

## Jochebed's Faith

Exodus 2:1-10

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Pastor Francis Bezzam

*Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. <sup>3</sup> When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. <sup>4</sup> And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. <sup>5</sup> Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. <sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." <sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" <sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. <sup>10</sup> When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."." Exodus 2:1-10*

Mothers have a level of influence few others have. Throughout history, you read about men who have credited their success to their mothers. Augustine, Spurgeon, John Wesley and many others have their mothers to thank.

What a privilege mothers have!

Here in our passage, we see a quite a fascinating narrative about a mother's journey. It's very likely you have heard about Moses. But his mother? Very unlikely.

Even though the name of Moses' mother (Exodus 6, Numbers 26 tells her name is Jochebed) is not mentioned in this passage, what is significant is how much is described about this mother. Just in verse two, you see this mother *conceived*. The mother *gave* birth. The mother *saw* the child as beautiful. The mother *took* the child. The mother *hid* the child. And in verse nine, the mother *nursed* the child. The mother *brought* the son to the adopted mother. All these significant actions of the mother of Moses. But what appears to be even more significant are this mother's motivations behind her actions. This mother was a mother of *faith*. We'll try and unpack that as we look in our passage. I have titled this message, "Jochebed's faith".

A little bit of a context and history before we look at this passage.

Moses was born in the shadow of death. Moses was born during a time when the king of Egypt, the Pharaoh had issued a proclamation and an edict. His edict was that every male child should be put to death. Pharaoh saw that the growing population of the Hebrews was a threat to his own nation. He was worried the Hebrews would outnumber the Egyptians. Therefore, he orders that all male children be cast into the river Nile (Exodus 1).

And it is in this very hostile environment, we see God's providence at work through this mother's faith. I have a five observations or propositions as we walk through this passage.

*Observation#1: Christian motherhood honors God in marriage.*

Jochebed's faith journey begins with her marriage. Verse one and two.

*Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months.*

Jochebed was married before she conceived and gave birth. Amram is the husband's name (Exodus 6). So Amram took Jochebed to be his wife they became one flesh. This is God's ideal for a family. Marriage first. Children second.

In verse two we see that this woman conceived.

*Have you wondered how amazing conception is?*

Two cells, one from the mother and one from the father, *unite* to form one single cell.

And these two genetic halves fuse together to form a full set of DNA.

About *four* weeks after conception, the brain and spinal cord are developing. And soon a heart is formed and blood starts circulating.

About *six* weeks after conception, brain waves can be detected.

In the next few weeks, taste buds are formed and the unborn child can taste what the mother has been eating.

I wonder how many children are conceived and are born without any regard for marriage. God has instituted marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman. The author of Hebrews tells us that marriage is to be *held in honor* among all (Hebrews 13:4).

Sadly, we see that marriage come under attack and has become very dishonorable today. And this culture of living together and having children together has even infiltrated the church.

Now, Jesus can redeem your past when you repent and go to the cross and confess and forsake your sin. But if someone who calls himself or herself a believer or a follower of

Jesus Christ and is living together or co-habiting, you are living the devil's agenda not God's. You need to break it off. Honor God and God will bless you.

So Jochebed was married, conceived, and she gave birth.

*Observation#2: Christian motherhood beholds beauty.*

Notice, at the end of verse two, after the mother gave birth, she *saw* the child.

What did this mother *see* in her child? A fine child.

She sees her child as a beautiful child. Every child is precious and beautiful.

Today we have in our nation, many teens, adolescents and women who, I believe, have lost the capacity to behold beauty and splendor.

They have become pharaohs in their own eyes. They do not need an edict or a command from a king or a ruler or the government. They have become rulers of their own bodies and even before a child is born they see the child as an inconvenience.

No, children are not an inconvenience. Children are gifts from God. Children are a blessing. (Psalm 127).

The last thing you notice in verse two is that this mother *hid* the child.

*Proposition#1: Fear God to steward the gift of God.*

Why? What was this mother's motivation to hide the child?

Answer: this woman *feared* God.

There is back story to this narrative. In the previous chapter, we see that the king of Egypt ordered all the Hebrew midwives to kill the male children as soon as they were born. But we're told that these midwives did not do what the king told them to do.

Why? Because they *feared* God (Exodus 1:17,21). To fear God is to honor God and his commandments.

Jochebed could have easily caved into fear. She could have reasoned her way into thinking that she was only a slave in Egypt, a second class citizen. She could've said to herself, "it's far better than the child should die now at my hands, than be killed by the king of Egypt".

