

God is God and You are You

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 June 2018

Preacher: Rev. Thomas Davis

[0 : 0 0] Tonight I'd like us to turn to this passage that we've read and we're going to focus especially on the words that we have here in Exodus 3 verse 14. God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, Say to this people of Israel, I am has sent me to you. Last Sunday evening we were speaking about the whole issue of sharing the Gospel with a friend. That's something that we all want to do. We all want to be able to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the people we know, the people we work with, the people that we see day to day. And yet it's something that I think all of us find hard. If someone came to us and said, What's the Gospel all about? Why are you a Christian? What do Christians believe? Often certainly speaking from my own point of view, in that situation I panic and I don't know what to say and often I find it difficult. So these opportunities, they don't come up very often and when they do come into my experience I tend to make a mess of them. And so last Sunday evening we were looking at this issue about sharing the Gospel with a friend and we focused especially on the words of John 3.16 because we saw that that verse gives us six things that we can say if we're trying to explain the

Gospel in two or three minutes. So for those of you who weren't here and for those who weren't here, we can just remind ourselves of what we said. John 3.16, the great words, For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that he ever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And from that verse that I'm sure we all know, there's six things that we can remember in order to explain the Gospel. The first thing we want to tell people is that the God of the Bible is real. You look at John 3.16, starting point is God. In exactly the same way in Genesis chapter one, the starting point is God. And we want to highlight the fact that not just that there is a God as like some kind of being but that it's the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is real. Second thing we want to highlight is that people are precious. God so loved the world. And again, that's something that we want to always highlight that it's the Christian worldview that actually explains why people are precious. And the non-Christian worldview has great difficulty in justifying the validity of that statement. Thirdly, we want to explain that the world is broken. It says God so loved the world. When John uses the word world, more often than not, he is talking about something bad, not something good. And so when he's talking about the world, he's talking about something that's broken, something that's unlovable, something that doesn't deserve God's favor. And yet that's the world that God loves. And of course, the whole biblical narrative explains why the world is broken. It goes all the way back to Adam's sin.

And we only need to turn on the news to know that that's true. So we want to mention that. People are precious, but the world is broken. These three points in many ways just are so, anyway, say just our experience of reality or experience of life just shows us in so many different ways that all these things are true. Number four, we want to say that Jesus has come to fix it. God gave his only son in order to put this right. And that's the great work that Jesus has done. We have ever need to respond. And our response is in terms of faith. And so we want to emphasize not only has Jesus done all the work that needs to be done, there is a responsibility for us to respond. And that response is simple, but it's like we have to believe. So we want to tell people that the God of the Bible is real. People are precious. The world is broken. Jesus has come to fix it. We need to respond in faith. And last of all, we want to make sure we never forget that being a Christian is brilliant. Because if we believe in him, we will not perish, we have eternal life. That means not just their future, but even right now, knowing Jesus makes an amazing difference in our lives. So I wanted just to highlight these things again, because if you can have these six things in your mind, then maybe instead of panicking like I often do, maybe it gives us a wee framework as to what to say if we're going to share our faith with others.

[4 : 54] Obviously, there's other ways you could do it, probably better ways you could do it, but this I hope at least gives us a starting point. Tonight, I want us to look at Exodus chapter 3 because it's teaching us another very important truth. In fact, it's teaching us two very important truths regarding sharing our faith with other people. So as we go out to bring the gospel to other people, whether it's speaking to a friend or whether it's a day-to-day witness, or whether it's a work as a church, there's two things that you must remember and that are being set before us very clearly in Exodus chapter 3. These are two principles that run right through the Bible, two principles that are at the heart of our Christian witness, two principles that we must never ever ever forget. And they are God is God and you are you. God is God and you are you.

If you're already thinking what on earth are you talking about Thomas, well let me explain. We'll go through them in turn. First of all, God is God. Go back to Exodus 3, one of the most fundamental truths been highlighted to us here is that God is who he is. Moses said to God, if people ask me who is it and they say what's his name, what should I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. He said say this to the people of Israel, I am, I'll send you to you.

