

Called To Save
Exodus 3:1-15; Matthew 16:21-28

I realize that many of you may be tiring of the continuous media coverage of Hurricane Harvey's devastation of Texas, Louisiana and other areas in recent days. However, there are some stories that simply must be told again and again as we seek to make sense out of the senselessness of what has been labeled as the costliest natural disaster in the history of the United States.

The actions of Jim McIngvale, known as Mattress Mack, gained international attention when he opened two of his furniture showrooms to hundreds of Hurricane Harvey evacuees and dozens of National Guard troops in Houston, Texas. Many have long known Mattress Mack for his generosity. "All day long Sunday we went around and rescued people out of high water standing on overpasses and those sorts of things." He and his team had 24-foot delivery trucks that could easily get through the waters. "We brought about 200 people in that way." Although the stores had taken in about 800 people total over the weekend, Mattress Mack said he and his crews were not slowing down – he even gave out his personal phone number for those in need to call and told CNN that it had been ringing off the hook. He provided food, clean rest rooms, and even accepted kenneled pets. When asked why he did this, he said, "My parents would have done it; because it is the right thing to do. We have to give these people hope for the future." This is Labor Day weekend and other furniture stores are focused on selling the inventory, not soiling it so it may never be sold.

In the passage from Matthew as Jesus continues to prepare the disciples for what is to come, Peter responds with denial, rebuking Jesus, "God forbid it! With my newfound authority I will not let you and the promise of the coming kingdom be destroyed! How could the Anointed One be tainted by suffering and death?" You cannot go through the tears and the sweat, the blood, and the muck of humanity, because you are God – you have to save us!"

To which Jesus replies, "Get thee behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Isn't that what we, the church, do? We set our minds on human things and do not think of things like God thinks of them? Of course we do, we are human and not God. However, God calls us to think more like God. God calls us to be more like him.

Moses sees the bush that is on fire but it is not being burned up. He makes note of that. He hears God's voice speaking to him, but he has human answers – reasons he cannot do what God is asking him to do. But when God speaks to you from a bush that is on fire though not being burned up – there are no valid excuses – there are no reasons good enough to say "no". When God says, "Go save my people." You go.

God calls. God equips. God provides. God saves. God directs. God rewards. Moses, Mattress Matt, Jesus Christ, you and me, God calls us to save. It may seem impossible. Others may not understand. We may not see clearly. We may not fully grasp the gravity of our mission. BUT...God sees the big picture and we are called only to say yes, to trust, to go

forward with joy, giving hope and spreading the good news that God uses us in good and not so good times to show his love and grace to everyone we meet.

The bottom line for Gallery Furniture Stores this Labor Day may not show the greatest dollar amount in their history; however, this will be the most remembered Labor Day ever because more lives have been touched by the generosity of one man doing what he was being called to do.

How will you give hope and share the saving love and grace of God with others? Amen.