

God's Love Is Infinite

Ex. 3: 1-8a, 13-15; Ps. 103; 1Cor. 10: 1-6, 10-12; Lk. 13: 1-9

When we meet someone new, we try to find out something about them and, often, we ask: 'What do you do?' Usually, the person answers the question by giving his/her occupation. He/she might say: 'I'm a doctor or I'm a carpenter. Maybe it's a musician or an artist or a homemaker. Whatever the answer is, it gives us an idea of what the person does and who he/she is. Our occupations tend to define us. Also, they limit us. If I'm an artist, I'm likely not a lawyer. If I'm a homemaker, I'm probably not a mechanic.

God gives Moses a message that He is going to deliver the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Moses is concerned that the Israelites will not believe the message unless they know the name of the person who sent Moses to them. God instructs Moses to tell the people that 'I AM sent me'.

I AM? What kind of a name is that? It is vague. It does not give any information as to who the person is or what they do and that is exactly the point. God is limitless. He will not be defined or bound by a name or title that would be understandable to the Israelites. God wants the Israelites to trust Him completely; trust that He will lead them safely to the Promised Land. He wants them to trust Him even if they know nothing about Him except that He is their God.

And this is true for us as well. We must learn to trust 'I AM' to lead us safely out of our slavery to sin, through our own particular 'desert' in this life, to the Promised Land that He has prepared for us. We can have confidence that He will do this because we have a special relationship with Him. Even though He is so powerful and we are so weak and prone to sin, God is close to us because we are special to Him, created in His likeness and image. Perhaps God cares for us in a special way not in spite of our weakness but because of our weakness. He loves us in a way that we cannot begin to understand.

God is limitless. Therefore, His love and mercy are without limit. No matter how many times we fall due to our sins, God, in His infinite mercy, is always there to pick us up if we admit our failings and repent. He is always willing to give us a second chance. Jesus tells the parable of the fig tree that has not borne fruit. When the owner wanted to cut the tree down, the gardener convinced the owner to allow him to cultivate the tree for one more season to see if it would bear fruit. The tree is spared from the fire and given another chance.

The Psalmist tells us about the limitless love and mercy of God:

*The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.*

But these words also describe the mercy that God wants us to show each other. In our dealings with one another, God wants us to be 'merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love'. As God has loved us, we are to love each other. As God has been merciful to us, so we are to show mercy to others. As we continue our Lenten journey, let us show our love and mercy for our fellow travellers as, together, we make our way to our heavenly home.