trust me". What you know now is only the tiniest slither of the truth about God, it is just a start, but you know enough and you will always be learning more, there is so much more to come. You are on a never-ending ascension into God.

And maybe the key thing for Moses is not being given God's name, but being given the old promise, the one that was given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the promise "I will be with you". Moses will put up more resistance, but in the end, he will go and set the people free.

And the one who promised to be with Moses is the one who promises to be with you. The same God who was revealed in the burning bush. The one who is gracious, who gives without needing to be given to, who does not destroy but gives warmth, light and life. The one who is love. The one who now has been revealed not only in a burning bush, but in a human face, that of Jesus who repeats God's promise, "I am with you always to the end of the age".

God bless you,

Tony