

## Amirah Partner Highlight:

Story: This is Mary Speta, (CIO) Chief Impact Officer, at Amirah. Amirah was first getting started... Ministry that works to alleviate the suffering of victims of sex trafficking.

- We've always prayed for and sought to support their work, but we want to do more.
- They will be opening their 2<sup>nd</sup> location in New England in the New Year, and we not only want to pray for them, we want to give to them.
- As they worked on this new safe house, they discovered several unexpected projects.
  - Example: ripped up old carpeting; discovering lovely hardwood floors needing professional TLC to restore. Estimated unexpected cost: \$4500.
- We have a tradition of celebrating our RHC Anniversary with gifts (Hope Chest - MHS, Boys & Girls Club)
- This year, we will share gifts with... Amirah – to benefit the women they serve!
  - Our goal is that 100% of attenders and members share something.
  - 100% of all funds received will be given to Amirah to continue the preparation of the Hartford property.
- You can give by:
  - PushPay – select the Fund designated as:
  - Check – write Amirah in the memo – deposit in the Collection Box
  - Cash – write Amirah on the envelope – deposit in the Collection Box
- Mary, Chief Impact Officer – will be available for your questions in the Lobby and at the Brunch

### **“The Fire is Still Burning” Exodus 3:1-22**

*Introduction:* Pg. \_\_\_\_

Our Anniversary Celebration is such an important event that just last night my 5 year old declared: “Tomorrow is a holiday.”

And what today is about is not about celebrating the generic idea that a church has existed for 8 years in the great city of Medford, but about celebrating specific people and the specific ways we see pictures of heaven in and through those people.

RHC is a community of people who live as family where we can know and be known, love and be loved, serve and be served, celebrate and be celebrated!

Just think about a few of the highlights over the past year:

- Growing and diverse family.
- Growing diverse leadership team.
- Relationally deeper. Historic # of people in Groups.
- Commitment to serving one another and our community. 2 Mile People... You can't have movement dynamics without a culture of sacrifice!
- We should celebrate the increased use of our Community Center in Medford Square.

- What about supporting different churches and missionaries across North America and all over the world.
- Lives being changed. Over the past 12 months, we've seen more people say YES to a real, vibrant, life-giving relationship with Jesus than ever before!

This is the kind of church I want my kid's kids to come to, but here's the exciting reality: we're just getting started...

I want to take you to a story that will help us take the next step, a story from the pages of the Bible that can catalyze an even greater story through Redemption Hill in the days to come.

### Story of Israel

- Famine drove them to Egypt (end of Genesis).
- They prospered, had a bunch of babies, and became a strong presence (Ex 1:7)
- So much so that Egyptian officials feared they would love and hurt their own prosperity as a nation, which led them to oppress and enslave the Israelites. By the way, oppression and injustice can usually be traced back to fear.
- But God was working to raise up a future leader named Moses. Exodus 3 tells the story.

### **Exodus 3:1-6 (first two text slides)**

The opening section of this story teaches us... the fire is still burning, because...

#### **1. God's voice still speaks.**

What do we learn about God's voice?

- God has creative ways to get our attention.
  - Moses rolled up to Mount Horeb with his sheep and saw a bush on fire, but this was no ordinary burning bush. The bush was burning with the presence of God. That's why it did not stop!
  - Can you imagine Moses' perplexity as he is staring at this unquenchable fire, to, then, out of nowhere, hear his name called twice! "Moses Moses!" It would take two times for sure. For me, probably 22!! :)
- And don't miss this: when God speaks, he gets personal:
  - God knows your name! That's the kind of God I wanna follow, a God who is infinitely transcendent (above everything) *and* infinitely intimate (closer than your fingertips - yes, I just said that).
- And here's what will blow the mind even further. This infinite God has a specific assignment for each of us.
  - Sure, there's unity to his plans (all summed up with two commands: Love God and love the person beside you), but diversity in how each person contributes to God's vision for good in our world.

- We see Moses' specific assignment in verse 10: "Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."
- What about you? How are you living out a sense of divine assignment? God has great plans for you to fulfill his great plans!

You say, "Tanner, help me be ready to hear his voice." Here are two encouragements:

- Keep your eyes and ears open!
  - Listen, God will always lead us in a way consistent with the truth found in this book. He will speak by his Spirit as we read and experience moments like these, but... if we're not careful, we can put God in a box.
  - If you listen, God might pull a Moses moment on you. I'm talking about hearing his voice in the everyday moments life. Moses was caring for smelly sheep, and God met him there!
  - God may speak to you when you're hammering a nail, clicking save on a spreadsheet, or teaching a five-year-old how to say the letter "Q." Q is a tough one :-)
- Be ready to respond.
  - Did you notice that God waited to speak until Moses took a step?
  - And when God spoke... "Here I am." Moses responded from a ready heart.
  - And Moses took off his Jordan's. Everyone wants a moment with God, but not everyone wants to take off their shoes. God is holy. We can't move forward or lead if we're not seeking to reflect his heart. God is so holy that Moses hid his face. WOW.

T: Isn't it amazing that God uses people like us for his greater vision for our world. God's voice still speaks, because...