That statement, I am who I am, is simultaneously the simplest and the most profound theological statement that can ever be made. It highlights the fact that God is unique. There is no other, only God is God. It highlights that God is personal. So there are certain attributes that he has, certain characteristics that that he displays. It highlights the consistency of God. So he's always true to his character and it highlights the perfection of God. He is always everything that he is meant to be. It's a great reminder that only God is God. He is who he is. And of course the whole of theology arises out of that statement. The whole Bible is the revelation of who God is. He is who he is. And the fact that God is God is revealed to us in the way that Moses deals and that God deals with Moses. We read through this chapter. We see various things about God. First of all, we see that God is sovereign. God is the one who's in control of everything that's happening. God is the one who knows what's happened to the Israelites in Egypt.

God is the one who knows what's what he promised to Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob. God is the one who knows where Moses is going to be at this very moment. God is the one who's in control of absolutely everything. We see God's initiative. Who's started the conversation in Exodus 3? God. God took the initiative. God is the one who appeared to Moses. We see God's power. You have this amazing description of a bush burning but not being consumed. You see God's energy being displayed but not being exhausted because usually in a fire it roars and then if the fuel is gone away it dies down. But here you have a bush burning but it's not disintegrating.

[8 : 57] It's not being consumed. We see God. God is sovereign. We see God taking the initiative. We see God's power and we see God's compassion because God has heard the cry of the Israelites.

He knows their pain. He knows their suffering and he is willing to help them. So God is sovereign. God takes the initiative. God is powerful and God is compassionate towards those who are in need. And these are the theological truths that we must remember when we're trying to share our faith. So all that we seek to do in terms of witnessing to the world around us is under the sovereign control and plan of God. Our witnessing is following God's initiative because he's the one who sent us. Our witnessing relies on God's inexhaustible power. Our witnessing is a demonstration of the extraordinary compassion of God. And the key point in all of that is that when we think about witnessing we can often think about who we are.

And yet that's not the really thing that's important. What really matters is who God is and what God is capable of and what God is doing. So when it comes to sharing our faith there's a lot of things that we need. We need opportunities to share our faith. We need resources for the task. We need hurdles to be taken down. We need people's eyes to be open. We need a message that is actually going to change people's lives. We need a power that goes beyond anything that we are able to achieve ourselves. Do we have all of that? The answer is yes we do because God is God.

So is God powerful enough to use people like you? Is God powerful enough to open the eyes of people who are blind and to soften the hearts of your friends, neighbours and colleagues?

[11 : 08] Is God's message effective enough? Will God keep his promise to build his church? Can the Holy Spirit empower people like you to bear witness for Jesus? Is God sovereign and able to overcome opposition? Can God do more than we can ask or think of course he can because God is God.

He's not just a foreshorter of philosophy or a guru or a lifestyle choice or an ideology. He is God. He is bigger, stronger, wiser, holier, more powerful, more compassionate, more capable, more gracious and more loving than anything else. And the key point is that even though we can't do it, even though we are not capable, we do not need to be because we're not God. God is God. He is able and he can do it. And that's something that we must, must remember as we seek to share our faith because it helps us and it transforms our situation. It should give us confidence because God is able, God is willing, God is sovereign. God has already worked in my life, in your life and in the life of millions and millions of other people and he is not stopping.

We were all once blind. We were all once in darkness and God changed us. And so that means that God can work in the life of your friend, your colleague, your family member. He can work in all of their lives. And the fact that God is God means that every day something amazing might happen. You go to verse one of this passage. What was Moses doing? He was looking after the sheep and by the end of that day, the whole of history had changed.

What started as a normal day was transformed by the God who alone is God. So it should give us confidence. It should also give us a sense of dependence because as we seek to share our faith with others, we do so in complete dependence on the God who alone is God. So when you see your friends and you think to yourself, you know, the gospel is never going to have an impact on that person's life, you think to yourself, I could never persuade that person to become a Christian. [13:33] I'm not going to be able to do anything with this person. I'm incapable. If you think like that, you are absolutely right. You can't. But God can. God is able. So we look at the village around us and we see lots of people not coming to church and we feel frustrated and disappointed and yet none of it is a problem for God. God is God. And he is able to do it. It's his work that we're doing.

