

The Psalm appointed, Psalm 26:1-8

- 1 Give judgment for me, O LORD,
for I have lived with integrity; *
I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.
- 2 Test me, O LORD, and try me; *
examine my heart and my mind.
- 3 For your love is before my eyes; *
I have walked faithfully with you.
- 4 I have not sat with the worthless, *
nor do I consort with the deceitful.
- 5 I have hated the company of evildoers; *
I will not sit down with the wicked.
- 6 I will wash my hands in innocence, O LORD, *
that I may go in procession round your altar,
- 7 Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving *
and recounting all your wonderful deeds.
- 8 LORD, I love the house in which you dwell *
and the place where your glory abides.

A Reading from the Book of Exodus, Exodus 3:1-15

Moses had run away from Egypt out in to the desert. He was living a quiet life there. He'd gotten married and had a job tending the sheep that belonged to his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. One day he took them way out past the wilderness where they could find something to eat. They settled down by Horeb, which was called the mountain of God. The sheep were happily munching away when Moses noticed that a bush was on fire. It seemed kind of strange to him, and he had this feeling that he should go see what had caused the fire. He looked at the bush. There was flame but no smoke. And it kept burning, but not burning up. "What is up with that?" Moses said to himself. It was an angel, a messenger trying to tell him something from God! It sure grabbed his attention.

Then Moses heard someone call him by name. Out there, in the middle of the desert! It was God himself talking to him, "Moses, Moses!" All Moses could say was, "I'm here."

Then God said, "Don't get any closer than you already are. And you should really take your shoes off, because this place where you are standing is holy ground. I'll bet you are wondering who I am, Moses. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When Moses heard this, he hid his face in his arms and wrapped his sleeve around his head, because he was afraid to look at God.

Then God said, "I have seen how my people who are slaves in Egypt are hurting. They cry themselves to sleep at night because their masters are mean to them and beat them, and give them no rest. Their cries make my heart hurt. I have a plan to get them out of Egypt and to show them their own place to live, a good place that is full of good things. I know what awful things are going on in Egypt. You are part of my plan. You are going to go to Pharaoh and march the people out of Egypt right under the nose of Pharaoh."

But Moses said to God, "Me? Are you kidding? You want to send me? Why would you think I could do this?"

"Don't worry, Moses," said God. "I will be with you the whole time. And when you and all the people get out of Egypt, then you can bring them here to this mountain and worship me."

But Moses said to God, "I'm not very popular with the Hebrew people or Pharaoh right now. What if I go to the Hebrews and say to them, 'The God whom your fathers knew has sent me to you to help you out of Egypt. Let's go.' What if they say, 'What God? What's his name?' What am I going to say then?"

"Tell them this, Moses," God says. "I AM Who I AM. That's all you have to say. 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "And tell them, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.'"

"This is my name forever. Go tell them that."

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew, Matthew 16:21-28

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."