



# **The Burning Bush**

**Exodus 2:11-12, 3:1-17, 4:12**

**"Matey, Matey!" Ripply called as he stepped into the bright sunlight. He squinted hard as he scanned the deck for the faithful deckhand. "Ah, there ye be, Matey," Ripply shouted as he walked across the deck to the hold. "We've just received the great news that Sandy Shores has become Captain of her own ship. I want to take this letter of congratulations to Sandy Shores."**

**Matey grabbed a rubber ducky swim float and put it on. "Aye, aye, sir! Dear Lord, please let me have a safe journey! All right, I'm on my way!" He pulled himself up on the rail and prepared to jump into the sea.**

**"Wait, where are you going?" Ripply grabbed his arm.**

**"I'm going to swim to the sandiest shores I can find!" Matey answered.**

**"No, no, no! Sandy Shores is a person." Ripply corrected. "And she be onboard her new ship, the Ocala. All you have to do is walk down the gangplank, turn left and go down to the third dock. You can't miss it."**

**Matey pulled off the float and walked towards the gangplank. "Aye, aye, sir."**

**"Nigel! Where are you going?" Ripply called after him.**

**"To take a message to the Ocala!" he replied, very matter-of-factly.**

**"Aren't you forgetting something?"**

**Matey thought for a moment. "I've got my cap and my shoes and my lunch money!" He smiled, convinced he was ready to leave.**

**Ripply waved the parchment in the air. "What about the message?"**

**Matey stepped onto the gangplank. "I'm on my way to deliver it!" he announced proudly.**

**"Matey, I've got it." Ripply handed him the message. "Now I want you to take it to her! Here, guard this with your life."**

**"Aye, aye, sir! I'll keep it in a safe place where no one will touch it." He tucked the letter under a crate. "All right, sir, I'm on my way! Wish me luck!"**

**"Matey! I don't want it in a safe place. I want it to go with you to Sandy Shores!" Ripply demanded, trying to be patient with the silly deckhand. He retrieved the message from under the crate and held it up for Matey to see.**

**"Oh! I see! You want *me* to take the message to Captain Sandy Shores."**

**Ripply nodded and explained. "Yes, that is usually how a messenger works. I give you a message and you deliver it."**

**Matey rubbed his head and sighed. "Oh, this is so complicated! I don't think I'm cut out for this messenger business. I don't think God can use me at all!"**

**"Aw, nonsense." Ripply disagreed. "God can use anyone. He used Moses, didn't he?"**

**"Who's Moses?" Matey asked.**

**"He were one of God's messengers." Ripply answered. "I'll show you how God used him!" He reached into the Treasure Chest and removed Captain Billy's black leather Bible. "Now, Moses started out as a little, bitty baby."**

**Matey grinned. "What a coincidence! I started out as a little baby, too!"**

**"Well, see, you got that in common." Ripply pointed out. "But, Moses were an Israelite baby and Pharaoh had made a law to have all of the Israelite first born boys killed!"**

**"Why, that's a terrible law! Why would he make a law like that?!" Matey asked, shocked.**

**"Well, this Pharaoh was hardhearted for sure. But Moses' Mama put him in a basket and set it in the reeds on the shore of the Nile River. A little while later, the Pharaoh's daughter found him. So, you see, Moses ended up growing up in the Pharaoh's palace. Ole Moses grew up and ran away into the desert where he became a shepherd. Then one day when Moses was tending his sheep, he saw a burning bush."**

**"Did he call the fire department?" Matey asked.**

**Ripply laughed. "No. This bush was on fire but it wouldn't burn up, so he went for a closer look. Just then the Lord called to Moses from within the bush and said, 'Moses, take off your sandals, you're standing on holy ground.'**

**Matey was amazed. "The burning bush was talking to him," exclaimed Matey.**

**"It were the Lord talking to him," Ripply corrected. "He said He was sending Moses to lead His people out of Egypt."**

**"Moses!? Why would God's people follow him?" Matey asked.**

**"Do you know Moses asked that very same question? But God had chosen Moses to be the one, and God promised He would be with him." Ripply added, "God said to Moses, 'I AM who I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites, 'I AM' has sent me to you!'"**

**"The Great I AM!" Matey smiled broadly. "That's one of the names of God! I'll bet meeting the Great I AM changed Moses life forever!"**

**"That it did," Ripply agreed. "Moses didn't feel worthy to be His messenger, but the Lord said, 'Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.'"**

**Matey hung his head. "Wow, I wish I could carry God's message."**

**"You can!" Ripply sat down and put his arm on Matey's shoulder. "And God will help you know what to say, too. God used Moses to carry His message and God uses us, all of us! Every time we tell someone about the Lord, God uses us to speak His message!"**

**Matey stood up and saluted. "I am ready to carry God's message, Sir!"**

**Ripply smiled. "You can start by carrying that message to Sandy Shores!"**

**Matey stepped onto the gangplank. "Never fear, sir! Matey, God's messenger, is on the way!"**

**"Matey!!" Ripply laughed. "Aren't you forgettin' sometin?" He held out the letter to Matey.**

**"Oh, yes, sir." Matey answered sheepishly as he reached for the letter. He tucked it into his shirt pocket and walked down the gangplank. He would do his best to be a good messenger for God.**