

## LENT MIDWEEK #2

### God is Still Here

March 4, 2009

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Exodus 5:1-9

Isaiah 51: 1-6

#### Outline:

1. **Most foundations can be pulled out from under us.**
2. **Israel lost THEIR foundation.... “work harder/work faster!”**
3. **The burning bush says, “God is still here!”**
4. **We are “chips off the old block of God!”**

Last week, wearing the mark of the cross on our foreheads, we were reminded that we are, as the words so starkly say, “ashes to ashes and dust to dust.” The entire service pointed us to Christ as the foundation of our lives, a foundation that cannot break, crumble or fail. In fact, to help remind us, we just sang that marvelous old song, “Built on a Rock,” even though some of us may be more in the “Jesus is the Rock of My Salvation” genre of music.

#### **1. Most foundations can be pulled out from under us.**

Last week we received a reminder rock....a rock that can easily crumble into ashes and a rock that would be very difficult to walk on or grow crops in.... as a reminder of the consequences of sin. For me it’s a reminder of just how important God’s covenant with us IS...and that, push comes to shove, it is the best way to live and the only way to die.

Foundations CAN crumble. How about a couple examples:

- Drive down the oceanfront in Sandbridge, Nags Head or anywhere else. What will you see every few blocks? A driveway that leads to a house that has been washed away!
- I opened another round of my retirement annuity statements this week. Talk about crumbling foundations!!!
- I spent a few hours with a lady who received the worst news possible from her cancer doctor.... her time on earth is now measured in months or weeks, not years.

We LOVE to believe that life is solid in so many ways:

- We desperately want to believe that our economy is solid;
- that our health is solid;
- that our marriage is solid;
- that our faith is solid.....

And sometimes what we thought was there..... either crumbles, or really wasn't what we thought it was in the first place.

## **2. Israel lost THEIR foundation.... "work harder/work faster!"**

Let's examine our text from Exodus.

The people of Israel had been GOD'S people....and you don't get much more solid than that. God had led Abraham to Canaan, planted him there with a family and made some very significant relational promises....which He reinforced through Isaac and Jacob. Even when they had to move to Egypt because of famine, they were on solid ground, because Joseph....their kinsman/redeemer was best buddies with the Pharaoh. They prospered there and after a few hundred years of living there, they grew into a nation that numbered close to a million people.

Sounds pretty solid, doesn't it.

Oh how quickly things can change. A new pharaoh came to power who either didn't remember Joseph or just plain didn't care.... This new pharaoh didn't recognize these people as being anything other than a force of slave labor, and in one swift slash of his pen, turned them into brick-makers..... taking mud, mixing it with straw, forcing it into molds and allowing all these bricks to dry in the heat of the sun.

And if there's anything these bricks could have said, it was this:

***Work harder! Work longer! Make more of us! You'll never be done!***

Sound familiar sometimes? Like you're on the treadmill and you can't get off? It reminds me of the M&M commercial....the big red m&m is running on a supermarket checkout belt, trying to keep from getting scanned. Finally he's forced along the belt, resigning himself to sitting on the scanner and ending up not just in the bag for the big game, but ending up on the menu!

My life, it seems at times, wants ME to be on the menu of the main course.

How about yours?

Then God brought Moses onto the scene.... Moses who basically said to God, *"God, thanks for thinking of me, but please go recruit someone else!"*

### **3. The burning bush says, "God is still here!"**

Moses ends up being *MISERABLE* in exile in the wilderness and once again, God shows up...this time in a burning bush! Burning bushes aren't all that unusual, especially in dry climates, but burning bushes that don't burn up ARE....and burning bushes that TALK are even more unusual....and this one did just that>

*"Moses! I am still here. I have heard your cries. I have seen your misery and the misery of my people. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and I am STILL HERE! I AM!"*

It was God, showing up to remind Moses where his true foundation really was. And of course, God goes on to show them that He WOULD free them from slavery, He WOULD let Pharaoh know that HIS people weren't destined to make bricks from mud, but instead, they were to be "rock people."

**Isaiah said it this way: "Look to the ROCK from which you were hewn!"**

*I suppose this was Isaiah's way of saying that we, as God's people, are "chips off the old block!"*

There are times I really need to remember that....and so, I would think, do you.

Those times come all too frequently in my life....and probably yours too...when the solid ground of our lives turns to mud, or even quicksand, and very quickly we're down to our knees, then our hips, then our waists, then our necks and ...

And....And just at the right time.... **GODS time and not ours.....**God shows up to set our feet on a firm foundation..... one of solid rock that last forever.

#### **4. We are “chips off the old block of God!”**

***“Look to the rock from which you were hewn!” God says! “You’re not MUD a mud person, you’re a ‘chip off the old block,’ and you’re mine!”***

A few years ago Pam and I visited the “Rock of Ages” quarry in Vermont. As we love to do, we took the tour and got to go out to where they have been digging Vermont granite for about 200 years so far. The quarry is so deep it boggles the mind. The granite is so hard that something made of it will last for centuries. And there is so much there that they estimated they could mine just from that one quarry for another 700 years!

That’s solid....isn’t it?

If I’m going to put my life onto something....onto anything... I want it to be on a completely solid foundation.

***Listen to me, (says Isaiah 51), you who pursue righteousness and seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were cut and the quarry from which you were hewn.....***

***Look to Christ....build your life on Christ.....the cornerstone of our lives and the Rock of our Salvation, and you will truly be,***

***“A Chip off the Old Block”***