

**Sermon:** Go Ahead and Have Your Midlife Crisis!

**Date**: July 31, 2016

**Scripture**: Exodus

**Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon:**

**Daily Study Guide August 1-6**

**Use this daily prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.**

*Dear God, many times I wish you would just write out in the clouds what you want me to do. Wouldn’t that be easier? Then I realize that you don’t want me to be a passive robot, spinelessly following orders, but a fully alive human being choosing to walk with you each day. Thank you for that freedom. Guide me in that awesome responsibility. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

**MONDAY August 1, 2016** Genesis 11:27 – 12:8 Abram’s (God changed his name to “Abraham” in Gen. 17:5) midlife crisis came in two parts. He and his father set out for Canaan (11:31). Genesis doesn’t say why they only went part way, to Haran. Still, Abraham kept his inner “ear” tuned to God’s voice. He left Haran—his country, his people and his father’s family—to follow God’s compelling call.

• In Genesis 12:5, we see that Abraham was well-to-do before he set out across modern Iraq and Syria toward Canaan. But God did not want him to hoard his blessings, material or spiritual, for just himself and his family (12:3). How are you using your blessings to bless others? How might you do that more?

• God’s promises (12:2, 7) sounded great! Just one little problem: Abraham didn’t have any offspring (11:30). How would you respond to a calling that seemed absurd, that presumed facts you can’t see? What does it tell you about Abraham’s walk with God that he took the promise, and the call, seriously?

**TUESDAY August 2, 2016** Exodus 2:11 – 3:10 Moses faced two major midlife crises. The first he created by murdering an Egyptian guard. He had to flee quickly from Egyptian justice into the land of Midian—but things worked out. He married, started a family and tended his father-in-law’s flocks. He had a secure (if not very exciting) situation. Then that bush started burning. . .

• Note the sequence in chapter 3, verses 3 and 4. Moses shows his openness and alertness by going over to look at the bush. Only THEN does God speak to him. How can you nurture openness to God’s presence, so that you do not overlook or ignore the “burning bushes” in your life?

• What was the key difference between Moses’ first effort to free Israel from tyranny, and his second? In Zechariah 4:6, God tells the prophet, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.” What problems are you trying to deal with through might and power? Could God be trying to suggest a different method? Are you listening?

**WEDNESDAY August 3, 2016** **Luke 4:42-5:11** Luke tells more than Matthew or Mark about the “crisis” that changed these young men. The miraculous catch of fish showed that Jesus was not just “some guy.” Then he said, “Give up fishing for fish. Come—we’ll ‘fish’ for people.” And they did. They left their nets and became first Jesus’ disciples (pupils), and then his apostles (emissaries).

• Luke never spells it out, but it seems clear that Jesus and Simon had some previous contact. But this was the day when it all came together for Simon. What has been the story of your journey toward and with Jesus? Did you experience a time when everything “clicked”? Are you still waiting for a time like that?

• Fishing was probably Peter’s lifelong family business. Still, in verse 5, we see him accept fishing guidance from a carpenter. What are your areas of expertise, in which you might hesitate to follow God’s wisdom if it differs from your own knowledge? How does Peter’s submission to a carpenter speak to your heart?

**THURSDAY August 4, 2016 Acts 26:4-20** Speaking at his own trial before King Agrippa, Paul laid out the facts, even the ugly ones, of the “midlife crisis” that turned him from Saul into Paul the apostle. He had been sure he should do all he could to stamp out the name of Jesus. Then, obeying “the vision from heaven,” he gave his life to preaching that very Jesus as Lord and Savior.

• Paul’s mission statement was “to open (the Gentiles’) eyes and turn them from darkness to light....so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith.” What’s your life mission? If you don’t know, try prayerfully creating a mission statement.

• This passage offers a key outlook on persecution and suffering. Paul was arresting Christians. But when Jesus appeared, he asked, “Why are you persecuting ME?” When you face struggle or pain, do you realize that Jesus suffers along with you? How can Jesus’ solidarity in suffering with you give you strength and comfort?

**FRIDAY August 5, 2016 Psalm 119:33-40** We might almost see this passage (drawn from the longest psalm in the Bible) as a prayer for a good midlife crisis. “Teach me, Lord…Direct me…Give me understanding…Turn my heart…Turn my eyes.” These are the requests of a heart that wants to follow God, and to live according to God’s values.

• Verse 40 says, “How I long for your precepts” (or “See how hungry I am for your counsel” (The Message). What forces or circumstances keep you from hearing God’s counsel, or even from wanting to hear it? What makes you hunger for a clear vision of God’s precepts for your life?

• In verse 36, the psalmist prays, “Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain.” How natural do you find it to focus on God’s teachings rather than on “selfish gain?” How might shifting your heart’s attention to God’s statutes trigger a healthy midlife crisis for you right now?

**SATURDAY August 6, 2016**

Practical Application: A Godly midlife crisis can be a blessing. In what areas do you feel “in crisis” right now? Ask God to help you discern opportunities to gain insights that might point to a change in direction for your life. (Often a friend, counselor, or pastor can help you better understand these pointers.) Be patient and gentle with yourself. As you find specific steps to better align your life with God’s purposes, take them.