## 2. God's heart still breaks.

**Exodus 3:7-10 (next two text slides)** What do we see here? Look at verse 7...

### God sees our pain (7)

- You never have to wonder if God has his eye on your situation. He cares. He's a good Father.
- God's heart breaks at the brokenness of our world. And the more our hearts align with the heart of God, the more our hearts will break for the brokenness around us.
- This is how it happens. It starts with our vision. We see two things...
  - A clear vision of the way things are (which includes a grasp of the depths of our sin and brokenness) and...
  - A clear vision of the way things ought to be (shalom).
  - Jesus saw the gap between the current reality and his vision of shalom, and it crushed him.
- So much so that he went to die for it! Not just our personal sin... (yes, we need personal reconciliation with God to have peace with God), but also for the cosmic effects of sin (seen throughout all of our world - Col 1:20 - he will unite all things in himself, making \_\_\_\_ what? Peace!)

### God hears our prayers (7b)

- The cry of the people. The bush burns when people pray.

- Back up to Exodus 2:23-25... God heard their groaning. God remembered his covenant. God saw the people. God knew.
- When people pray, God shows up
- Fire Nights.. This Friday we're launching a new rhythm: the first Friday of every month we will be gathering at our Community Center (8p) to pray.

#### God delivers us out of our trouble (8-9).

- *Verses 8-9*
- God redeems and restores. He takes us into the promised land.
- Now it's our privilege and joy to join in his work. It's his work that motivates our work.
- Our church is called Redemption Hill because we want to work to see God's redemptive plan at work right where God has placed us in Greater Boston.
  - That's why we partner with great people like Amirah.
  - That's why we just partnered to make the first ever Mobile Food Market a reality in Medford.
  - That's why we'll give out close to 150 Thanksgiving meals to families across Medford.
  - That's why we'll continue serving the Medford Youth Center, Medford Housing Authority, and the City of Medford by improving and beautifying our parks.
- We've only just begun.

T: Can you see the heart of God bleed for the hurting people around you? Who's life will be different because you gave of yourself for their sake? God's voice still speaks. God's heart still speaks. And...

### **3. God's hand still moves.**

Two problems... One solution...

#### Opposition from the outside.

- The assignment will not be easy. They will be opposition, and the opposition will be fierce. There will be enough critics, naysayers, and trolls to try to distract and slow you down!
- There's almost no great work that does not face great opposition but if the work is great enough the work will be worth it.
- Here, God is straight up with Moses (*verse 19-20*).
- But don't miss this... not only opposition from the outside, hesitation from the inside.

#### Hesitation from the inside.

How would you respond if God showed up and handed you an assignment? Maybe you'd go full Brady coming out of tunnel "Let's Gooooooo!" Not Moses...

- Verse 11: But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"
  - I don't have the experience.
  - I don't have the credentials.
  - I don't have what it takes.

- Verse 13: Then Moses said to God, (uhhh... hypothetically speaking...) "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" (The dude was SCARED!)
  - There is humility mixed with insecurity, the recipe for so many great leaders.
  - Humility is required for leadership. A sober view of oneself. Self-awareness.
  - At the same time, "Most anytime someone is called to a great task there will be feelings of insecurity." How am I going to do this? Do I have what it takes? Security is found in the presence of God, and it is his love and presence that fortifies us and gives us the confidence we need to drive insecurity from our hearts! (RW?)
- God speaks in verse 12: "But I will be with you."

This nullifies the objection: "God only calls people who are super spiritual, ultra qualified... God does not call the qualified, he qualifies the called!"

Do you see? We go by knowing who is sending us! God's hand still moves because God is still God.

- Verse 14. I AM WHO I AM.
  - God is self-existent & self-dependent. He needs nothing. He is the Creator of all that is. He is the only all knowing, all powerful, everywhere present being in the Universe!
  - I AM WHO I AM! The verb here is where we get God's divine name: YHWH. 6500 in the OT, translated LORD, all caps.
- God is and God will. He promises his presence. He promises his strength. He promises his victory. The plunder is promised.
- Jesus:
  - I AM the bread of life (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)
  - I AM the light of the world (John 8:12)
  - I AM the door of the sheep (John 10:7, 9)
  - I AM the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14)
  - I AM the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
  - I AM the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
  - I AM the true vine (John 15:1, 5)
  - "Before Abraham was, I AM." (John 8:58)

*Conclusion:*

The fire is still burning, because the presence of Jesus is still burning in his people.

**"Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." - Matthew 3:11**

His presence is in us, by the Holy Spirit who he sent us.

Don't underestimate yourself. I'm so tired of people living lives that communicate: "God would never use me to make a difference." God has not changed! He's the same God!! To underestimate yourself is really to underestimate him.

God is still moving people to move other people to accomplish his good vision for our world.

I've never been more optimistic... the number of people who believe God's voice still speaks, God's heart still breaks, and God's hand still moves is higher than ever!! So many of our young professionals in their 20s & 30s, but not just them: I got an email on November 5, 2018 (READ IT):

"We need to be burning bush Christians, people full of the presence of God." Yes, Yes we do.

**The fire [of GOD] is still burning.  
Is it burning in you?**

PRAY.

Let's celebrate the goodness of God to us as individuals and as a church as we sing.

Final Word...

1) Fire Nights...

2) Amirah Gifts...

3) Jazz Brunch...

- Upstairs...

- There will be two identical self-serving lines (use both sides of the table)

- Plenty of food, but be modest with your first plate.

- Sit with someone new!

- Dismiss Parents to Get kids.

- Let me thank God for the food we're about to eat and our time here together.