

The Mother Of Moses

Exodus 2:1-10

Pastor John Miller

I'll be reading Exodus 2:1-10.

"And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.' Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?' And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Go.' So the maiden went and called the child's mother. Then 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. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, 'Because I drew him out of the water.'"

Most everyone knows the story of the man Moses. Even Hollywood. If you haven't read the Bible, you probably have seen the frequently shown movie, The Ten Commandments and The Prince of Egypt. When children go to Sunday school, they hear the story, at an early age, of the little baby in the basket, of the princess finding him and that Moses' mother got to nurse him. Then Moses went back to the palace to live and became the great deliverer of God's people.

Without doubt, Moses is one of the greatest men who ever lived. We know that the Ten Commandments were given to Moses. We know that the first five books of the Bible were written by Moses. And Moses was specially called to deliver God's people, to bring them out of bondage and lead them to the Promised Land.

When God wants to use a man for His purposes, where does He start? He starts with a mother. Isn't it interesting that God starts with a woman to prepare the man. God had a purpose, a plan, a design for this little baby, but He started to mold him and shape him and prepare him through his mother.

Mothers are the makers of men. In this case, her name was not given in verses 1-10, but we find it in Exodus 6:20. Her name was Jochebed. Her husband's name was Amram.

Now notice in Exodus 2:1 that marriage is the foundation of our society. The call of this great man, Moses, first starts with the story of a great father and a great mother. Verse 1 says, "And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi." So Moses had a godly

father and a godly mother from the godly tribe of Levi.

We need to remember that the foundation of our culture, the foundation of society, the very first human institution that God had ordained, was marriage. Way back in the book of Genesis, it was said—and Jesus quoted it in Matthew—that “For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” So marriage is the foundation of everything.

It’s a sad day in America when we redefine marriage. Marriage is a divine institution, given by God. As goes marriage, so goes the home. And as goes the home, so goes our culture and our nation. Marriage is the foundation for everything in our world today. Then from marriage come children, verse 2. “So the woman conceived and bore a son.” So it starts with marriage. One man and one woman is God’s design for marriage. Being joined together for life. And out of that wedlock comes children, and they are a gift from God.

Psalms 127:3 says, “Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.” They’re not a bummer or a curse; they’re a reward. Sometimes children are viewed or looked at as a hindrance or weight, or they cost too much money. But the Bible says they are a gift and a reward from God.

So the Lord rewarded this God-fearing couple with three children. The first was Aaron, then Miriam and the third was Moses. In our text, Miriam is mentioned in verse 4. She is the one who watched the baby in the basket and went to the princess, although her name is not mentioned. Then, verse 2, Moses is born into a godly home. And it says, “When she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months.”

Every parent believes their child is beautiful. It’s funny that, as a pastor, everyone wants me to see their babies. All babies are beautiful and are gifts from God. But Moses was especially beautiful.

Now even though the text doesn’t clearly state this, I believe that there was some kind of witness, word or direction from God that this baby was special. God had a purpose and a plan. Some Bible scholars believe that perhaps God spoke directly to Jochebed and her husband, and they believed this baby was chosen by God to be the deliverer.

Now why did she hide him, verse 2, for three months? Moses was born into a loving and godly home, but he was also born into a dark, difficult and dangerous time. The context of this story is that the children of Israel had gone into Egypt to get grain, and they had grown and multiplied there. Joseph had gone before them, but the Pharaoh who knew Joseph was now dead. The current Pharaoh and some of the Egyptians were worried that the Israelites had grown to such a large number that they might overtake the Egyptians, so the Pharaoh had given a command to the Hebrew midwives that whenever a Hebrew male was born, they were to kill that baby.

But because these Hebrew midwives feared God and wanted to do the right thing, they didn’t kill the Hebrew baby boys. When Pharaoh found out about this, he then told all the Egyptians

that whenever a Hebrew woman gave birth to a male child, they were to throw the baby into the river, perhaps the Nile River. It's interesting that it's the same river that Moses was rescued from. Isn't God amazing that this baby would be spared?!

A lot of people think that when the times are difficult, it's not a good time to have children. We feel that because of the problems in the world, the darkness of our culture, that we shouldn't bring children into the world. But I believe that God wants us to raise children to be an influence on our world, to be a blessing to our world and to be contributors to our world.

So the stage is now set; Moses is placed in the basket out on the Nile, and Jochebed sent Moses' big sister, Miriam, to watch where the basket went and to make sure he would be okay. The princess was down by the river bathing, she spotted the basket and she sent one of her maids to retrieve it. When the basket was opened, Moses started to cry. There is an old, Jewish fable that at that very moment, an angel pinched the baby and made him cry. I think God has His hand on this whole situation.

