

# Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

March 7, 2021 – Third Sunday in Lent

*“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery...” – Exodus 20:1-3*

God gave Moses specific instructions on what to say to the people before giving them the Ten Commandments. Listen to the words: “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.” (Exodus 19:4) Why would God say that? The Israelites who heard these words knew why. The memory was still fresh in their minds. God was saying, “Do you remember when you were trapped in Egypt and there was no escape from bondage? How you groaned under the cruelty of your taskmasters? I came down to buy you back out of slavery. Remember standing on the shore with the sea at your feet and Pharaoh’s troops breathing down your back? Feeling stuck because you couldn’t move forward and you couldn’t go back? I made a way for you when there was no way. Remember how in the wilderness I fed you with manna? Remember how I swooped down and bore you up on eagles’ wings? Remember?”

See, the rightful setting for the commandments is God’s boundless, faithful, fatherly love. Love doesn’t always come wrapped up like a pretty gift. It doesn’t always show up on your doorstep in the form of beautiful flowers. In fact, it just might be written in stone.

So how should we respond to such a gift? Before God gave the Ten Commandments, he told Moses to prepare the Israelites for his visit. They were to sanctify themselves and wash their clothes. When God comes down to visit you, it will require something of you. Something like reverence and expectancy, humility and awe. How might you and I prepare ourselves for whatever it is that God might like to give us or say to us?

We need to make room in our hearts and minds, we need to lose the clutter that prevents us from hearing God speak. Clutter like worry, and riches, and endless busyness that robs us of rest and peace. See, sin in our lives doesn’t stop God from giving, it just stops you and me from receiving.

Moses pleaded his case for the Israelites on the mountain, and God sent his first love letter written in stone. Today we come before Jesus Christ and he pleads for us before the Father’s throne. His love letter would be written in the blood of the Lamb. Let us prepare to receive his love in Word and Sacrament that we may be set free from all that holds us bound. Amen.

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