We depend on him. So we should have confidence. We should have dependence. But the fact that God is God should also give us a desire to obey him. And that's a really, really important thing. Sometimes when we talk about the fact that God is God and the fact that he is sovereign and capable and in control, we can sometimes fall into the trap of thinking that our dependence on God means that we shouldn't really do anything. We should just wait for God to do it. We wait for God to move in our midst and we shouldn't really be proactive in terms of evangelism. It's very, very easy to think like that. And I can understand why people think like that because they're trying to respect the fact that God is sovereign. I can understand that. The key point, however, is that our witnessing is not a case of recognizing that God is sovereign and worrying about whether we're going to jump ahead of him. Our witnessing is a matter of obedience because God has said, do it. And if God is God, then there must never be a part of our lives where we are disobeying him.

And so seeking to bring the good news to the people around us is a command from God. And we must obey, must strive to obey that command. Now any fruit that comes from that effort is entirely down to the work of God, the Holy Spirit. But whether the harvest is great or small is not really our primary concern. Our primary concern is that if God says go, we want to obey it. Why? Because God is God and he is to be obeyed. So when it comes to sharing your faith, never, ever, ever forget when that go back, oh, too far. Never, ever, ever forget that God is God. Sometimes we can be so easily discouraged because we think to ourselves our nation is too dark, our church is too weak, the challenge is too great, our witness is too poor, people's hearts are too hard, the situation is too bleak. All of that is complete theological rubbish. Because God is God. God is God. And we must never forget that. So in Exodus chapter three, we have this amazing revelation of who God is. And at the same time, we see that God is willing to work out his purposes through a very, very ordinary person. God gives this remarkable revelation that we've been studying together.

[17:21] It comes to Moses and he reveals his name, I am who I am. And then he says, go to the people, say to the people of Israel, I am, has sent me to you. That shouldn't be Moses saying that.

God has sent me to you. God sent Moses to deliver the people out of Egypt. And the great emphasis in the rest of the chapter is not that Moses is strong and capable, but that he's scared and that he's weak. But God comes to this weak, nervous old shepherd in the middle of nowhere. And he takes this man as he was and he uses him to do amazing work. And that is reminding us of the second key point that we must always remember in our evangelism. God is God. You are you.

God is God. And you are you. What do I mean by that? Well, when it comes to sharing our faith with other people, we can often think that this is the work that's done by the select few. So we think of the people who are good at it, the people who seem to do it so easily and so naturally, people who are so confident, so capable, and they can talk to anybody, they're brave, and they can go to all

sorts of places and do all sorts of wonderful things. And we look at people like that and we come to one of two conclusions. Either we think, I'm not like that. Therefore, God could never use me and we feel discouraged and useless. Or we think to ourselves, I'm not like that. And so if God is going to use me, I need to become like them. I need to change and copy other people who I think are better than me. Now, both of these conclusions are wrong.

Because when it comes to witnessing, you must never forget that God is God and you are you. Now, first of all, that statement there is a statement that should make perfect sense towards theological. Because it is just the outworking of some basic theological truths that we do not dispute. Who's your creator? God. Who formed you in your womb? God, in your mother's womb, sorry. God. Who gave you the attributes that you have? God. Whose image are you made in? God. God's image. And our doctrine of providence tells us that the people that we are is part of the work and plan of God. Now, obviously, that does not include our sin, because our sin is in a rebellion against the plan of God. It's a rejection of what God is instructing us to be.

[20 : 39] But in terms of circumstances and personalities, features, we do not put these down simply to biological or sociological factors. We rightly regard them as the work of God. So in other words, you look at Moses. Yeah, who made Moses Moses? The answer is God. God made Moses into the kind of person that Moses is. Who made you you? God made you you. In other words, there are things about you that are the result of the deliberate plan of God. So just as God came to Moses, where he was and as he was and used him for his glory, so God can take you where you are and as you are and use you for his glory, you are you. And that is all part of what God is working out.

And there's two key points I want to highlight from this and make another page. First of all, God can use you where you are. So where are you going to be tomorrow? Where's everyone going to be tomorrow? At work at home, well not for some lucky teachers, 30 weeks old. So some of us will be working tomorrow. Some of us will be at home. Some of us will be at school, but some of us might be at a shop, maybe at a friend's house, we might be at the community. What are you going to be doing tomorrow?

