

EXODUS: Of Pride and Marches

The book of Exodus is a journey from slavery to freedom. Enslaved by the Pharaoh of Egypt, the Israelites suffer heavy burdens until the prophet Moses, chosen by God, commands the Pharaoh – “*Let my people go!*” What follows, is a journey out of Egypt and into the wilderness for 40 years. Rather than being a nation lost in the desert though, the book of Exodus evolves into entering a covenant with God, being formed as God’s people, and discovering who they truly are as God’s pride.



EXODUS 3:1-12

Moses and the Burning Bush

3 Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. Leading the flock deep into the wilderness, Moses came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the messenger of Yahweh appeared to Moses in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire, it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this remarkable sight— why the bush does not burn up.”

⁴ When Yahweh saw Moses coming to look more closely, God called out to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” Moses answered, “Here I am.”

⁵ “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ The voice continued, “I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Sarah and Abraham, the God of Rebecca and Isaac and the God of Leah and Rachel and Jacob!”

Sarah and Abraham, the God of Rebecca and Isaac and the God of Leah and Rachel and Jacob!”

At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at the Holy One.

⁷ Then Yahweh said, “I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries under those who oppress them; I have felt their sufferings. ⁸ So I have come

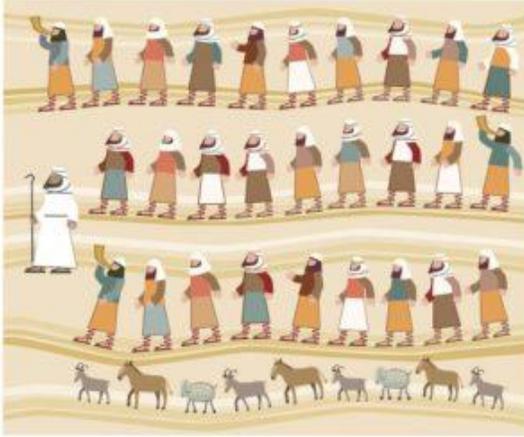
down to rescue them from the hand of Egypt and to bring them out of their place of suffering, to a land that is wide and fertile, a land flowing with milk and honey — the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹ The cry of the children of Israel has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.

¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”¹² And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this very mountain.”

FOR REFLECTION

1. As an LGBT person or ally standing before God, what is “*holy ground*” for you and what causes you to “*remove your sandals*?”
2. When Moses encounters God, he hides his face because he was afraid to look at God. What is your experience of being in the presence of God?
3. God often uses insignificant people to further the Reign of God. Do you think this is God’s intention? Why? If you have felt insignificant as an LGBT person or ally, how is God calling out to you? Do you answer?
4. The Book of Exodus mirrors many of the elements of a Pride March. It is a march from slavery to freedom; there are celebrations, memorials to remember the past, the making of a covenant and the beginnings of a new people. Where do you see yourself in the Exodus story? What has been your experience of Pride marches, parades and the LGBT movement for equal rights? Has it been a sacred experience?
5. The Israelites continue to wander in the desert for 40 years before they reach the Promised Land. What makes you continue to “*wander in deserts*” even if you have “*come-out*” as an LGBT person or ally? What “*manna*” feeds you along your way?
6. The central event of the “*desert experience*” was establishing a covenant relationship between God and Israel at Mount Sinai. The covenant reminded the people that it was God who had brought them “*out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery*” (Exodus 20:2). If God were to draft a covenant relationship with you, what would that covenant look like?
7. Pride events and especially pride parades and marches are about visibility and creating a sense of belonging for people who may not have it. Like the Israelites who shouldered heavy burdens, “*gay pride*” is also about being part of a group of people who are often rejected and attacked for who they are. Where and how do you see yourself as part of LGBT pride and hope?



PRAYER

Loving God who created all humanity to be free, we ask your blessing on all those who are still “slaves” around the world. Raise up prophets, like Moses, who are willing to move out of their comfort zone to stand up for those enslaved.

We ask forgiveness not only for the times when we choose to turn a blind eye, but also for the times when we could have done good, but refrained from it.

Loving God, as your will is fulfilled in the heavenly realms where no slavery exists, so, also may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.