

SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES: 25 February 2018: Moses, a friend of God



Reading: Exodus 3:1-12;

Memory verse: Isaiah 49:1: The LORD called me before I was born."

So far this year we have discovered that we can meet God.

1. Through the Bible
2. Through what happened long ago
3. In nature
4. In special meetings
5. Through other people.

Sometimes people meet God in these ways, but Jesus made it clear that he doesn't just want us to meet him; he also wants us to be his friends (John 15). What does it mean to be a 'friend' of God? We are going to study some friends of God and see what they discovered..

Exod 33:11 says "The Lord used to speak to **Moses** face to face, as one speaks to a friend".

You probably all know that Moses was given a special job to do for God: He was appointed to lead God's people out of slavery in Egypt. Do you remember how God told him about his job? When the right time came, God set up a meeting. (By this time Moses was 80!)

Moses was wandering with his sheep in the wilderness, an area rather like the Karoo – not just sand. One day he saw a bush that was burning. There was nothing strange about that in a hot climate where there were often fires; but this bush didn't burn up. No ash, no soot; just a flame and no consequences. So Moses stopped to check it out.

Almost at once God spoke to him and told him to take off his shoes and not to come too close as this was holy ground. The real God was really there! There was no one else around to pay a trick on him. So Moses took off his sandals and covered up his face, very afraid.

God started by reminding Moses that his ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, had all met God. Moses probably began to remember the stories he had heard about these people. And now this same amazing God was speaking to him! So Moses was listening very carefully.

God's next words must have terrified him. God told Moses that he was sending him to bring his people out of Egypt. Over the years things had got really bad for God's people and Moses was to rescue them. But Moses hadn't been in Egypt for 40 years and didn't really

want to go back there! He had left in a hurry because he had killed a man who had been beating one of God's people. When he realised that people knew what he had done, he just ran away. And now God was telling him he must go back!!!

Moses didn't really want the job either. In fact, he didn't think he was the right man for the job! However, God knew that he had been preparing Moses for this job for years. God wasn't throwing him in at the deep end! God hadn't got it wrong!

- God had protected him so he wasn't killed as a baby.
- God had made sure that Moses learnt about him through his mother who was paid to nurse him! The Egyptians worshipped all kinds of gods, but Moses knew the truth.
- God made sure that Moses felt pain for his own people.
- God had provided him with the background so that when he went back to the palace he would know how to behave there and would command attention.
- God had given him a 'palace education' so he could write down his story so we could hear about it.
- Strangely God had allowed him to struggle. If his life had been too easy, he wouldn't have understood his people's suffering. Moses had had to learn to allow God to work and not to be impatient and angry. Shepherding was slow lonely work and Moses had time to think!
- God had let him spend years as a shepherd so he knew the conditions in the wilderness when he led the people out. He knew about things like snakes and herbs and 'brak' water.

What was more, God didn't just give Moses a job; he also gave him a promise: "I will be with you!"

From then on God spoke to Moses often, telling him what to do and how to do it. The Bible says that, after he had spoken to God, Moses' face used to shine so brightly that he had to cover it up (Exod 34:35). Everyone knew when he had spoken with God.

This doesn't mean that Moses got everything right. There were times he despaired; there were times when he sinned. In fact, he never actually set foot in the Promised Land because of his sin. Yet when he said goodbye to his people just before he died, Moses describes God as a 'Rock'; as a 'faithful God'; as their 'father'.

And this is what was said about him (Deut 34:10) "Never since has there been a prophet like Moses whom the Lord knew face to face". From the day Moses met God, he discovered that God had been at work in his past and could be trusted for the future.

God prepares his friends for what he wants them to do. He doesn't just dump them down and expect them to cope. God has created us so that each one of us is just right for his special work.

