Have you ever been to places where you don’t feel quite fit-in and you feel like you are a total stranger in the midst of a crowd? Or for those of you who are students, this could be like the first day in a new school where you don’t know anybody else there. All of a sudden, you feel lost and don’t know where you belong. That could be quite a daunting experience, especially if you are an introvert, trying to find a place to “fit in” with the rest of the crowd.

A few years ago, I was invited to a friend’s wedding. When I received the invitation, I was contemplating whether or not I should go, since I only knew the bride or maybe a 1 or 2 other people who might be there. Ultimately I did decide to go. The wedding ceremony itself was beautiful but the thing that I dragged about the most was the reception that came afterward. I found myself trying to fit in with a whole bunch of strangers. They made me feel uncomfortable and unwelcome, as those who knew each other only interact among themselves. I felt like I was a complete stranger in a place where I didn’t quite belong. All of a sudden, I became worthless and transparent. I was a no-body!

Last week, we were looking into the circumstances surrounding the life of Moses…who himself was caught in between concerning his own identity. However, Moses was destined to be a leader amongst his own people, despite his personal insecurity, lack of self-esteem, and other physical challenges. If it wasn’t for the heroic efforts by the Hebrew midwives, who risked their own lives by defying the Pharaoh’s order, Moses would not have been alive and became who he was destined to be.

As his name suggested, Moses was “drawn out of the water” by God in order to fulfill God’s greater purpose for humanity. This wasn’t about Moses, it was all about God and God’s divine purpose and providence. Moses just happened to be the one whom God had chosen as he wrestled through his own identity crisis.

 But there was another layer to this liberating story besides Moses’s personal identity. **Moses was wrestling and discerning his own calling and relationship with God.** Moses tried to run away and hide from God when God called, just like a number of other prophets did. When God encountered Moses at the burning bush, God told Moses to *“Back off, Moses! Take off your sandals! Don’t you know where you’re standing? You are standing on holy ground”,* Moses knew immediately who he was dealing with. He fell on his face and was afraid to even look up to God.

Remember a couple of weeks ago when we had the solar eclipse, I drew the analogy that God was like the sun, so bright that no one would dare to look directly into it. One can only see the reflection or the shadow that is being cast. Moses stood his ground and out of his total reverence, he kept his distance from God. Moses knew right where he fit in in the presence of God. When God calls, he knew that he better listen.

What about us, **when God appears before us, do we take a step back, take our shoes off, and give God our utmost attention and listen to what God had to say?** Or do we try to run and hide, hoping that God would go away and forget about us? When God calls, do we put God on “call waiting” or on our “To-Do” list because we are too busy with other activities in our own lives?

Although Moses a “misfit” in society, he was the “perfect fit” in God’s eyes in order to fulfill God’s plan for humanity. Because of his unique dual identity of being a Hebrew and an Egyptian, which enabled him access to both peoples. He became the perfect ambassador, a “bridge-builder” when God needed someone to go before the Pharaoh. We need more people like that. Perhaps God is calling some of us to be ambassadors and “bridge builders” among the people as well.

 God knows us all even more than we know ourselves. God knows what we are capable of doing and what we are not. Scripture tells us *for the eyes of the LORD range throughout the entire earth, to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.[[1]](#footnote-1)* Like Moses, God sees us and accepts us for who we are both inside and out, in spite of our flaws and challenges. We don’t’ need to prove that to anybody either.

 **Through Christ, God has bridged our broken relationships and narrowed the many barriers that separate us from God.** We are no longer “misfits” and strangers among God’s people because we ultimately belong in God’s household and not as wanderers in the desert. Each of us are all given unique gifts that fit into God’s perfect plan in accordance to God’s purpose.

As God has called us to be ***“a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God”***....***so that we may declare the praises of the One who called us out of darkness into this wonderful light.”*[[2]](#footnote-2)**

**Encountering God is about establishing personal relationship with God and with one another. Like Moses, God will provide us with opportunities in which we may exercise our gifts with one another.** Scripture tells us that,***“No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.”***We are no longer “strangers” and “misfits”, because we have seen the face of God and are responding to God’s calling through our lives.

Last Saturday, in the early hour of August 26th, 61-year old Houston police sergeant Steven Perez was reporting to duty at his local precinct, when he heard the department’s call for “*all hands on deck*” at 4:30am. Even though he was not supposed to be on duty that day, he went into work nevertheless because he told his wife, *“I got works to do and the people need me.”*

As Perez was driving around numerous detours due to local street flooding, suddenly he too found himself of being a victim of the storm. His vehicle become immovable and stuck by a flash flood without any warning whatsoever. Perez placed a call for help on his radio to other fellow officers, but to no avail. By the time the other officers responded, it was too late and the condition became too perilous to put other officers’ lives at risk in trying to rescue him. Officer Perez was tragically drown and his body was found inside his own vehicle two days later.

Sergeant Perez was just one of many examples of selfless heroic individuals, volunteers, and first responders who put their lives on the line while attending to the needs of others before themselves during times of crises. Totally random strangers helping strangers who just happened to be at the right place and at the right time.

As we read in our passage today, Moses also responded to God’s calling at the mercy of the people’s outcry, in the midst of injustice and human suffering. As Jesus illustrated in one of his parables*,* we stand face-to-face before Jesus when we see and respond to the needs of others. *“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'[[3]](#footnote-3)*

**What calling might God have installed for each of us today, in light of the people’s suffering and outcry?** It doesn’t have to be anything big. We’re not called to be a Superhero, but at the very least, we shall honor God’s calling in us, each according to our own abilities. **In what ways can we use our many gifts and talents, as well as our resources and privileges in order to serve God and serve others today?**

 As ambassadors for Christ, God has challenged each of us to serve one another through our humility and grace as ambassadors for Christ. Not all of us will be a leader, rescuer, and liberator like Moses. God has come to us and the Spirit has shown us the way through the wilderness of the uncertainties and into the promised land.

As God’s beacon of hope to this world, let us set our hearts aflame by opening our hearts to others, especially those who are strangers and visitors, those who are friendless, and voiceless among us. We are no longer misfits living in displacement of society, but as friends among strangers and as heirs according to God’s promise.

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *II Chronicles 16:9* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *1 Peter 2:9* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Matthew 25:35-36, 40*  [↑](#footnote-ref-3)