

February 1, 2026

“Waiting to be Noticed”

Exodus 3:1-6

Intro:

Everyone likes to be noticed. I will grant that there are degrees to which people like to be noticed... there are those who want to be noticed all the time and are constantly doing things to draw attention to themselves and what they are doing, and there are those who claim to not want any notice at all (but it is nice to be noticed at least once in a while), and everywhere in-between. Some of the need to be noticed we grow out of, and some of that need we grow into as we appreciate recognition for a job well done, or when we go above and beyond. This isn't a Mother's Day sermon, but I am pretty sure that our moms do way more than we ever give them credit for and probably they would appreciate a little more in the way of simple acknowledgment.

In our efforts to be (or not to be) noticed, we can often be oblivious to other things and people around us. A child wanting his or her parent to notice what they are doing often fails to recognize that their parent is on the phone or in the middle of doing something they have to maintain concentration for. As we grow older, there is more awareness that people are on the phone, but in our desire to point out the thing we have done (or want to say), we can ignore what is being said to us as we wait impatiently for our chance to speak up. Perhaps you can recognize some of those traits in your own self.

Believe it or not, God also wants us to notice Him.

The Burning Bush:

To explore this idea, we turn to a familiar narrative for many of us – Moses' encounter with the burning bush in Exodus 3.

Moses is no longer the lost baby floating among the reeds and being rescued by Pharoah's daughter. He is now an adult. He is married. He is a fugitive from the

Egyptian authorities. He is a murderer. He is a shepherd. There is a lot in the story of Moses that builds into the moment we read in Exodus 3. Probably at this point, Moses is content with his life. Sure, it isn't the opulence of the palace. And sure, he is in exile from his Hebrew countrymen. But all in all, he is probably feeling that life is at a good pace and that he can finally forge his own path and really discover who he is. He has a good wife, and he is fortunate in having a wise and respected Father-in-law. The life of drama and being in the spotlight is behind him. So you can imagine that shock that he would experience when he comes across a bush that is on fire, but is not being consumed by that fire. The author of the account moves quickly from the miracle to Moses bowing in awe and worship. But what was his initial reaction?

The text tells us that an angel of the Lord appears in the flames of the burning bush. This angel is likely the cause of the flames, and the reason for the bush not being consumed. But notice that the angel doesn't speak. It is up to Moses to decide what to do with the visual information he has been given. Imagine yourself in Moses' shoes... er sandals... for a moment. You are leading your flock of sheep through a desert like area looking for a suitable place for the sheep to eat. I imagine that near the bush, at the foot of the mountain for example, there was good grass for the sheep. A bush on fire in that region could result in a flash wildfire that would destroy any living plants, which would be a very bad thing. So maybe Moses' first reaction was to frantically look around for some water with which to put this fire out. Maybe as he does so he looks more carefully at it and discovers that the bush is not burning. He rubs his eyes to see if he is hallucinating. Nope, what he sees is what is really there. Now what would he be thinking?

What would you do?

Just to be clear, this is not an everyday thing. This is something outside the normal natural order. It is spooky. It is unnatural. It raises more questions than answers. It would be a perfectly normal, and understandable, response to just turn around and go the other way.

At this point, God has still not spoken. There is only the angel in the fire. Waiting. Seeing what Moses will do. There hasn't been an invitation to come closer, or to do anything at all. It is just there, burning and yet not burning. This is the point of notice, of paying attention. Will Moses notice that something else, something bigger than him is there?

We know the story. Moses does go toward the bush to see what it is all about and as soon as he begins to move towards it, as he commits to learning more, God speaks. It is almost as though the angel was the front desk person saying "please hold" and "so and so will see you now."

God waits for Moses to notice Him before He speaks. Once Moses notices God, then God opens up and invites him into the great adventure and responsibility of leading the Hebrew people out of slavery and into being God's chosen people.

Noticing and Being Noticed:

We want God to notice us. More than any other thing, we want that. We want Him to notice the injustices that we suffer. We cry out into the darkness or the void or whatever you imagine, asking if He is real and if He is there – not because we want to know Him, but because we want validation of our lives, of our choices. We want to matter and we want God to prove that by doing what we want Him to do. The Israelites of Moses' day wanted the same thing. God noticed them. He notices us.

But God also wants us to notice Him. He is far more patient about it though. He reveals Himself in all sorts of ways, from the wonder and beauty of creation around us, to miracles that can not be explained, to the comfort we feel when there is nothing that we can identify as being particularly comfortable. It isn't as dramatic, usually, as a bush on fire that doesn't burn, but it is no less God giving a sign of His presence.

And then He waits. He waits for us to notice Him. We cry out “pay attention!” and “where are you?”, and He shows us. But He leaves it to us to take those steps closer to Him. Do we dismiss the miracle, or do we look closer to see the miracle worker? Do we see the beauty in a sunset as something we deserve from this world, or do we look closer to try and see the artist behind the painting?

Conclusion:

God wants us to notice Him and to move toward Him with wonder and awe. And when we do, He will speak. We will, like Moses, find ourselves on holy ground. We will find ourselves being invited into the global and time-spanning work of God. We will find God telling us that the “bush” is but a small glimpse of the something much bigger that He is wants to do in our lives and with us.

God has noticed you. Will you notice Him?

Some of you have known God for so long that you have lost notice of Him. I’m not saying you have lost knowing Him, just noticing Him. He is still out there waiting in burning bushes for you to notice Him again. Open up your Bible with fresh eyes to see new things in the words on those pages. Look for the wonder of God in the world around you that you once had. Seek to see God again for the first-time.

What will you find and where will that lead you? It will be Holy ground.

Let’s pray.