The princess' heart was touched, so she took the baby as her own. Miriam approached the princess and asked her, "Would you like me to get a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby?" Again, God touched the princess' heart, so she said, "Yes." So Miriam ran to get her mother. Can you imagine how excited she was when she told her mother, "Mother, mother! Baby Moses is safe! He has been found, and the princess wants you to come to be his nurse!"

So Jochebed came quickly to receive the baby. Notice verse 9, the word the princess said to the mother of Moses: "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." The word "wages" could be translated "rewards."

This is the verse I want to key in on, because I believe this is the verse that God gives to every mother. God give you a child and says to you, "Take this child and nurse it for Me..."—not for you, but "for Me"—...and then I will reward you and bless you."

It's interesting that God used such a twist of irony that Pharaoh wanted to kill all the Hebrew male babies in the Nile River, but it was from the Nile River that Moses was spared and saved and would eventually become a prince in the very palace of Pharaoh and would become a deliverer of the people of Israel.

If you would have talked to Jochebed, after she was hired by the princess, and asked her whose baby she was nursing, what do you think she would have said? I think she would have said, "This baby belongs not to the princess, belongs not to Pharaoh, but this baby belongs to God. He's not my baby; he's God's baby."

Something very important for you mothers, fathers and grandparents to remember is that your children and grandchildren are God's children and grandchildren. They belong to God. You as a parent—and this is a Biblical principle—have only been given those children as a stewardship; God has entrusted them to you, but they belong to God, and you will be giving an account to God for your service in raising those children. I believe that what the princess said

to Jochebed—"Take this child and nurse it for Me, and I will give you your reward"—God says to every mother.

When God chose Jochebed to be the mother of Moses, He made a wise choice. When God chose your mother, when God chose your children for you, God made a wise choice. Sometimes you may look at your children and ask, "God, why did you give me these children?!" Or you may look at your mother and ask, "God, why did you give me this mother?!" But I believe that God is all-wise, all-loving and God has a purpose and a plan. And God purposely and providentially put Moses in this home to prepare him for the ministry that God was calling him to.

Let me give you some reasons why God made the right choice in choosing Jochebed to be the mother of Moses. Number one, she was a godly woman married to a godly man. When God wants to form and shape a man to use for his glory, he starts with the mother and the father. Notice it in verse 1: the man was of the house of Levi, and took as his wife of the daughters of Levi.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14, it says, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" It's so important that if you are a believer, if you're a follower of Christ, if you're a child of God and not married, if you are considering a spouse, consider someone who loves the Lord, who knows the Lord and who fears the Lord with "all their heart, soul, strength and mind." Not only should you look for a believer, but you should look for a devoted believer, a strong believer. And you must be that kind of person, as well. If you want to build a godly family that will impact the world around you, then you start with a godly home.

That's what God did. God didn't put Moses in a heathen home; God put Moses in a home with godly parents.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "No man is poor who has a godly mother." I like that. I thank God for the godly mother I had, for the godly grandmother I had and for the godly wife I have and for the godly influence they have on our family and upon my children. So parents build a godly marriage and build a godly home.

Secondly, God made a wise choice in Jochebed, because, no doubt, she was a willing mother. She was willing to be a mother and was devoted to motherhood. Verse 2 says, "So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months." So she was engaged. She was devoted. She was willing to be a mother. She was a mother who was devoted to her children.

It's sad that some wives don't want children. They see them as burdens rather than blessings. They want to follow a career path and do what they want to do. I understand that today, but motherhood is a high, holy calling. The Bible says that "She will be saved in childbearing," that God will give her that gift. So it's sad when some wives don't want children, when they see

them as burdens rather than blessings.

Psalms 127:3 says, "The fruit of the womb is a reward." So don't let selfishness keep you from God's reward. Don't let selfish pursuits keep you from motherhood and raising children. Jochebed was a willing mother.

Thirdly, God chose Jochebed, because she was a woman of faith. In Hebrews 11:23, we get a commentary on the parents of Moses. The writer says, "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command." Hebrews 11 is called "the hall of faith." Though the parents are not mentioned by name, we know it refers to Amram and Jochebed as being great people of faith.

When Moses was born, they saw that God had a purpose and a plan, so they stepped out by faith and hid their baby for three months and didn't fear the king's commands. Someone said, "His mother and father feared the God of heaven more than they feared the king on the earth." I like that. We need God-fearing, God-honoring mothers and fathers. If we're going to turn a nation back to God, it's going to start with our mothers and fathers. So their fear of God led them to act in faith.

