

Pastor's Corner: Brave the Journey

Exodus 3:1-15 and Matthew 16:21-28

Fall is here—or at least it is getting ready to remind us that summer has officially overstayed its welcome. The mornings are cooler, the leaves are changing, and somewhere in the neighborhood, someone has already put out a pumpkin. Before long, we'll be pulling sweaters out of the closet, scraping frost off the windshield, and wondering why we ever complained about the heat. Fall is a season of change, and change has a funny way of making us both excited and nervous. We enjoy watching the leaves change, but we aren't always as enthusiastic when **God wants to change us!**

In **Exodus 3:1-15**, Moses discovers a burning bush that isn't being consumed by the fire. God speaks to him and calls him to a journey that will change his life—and the lives of God's people. Moses' first response isn't, *"Wonderful, Lord! Where do I sign up?"* Instead, he asks, **"Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?"** In other words, Moses is basically saying, *"Lord, I think you have the wrong guy."* Moses has questions. Moses has doubts. Moses has excuses. And yet God doesn't give him a five-year plan, a detailed itinerary, or even a weather forecast. God simply says, **"I will be with you."**

Then we meet Peter in **Matthew 16:21-28**. Jesus tells his disciples that the road ahead will involve suffering and sacrifice. Peter immediately objects. Peter seems to think he knows a better route. You can almost imagine him saying, *"Jesus, I've been looking at the map, and I don't think this is the best way to Jerusalem."* Peter wants the destination without the difficult journey. Jesus reminds him—and us—that following God isn't always about taking the easiest road. Sometimes faith means taking the road that requires courage, sacrifice, and trust.

And isn't that a little like Fall? We know the weather is going to change. We know winter is coming. We know the leaves are going to Fall. Yet every year we act surprised when we walk outside and discover that summer has packed its bags! We can't stop the seasons from changing. We can only decide how we will respond to them.

Perhaps that's the lesson God has for us this Fall. **Don't be afraid of the changing season. Don't be afraid of the changing journey.** Moses was afraid, but God went with him. Peter didn't understand the road ahead, but Jesus kept walking. And sometimes God asks us to take a step before we can see the whole path.

Maybe there is a journey God is asking you to begin this Fall. Maybe it is a new ministry, a new responsibility, a difficult conversation, a relationship that needs healing, or simply a willingness

to trust God more deeply. You may find yourself saying, like Moses, *"Who am I?"* Or perhaps, like Peter, you may be thinking, *"Lord, I have a much better plan!"*

But God doesn't ask us to have all the answers. God asks us to take the next step.

The trees don't panic when their leaves begin to Fall. They don't hold committee meetings about it. They don't say, *"I'm just not ready for this!"* They simply let go—and trust the season God has given them.

Maybe we could learn something from the trees.

As Fall begins, let's be willing to let go of what God is asking us to release, embrace what God is asking us to become, and brave whatever elements may come our way. We may not know exactly where the journey will lead. We may not have the right clothes for the weather. We may even occasionally wonder whether we took a wrong turn.

But we know something Moses knew at the burning bush and something Peter eventually learned on the road with Jesus:

We don't have to know everything about the journey when we know who is walking with us.

So this Fall, put on your sweater, grab your umbrella, step outside—and don't be afraid to brave the elements.

God is already on the road ahead. And God is walking beside you.

- Pastor Thad