

Our lectionary this morning continues with Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush. As Moses decided to look more closely at the miraculous site of the burning bush, let us look more closely at this text.

Moses continues his dialogue with the Lord. Moses asks what is the Lord's name in case Pharaoh asks when he visits him. Here, it is helpful to remember that Egypt was superstitious and worshipped many gods. Many gods were embedded in creation and therefore they worshipped things like animals. Essentially, Exodus is not only about liberation of God's holy people, but also revelation of the Lord, the one true God.

Additionally, pagan priests would keep each Egyptian god's name secret. Each god has its temple and caste of priests. One never spoke the name of each respective god publicly. By having the access to the name of the god, you had access to his identity. Thus, the fact that Moses revealed the Lord's name is important. God reveals His identity by revealing His name.

God replies, "I am who I am." This is one of the most famous verses in the bible. Philosophically, we say that God's essence and existence are identical. That is, God *is* existence, being itself. He is not one being among many, but the ground of all being, or the ground of all existence. Said differently, His essence is to exist.

Theologically, God told Moses, "I will be with you." Essentially, He is saying, "I am the God who will be with you." He is not an absentee Father who ignores the suffering of His people. He is the God who sees, who is present to His people.

We do not hear it in today's verses, but Moses realizes that he is losing the argument. Therefore, he will turn to the tongue and say he is a poor speaker. I am a bad public relations man. I cannot speak. Comically, it is as if Moses is saying, "In fact, I am such a poor speaker that I am having trouble telling you I can't speak!" In response, God says that Aaron will be Moses' mouth.

Our verses today are extremely rich. Do you believe the Lord who is "I AM" is always with you? Always? Think of your greatest weakness. What frightens you? Can God work through that weakness? Do you believe He can and will to be glorified through it? Be not afraid to turn to the Lord and invite Him into your place of weakness and vulnerability!