

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 14, 2014
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Pastor Charles Heup

Exodus 6:2-8 (NIV)

God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. 3) I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them. 4) I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. 5) Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.

6) "Therefore, say to the Israelites: **'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.** 7) I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

8) **And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham,** to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.' "

Dear Friends;

If you listen carefully I think the following riddle will be one which you might find somewhat easy to solve.

*You will know that I am coming from the jingle of my bell, but exactly who I am is not an easy thing to tell.
Children, they adore me for they find me jolly, but I do not see them when the halls are decked with holly.*

*My job often leaves me frozen, I am a man that all should know, but I do not do business in times of sleet or ice
or snow. I travel much on business, but no reindeer haul me around, I do all my traveling firmly on the ground.*

*I love the time of Christmas, but that's not my vocational season, and I assure that is because of a sound
economic reason.*

Who am I?

If you guessed, "the ice cream man." You would be correct. While some of us may never have had the opportunity to buy ice cream from the "ice cream" man and his ice cream cart – I would imagine that many of us have enjoyed that experience and were able to solve this riddle.

In the Gospel lesson for today we heard Jesus ask the 12 a couple of variations of the question, "Who am I?" We can use a similar question to contemplate the truths taught in our OT lesson for today. At the time this text took place God's people found themselves enduring some terrible burdens and hardships as slaves in Egypt. Moses had spoken in the Lord's name on behalf of God's people but that only made their plight worse. Moses lamented to the Lord, **Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.**" Exodus 5:23 (NIV) Moses and the people were wondering about their identity and about their relationship with their God. This led the Lord to re-introduce himself to Moses. And so we will use the question,

Theme: “Who is the LORD?” to become more familiar with our God. Who is the Lord?

1. He is God Almighty
2. He is the God who promises to redeem his people
3. He is the God who is faithful to his promises

God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. 3) I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them. 4) I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. 5) Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.

The people who were now enslaved in Egypt traced their ancestry back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God had shown himself to be a God of power in the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was and is God Almighty. We might think for example of how God destroyed the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as evidence of how God revealed his almighty power to Abraham. But God doesn't only use his almighty power in judgment. He also uses it to bless and this was also evident to Abraham and his offspring. God called Abraham to follow him with these words and promises: **"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."** (Genesis 12:2-3 NIV)

Abraham and his wife Sarah were already past their normal childbearing years when God made that promise to him. Fifteen more years went by. Finally when Abraham was 100 years old God blessed him with his Son, Isaac, born to his wife Sarah. God almighty had acted and the people in Egypt had become a great nation that traced their roots to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Both we and the great nation descended from Abraham need the reminder that God is the Lord Almighty. Like the Israelites in Egypt there may be times when we call God's power into question. The Israelites looked were enslaved by the Egyptians – the status of things in their world seemed to indicate that God was powerless to help them. But nothing was farther from the truth – their God was still God Almighty.

When we consider world affairs today once again it may appear that things are out of control – that God is powerless. But nothing is farther from the truth. God is still in control. Just as he heard the cry of his people in Egypt so he hears the cries of his people today. At the proper time and in the proper way he not only watches over his people and keeps them from eternal harm but he also rescues them from all danger.

This is what the Lord told Moses to say to the troubled people of his time. **"I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. 7) I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians."**

Previously God had introduced himself to Moses with the name – The LORD. He called himself the “I Am” God to indicate his continual and unchanging presence in the lives of his people. Although Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were familiar with God's name the LORD God would reveal the full significance of that name to future generations. Future generations would see that LORD is not only the Almighty One but is also the one who will rescue and redeem his people in fulfillment of the promises he had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Who is the LORD? He is the God who promises to redeem his people. The LORD promised Moses that he would deliver his people from their slavery in Egypt by redeeming them (we could say rescuing them in this context) with his outstretched arm and his mighty acts of judgment. Once again the Lord promises to come to the aid of his people both in a positive way with his loving outstretched arm and with his acts of judgment against those who were oppressing his people. God promised to claim this people as his own to love them, to rescue them, to shepherd them, to guide them and to bless them. He would go with them as he led them from Egypt to the Land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

That is the hope that Moses was to share with the slaves in Egypt. And that is the hope that we also have in the LORD. We are oppressed by the sin and evil in this world. Just when it seems as if the news couldn't get any worse – the forces of evil raise their ugly heads again and again threatening our freedoms and leading us to question whether or not God is really still in charge. God is still the one who promises to redeem his people!

Today you and I have an even more complete revelation of the LORD. Not only do we know him as the one who delivered the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt, we also know him as the one who has delivered us from our slavery to sin, death and the devil by sending his Son to be a blessing for all nations.

Dear friends the LORD has shown himself to us by using his power to answer our prayers, keeping us from harm, delivering us from evil and empowering us to endure hardships with the strength that he himself provides. But more than that – he has called us to faith in our Savior; the one resisted all of Satan's temptations and lived a perfect life for us, the one who paid for our sins with his perfect life, who rescued us from eternal death with his death and who rose again to assure us of eternal life. Like Israel of old, we have been redeemed by the outstretched hand of the LORD and by his mighty acts of judgment.

The LORD is the God who is faithful to his promises. The Lord assured his people in Egypt “**And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.**”

When God revealed himself as the LORD in this text he is revealed himself as the unchanging one, the faithful one, the one who deals with his people in grace, the one who does not lie, the one who is always merciful and ready to save.

The LORD made a promise to Abraham and his descendants. Hundreds of years had passed by the LORD had not forgotten that promise. When the time was right God came to aid of his people in Egypt and led them to the land he promised on oath to give to Abraham and his descendants. It was in this land that the LORD fulfilled his promise that all nations of the world would be blessed through Abraham's offspring. It was here that Jesus, our Savior was born. The LORD has been faithful to all of his promises. That is why we can be confident that the LORD will never leave us or forsake us, that he will be present with us always and that we will live with him forever in the promised land of heaven where our Savior has gone to prepare a place for us.

It is the fulfilled promises of the LORD to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that gave hope and encouragement to God's people in Egypt. Those promises together with the promises God fulfilled to his people in our text and the fulfilled promises of the Savior give us hope and encouragement as we confidently await the fulfilment of God's promises to us. You can count on the LORD!

“Who is the LORD? That's not a riddle! As we have seen in our text

1. He is God Almighty
2. He is the God who promises to redeem his people
3. He is the God who is faithful to his promises

Amen.