Maybe you'll be talking to somebody, maybe you'll be attending to responsibilities that you have at home or at work, maybe you'll be doing something on your computer or whatever, maybe you've got Facebook or something like that. All of these things that you're going to be doing tomorrow, is any of that outside the providence of God? No. So who has placed you where you are?

God has. And why do you think God has done that? Because he's got work for you to do.

And in terms of witnessing, ask yourself the question, have you been in contact with an unbeliever today or this week? Will you be in contact with an unbeliever tomorrow or next week?

[23 : 17] The answer is more than likely, yes, either in your home or your work, or even if you're at a shop or whatever. So if you are in contact with unbelievers every day, or nearly every day, why do you think God's doing that? In his providence, why do you think God has ordered events so that you are in contact with an unbeliever? It's because he can use people like you. And that's exactly why he has put you where you are. Now that does not mean that you're going to be able to have a gospel conversation with every single person that you meet. We know that that doesn't happen very often, but it does mean that every day is a massive opportunity for you to be a light in this world.

You are where you are, and God can use you where you are, even when we're not even realizing it, your speech, your conduct, your actions, and your readiness to have that conversation when the opportunity arises. God can use you where you are. So you are where you are. You also have to remember that you are who you are. You are where you are, and you are who you are. Now that's a very, very important thing to remember, because every single Christian is different. We all have different personalities, we all have different strengths, we all have different weaknesses, we all have different fears. But the great thing about God is that he uses all sorts of different people to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. And this is where we need to remember the wonderful teaching that the Bible gives us about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Scripture makes it very clear that all Christians have certain gifts from the Holy Spirit. Some have some, some have others.

No one has them all, and no one has none. We are all given gifts by the Holy Spirit in order to serve. And that means that you, as who you are, you have gifts that God can use. And you might think to yourself, well, how do I know what gifts I have? How do I know what these gifts are? Well, I think step one for finding out what gifts you have is to ask yourself the question, what do I like doing?

What do you like doing? So if you like meeting people and making friends or going for coffee with people or having people for dinner or building up relationships with people, then that's a wonderful means of building up contact with non-Christians. If you like organizing things, if you have a gift for administration, then get stuck into church activities or community events where you can use these gifts for the glory of God. If you like helping people, then go for it.

Help people in different ways, through visiting them, through sending them a card, a text message, or something like that. It's amazing the work that you can do from your living room with a card, a pen, an envelope, and a stamp. You can write words of encouragement to people all over the world. [26 : 52] If you're able to be generous, then be generous. That's another wonderful spiritual gift. If you're able to teach, play for opportunities to teach, either one to one with friends or maybe in a Bible study group or something like that. Often what we like doing can be a great avenue for serving God. We must not think that in order to serve God, we have to do something that we're terrified of. Because God has made you, you, with the gifts that you have that you are able to use for His kingdom. But having said that, sometimes we have gifts that we don't recognize ourselves, and that's where the church can help us. By saying to us, you actually have this gift, even though you don't realize it yourself and the encouragement of others can enable us to use that gift to the glory of God. But one of the wonderful things about being part of a church is that it's full of different people. And God deliberately brings different people with different gifts together so that if you come up against something that you're not good at, that you can't do, then you've got an ad you have people with you that can help.

You've got other people who can support you and you can work together. So if you're talking about the gospel with somebody and they ask you a question that you can't answer, don't worry, just say, I can ask a friend of church and they'll be able to help. If you're supporting somebody who's in need and you find that they're financing them in a mess and you don't really know much about finances, go to your brother and sister in the church and you'll find somebody who knows everything that needs to be known about finances. If you feel that you're not very good at hosting people, maybe you're like me and you're a terrible cook and you wanted to invite somebody who you know is lonely and isolated, go to your brother and sister in the church who have that gift and who are able to help. The key point is that you can use the gifts that you have for the glory of God and your brothers and sisters with you in the church can help you when it comes to the gifts that you don't have. That's why being in the church is so good. No one person needs to be able to do it all, the stuff that you're not good at and you're not confident that other people have.

And that's when it's great because you look in the church and you see somebody who's you know, you think of something that you find really hard and then you watch somebody else do it and it's like it's so easy. They can do it and it seems so easy for them and that's so different, different for different people. I know this is a probably stereo typical example but you know would hate to come and stand up here in front of you.

