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I AM

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I AM

Abstract

"In the journey of Lent—in the 40 (plus) days of walking to the cross—we remember who we are and who God is. God is faithful. God is present. God is steadfast in love."

Posting about the character of God from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/i-am-2/>

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

I AM

 [inallthings.org/i-am-2/](https://allthings.org/i-am-2/)

Liz Moss

But Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM who I AM.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you’: This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations. Exodus 3:13-15

Moses had just been given what-seemed-to-be an unattainable task—go to Pharaoh to bring God’s people caught in slavery out of Egypt. As odd or surreal as the whole arrangement seemed (imagine a burning bush encounter, voice of God in the wilderness, revelation of God to a man stained with sin and guilt), out of curiosity and likely out of the need of assurance of the task set before him, Moses asks who this is that has called his name out of the fire that did not consume. Better yet, what assurance could this new servant of God give to the people who had been stuck in slavery and who had lost their own identity as God’s chosen people?

Who am I? Who are you?

These aren’t questions of animosity or doubt—instead questions of openness. Human openness is met by divine openness. Moses asks. God is revealed.

I AM who I AM.

Exodus 3:14 is one of the most perplexing verses in the Hebrew Bible. The NRSV translation puts it this way: “I AM who I AM.” Other translations say: “I will be what (who) I will be;” “I will cause to be what I will cause to be;” “I will be who I am/I am who I will be.”

I will be God for you. God will be faithfully God for them.

For those who follow the church calendar, today begins the season of Lent. More specifically, today is Ash Wednesday—the day in the year when we remember to who we are and to whom we belong. As the ashes of the palms are marked on our heads we hear the words, “Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return, but the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.”

Years ago, when I had the privilege of marking the ashes on the foreheads of the faithful, I recall those who would come not out of pure joy or fickle assurance, but their faces would be worn with reverence and awe. The stories they held in the hearts were stories of pain and suffering as they walked the path of what life brought them—life of struggle, life of suffering, simply life in general. For each person, the words were spoken, “Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return, but the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.” By the time the last person came to the front of the line, I could feel my heart’s beat rise and the solemn words in the phrase turn to joy. Yes, we are dust and to dust we shall return, but God is faithful! The steadfast love of the Lord *never* ceases.

I will be God for you. God will be faithfully God for them.

In the journey of Lent—in the 40 (plus) days of walking to the cross—we remember who we are and who God is. God is faithful. God is present. God is steadfast in love.

I find no coincidence that throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus' interaction with those in his midst are often words of pointing to his relationship with us and with God—as fully divine and fully human. It is no coincidence that the Gospel of John gives us clear statements of Jesus as the “I AM.”

Before Abraham was, *I am*.

I am the bread of life.

I am the true vine.

I am the Good Shepherd.

I am the gate.

I am the light of the world.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

I am the resurrection and the life.

Throughout this season of Lent, on each Friday leading to Resurrection Sunday, I invite you to join others as together we reflect on the words of the Faithful One in the “I AM” statements through our Lent devotional series. Like the people of Israel learned, the name I AM shaped their history, like the name I AM shapes our history today as children of God who have received grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus. In this season of Lent, may you be drawn closer to the one who calls you by name—the Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

Lord, may it be so.