Moses' mother feared God and that kept her from losing her child. She understood the stewardship given to her.

The Bible tells us that "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*" (Psalm 11:10, Proverbs 9:10). This mother became a wise mother because she feared God. This is the kind of woman who needs to be praised.

*"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be*

*praised*". Proverbs 31:30.

You see the fear of God keeps you from losing your balance. When things outside of your control seem to intimidate you, threaten you, it is the fear of God that keeps you in the favor of God (Psalm 34:9).

The church is in desperate need of men and women who fear God. It is the lack of fear of God that causes so many problems. To fear God is more than being afraid of God (Isaiah 8:13, Matthew 10:28). Fearing God is to honor and esteem God.

*Proposition#2: Act with faith in the providence and the sovereignty of God.*

Verses three through six.

*<sup>3</sup> When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. <sup>4</sup> And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. <sup>5</sup> Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. <sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."*

This must have been a very challenging time for Moses' mother. Here is a baby hidden with the mom while others are perhaps throwing their babies into the river out of fear. This mom could no longer hide Moses. The baby cries. People around know this is risky. Word gets around. Jochebed faces his fears with faith in God!

The author of Hebrews tells us that Jochebed and her husband acted in faith.

*"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict."*

Hebrews 11:23

*"At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house"* Acts 7:20

This mother is very smart and wise. She put Moses in a basket made of papyrus, makes it waterproof, and lets the child go with faith in God. In a way she casts Moses into the river which is what Pharaoh wanted. But her faith is in the providence and the sovereignty of God. She had also prepared Miriam the sister of Moses to keep watch from a distance. So much can be said about this mother. She had disciplined the daughter for a day like this.

Verses 5 and 6 are significant, because, you notice how the daughter of Pharaoh saw and reacted. This is the moment when the mom's faith turns into flourishing.

The daughter of Pharaoh *saw* the basket. And the daughter of Pharaoh *saw* the child. The ESV could be more precise. The verse actually says she saw the male child or a baby boy, crying. And she had compassion on him. Another translation says that the daughter of Pharaoh spared the child. Because she knew this was a Hebrew child. Here you see the providence of God.

*Observation#3: Christian motherhood implies discipleship.*

Verses seven through ten.

*"<sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" <sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. <sup>10</sup> When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."*

Miriam must have been so frantic with joy. She went and called her mom.

And there you see the strange and yet providential turn of events.

The daughter of Pharaoh entrusts Moses to her mom. So the mom *takes* the boy, *nursed* him, *nurtured* him and *raises* him. No doubt the mother raised Moes in the knowledge and fear of God. And after Moses grew up, she brought him back to the daughter of Pharaoh and he was formally adopted.

And Pharaoh's daughter named him "Moses". The Hebrews word is Moshe. The word Moshe is derived from three Hebrew words "Drew from water" all begin with the sound "M".

To summarize: Moses was destined to die by the hand of Pharaoh. But by the courageous *faith* of a God-fearing mother, Moses ends up becoming a prince of Egypt in the house of Pharaoh. What a blessing!

Historians say Moses could have ascended to Pharaoh's throne. But his purpose and calling were not for worldly acclaim or pleasure.

*"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible."* Hebrews 11:24-27

Moses was born to be a redeemer for the people of Israel. However, Moses was a deliverer only for short while.

Jochebed and her son Moses are a type and shadow of another mother and son. Mary, the mother of Jesus was conceived not of man but of God. After Mary gave birth, they had to flee to Egypt to escape the death threats of Herod.

Mary raised Jesus and treasured Jesus' obedience.

*"And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart". Luke 2:51*

And yet Mary could not save her son Jesus from death when he was betrayed and rejected by sinful men. Why?

Because, Jesus did not come to be saved. Jesus came to save those who die because of their sin. Unlike Moses, Jesus was not a man who died and was buried.

Jesus died for sinners. Jesus rose on the third day triumphant over sin and death.

Jesus came to save his mother and anyone those who will repent of their sin and trust in his death and resurrection.

The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Jochebed's Faith. Exodus 2:1-10

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What do you observe about Moses' mother and her faith journey? Hebrews 11:23

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. Do you believe the fear of God is instrumental in experiencing the blessing of God? What do we learn from Moses' mother nurturing him and his eventual rejection of his princely status in Egypt? Hebrews 11:24-28, Psalm 34:9

3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: What will you change to make disciples of Christ in your home?