She would find that so difficult to come and speak but she could take you all around to the man's and feed you no problem whereas if I took you home I'd maybe give you a packet of crisps so that would be about it. I would find it incredibly stressful and incredibly difficult because different people have different gifts. We see that elicited beautifully in Exodus chapter 3 because Moses says to God, I can't speak and God says no problem, Aaron can so he's going with you.

And so you've got two people with two different gifts working together for the glory of God. And the key point I want to highlight is that you, now really, really drawn this into your mind because this is one of the most important things for you to recognise as a member of the Christian Church. You, where you are and you as you are, you can be used by God. And when we recognise that that should give us such a great sense of excitement and intentionality about each day.

[31 : 02] So we want to get up every morning praying that today is going to be a day where God will use our gifts for his glory. We want to pray that we be led to the person that needs encouragement if we're able to give people encouragement. We want to pray that we will be able to welcome the person who is lonely and isolated into a home. We want to pray that our activities and administration will be to the glory of God in a very clear and obvious way. We want to pray that our words will point people to Jesus, even if it's not explicitly speaking about the gospel but just the way we speak that it would point people to Jesus. We want our conduct, our temperament, our attitude to show the people around us that we have something special in our lives. We want to be different from the world. You are you. And that means you have a unique set of contacts, a unique set of

gifts and you have these opportunities to share the gospel. And the fact that God is God means that you, as you, can be used for great things. God is God so he is more than capable of using you as you are. So tomorrow is Friday 29th of June, yes?

Is Friday 29th of June an exciting day for the gospel in your life? To who right it is? Because God is God and you are you. And all of this is summed up absolutely brilliantly in Colossians 4 verse 2 and this is where I am finishing. Because this in many ways is like a mini-instruction manual for sharing your faith. And these are verses that would be really good to write in our hearts. We think about sharing our faith. You think where do we start? What do we do? Well Paul tells us first of all to be constant in prayer and that's so clear. We need to pray for opportunities. Pray that God we work at work. Every day we wake up praying, God you are God and we need you to be at work if we are going to be accomplishing anything. So we start with prayer, it's the foundation of everything. We want to then look for doors to open. So continue set us in prayer, we watch for it in the thanksgiving, at the same time pray also. But us that God may open to us a door for the word. So remember that doors aren't open all the time and we can't necessarily force doors open. And if we go and try to sort of ram the gospel down our colleagues's throat often that just doesn't work. We need discernment, we need to be careful. But God as a result of prayer God will open the door and we want to be ready for that door to be open. To declare the mystery of Christ on the character of which you are Christ. That I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak. We want to make sure that when we do share our faith we do it clearly and that we point people to the simple wonderful message of the gospel. Coupled to that is the fact that we make sure that our daily walk is wise so that our conduct, the way we behave, that when you live your life backs up what you say. So we're wise towards outsiders, people can see that we are different, people can see that we're not foolish in our conduct and in our attitudes.

And we want to ensure that we make the best use of our time. So we want to take the opportunities that we have to witness and at the heart of it all we want to make sure that our speech is gracious. So that we are ready to answer each person when the opportunity arises. Fantastic little manual for witnessing and sharing the gospel. So God is God and he can use people just like you.

So when it comes to sharing your faith, when it comes to going to work or to do whatever you're going to be doing tomorrow as we go with the desire to bring the gospel to people, never ever ever forget God is God and you are you. Let's pray together.

[35 : 43] Father, we thank you so much for what your word teaches us. The fact that you are the God who is sovereign and capable and powerful and loving and compassionate and that at the same time you're the God who uses people like us who are weak and frail. But help us Lord to remember that you can use us where we are. That doors of opportunity may open for us even tomorrow or maybe even tonight when we go home. We pray that we remember that every day we are living out our lives in front of other people and we pray that our conduct, our speech and our behavior would always honor you.

And we pray that we would use the gifts that you have given each of us. Different gifts for different people but we pray that all of these would be taken and used by you. We thank you for the gifts that you have given. Thank you for the gifts that you give to all the people here and for the contacts that they have. We pray that you will bless them in their witness. And above all we thank you that you are God and that you are capable of far more than we can even ask for it.

So help us to remember these things and may our minds and our hearts always be shaped by your work. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.