Think of the faith that it took to put your baby in a little basket that you line with tar and pitch, release that little child out onto the Nile River and to take your hands off and say, "God, this child is in Your hands. We commit it to You." It's kind of like watching your kids go off to college, and you cry all the way home after dropping them off. You're releasing them. Or it's like when you take them to kindergarten for the first time, and you take 10,000 pictures of them with their lunch box on the front porch. When you send them off for the first time, you say, "God, I'm releasing them to You."

Or it's like when you walk your daughter down the aisle. I've had three daughters get married, and it's one of the hardest things I've ever done: to walk my daughters down the aisle and give them away. What a frightening thing that is! It's a blessing, but it's a frightening thing for a parent. So can you imagine what Jochebed went through?

And she only had Moses for a short time. We don't know how long she nursed him. Some say three years. Some say up to five years. The Hebrew women would nurse their babies for three or even up to five years.

Then can you imagine her bringing her three-to-five-year-old baby back to the princess? But Jochebed knew in her heart that her child belonged to God; that God had a purpose and a plan for her child. The purpose for the parent is to "train up a child in the way he should go," and then to send them out to fulfill God's calling and mission for their lives. Faith and common sense was used by Jochebed when she launched Moses out onto the Nile River.

In spite of the fact that they were poor slaves and living in a pagan place during dark times, the parents of Moses lived by faith. The point I want to make is that as Christian parents, moms

and dads, we must model, for our children, faith in God. It doesn't do any good to say, "We're trusting God," and then they see you freaking out. It doesn't do any good to say, "We believe in God," and then they see you scheming and conniving and not trusting God in a time of difficulty. So your children are not only listening to you, but they are watching you. It's so important that you live a life of faith. The impact of a godly mother and a godly father on the child, when they "walk by faith and not by sight," is profound.

The fourth, and last, reason that God chose Jochebed to be the mother of Moses was that she was a mother devoted to her task. She was a woman who was not only willing, godly and walking in faith, but she devoted herself to the task of raising her children. I like, in verse 9, when the princess said to Jochebed, "Take this child away and nurse him for me." Those words embody God's will for every mother and father.

What she was not to do was to turn the job over to someone else. She was not to give it to another person. She knew she only had a short time with him. Your children belong to God, and they are only loaned to you for a very short period of time. It goes so quickly. Whenever I see pictures of my kids when they were little, it's hard not to cry; you want them to come back and be little again. You want to be able to tuck them into bed again. But now they are tucking their children into bed, and you're a grandparent. So the task and calling is to live by faith and to send your kids out, but to be devoted to them while you have them.

Ephesians 6:4 says, "Bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." That's kind of an overarching requirement for all parents regarding their children: bring them up, nurture them and admonish them. I believe that Jochebed did just that: she was devoted to her children.

What does it mean to "bring them up"? It means "to love them." God gives you the children on loan, and you are to love them or be devoted to them.

What does it mean to "nurture," them, as the KJV says? It literally means "to discipline them." Something that is almost gone in our culture today is the idea of discipline, especially spanking. The Bible says that we should not spare the rod. It says that we can control our children with discipline. We need to do it properly and lovingly and we need to do it the way God has designed. We need to bring discipline into the home.

And then there needs to be admonition in the home. I'm sure Jochebed did this with Moses these first few years. The idea is to teach them.

So to "bring them up" means to love them. You show them emotionally by hugging and kissing them, by loving them and telling them that you love them. And you discipline them. There is the balance of love and discipline. And then you admonish them, which means you teach them or instruct them. Charles Spurgeon said, "Before a child reaches seven, teach them all the way to heaven. Better yet, the work will thrive, if they learn before they're five."

Can you imagine the times and hours that Jochebed spent nursing Moses, and she was singing over him, praying over him, sharing the Word of God with him? She was whispering in his ear,

“Jehovah is God.” She was telling him about the God of heaven. What a blessing that mother was in the life of that young child.

Jochebed had only a few, short years with Moses. But in those few, short years, she was going to send him off to live in Pharaoh’s palace. You talk about sending your children off to a pagan university! She was sending her son off, but she was able to put a foundation in his heart that lasted him through his whole life.

Then she let him go, verse 10. It says, “And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter—how challenging that would have been—and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, “Because I drew him out of the water.” In Hebrew, the name Moses means “drawn out”; in Egyptian, it means “the child.”

Think of Moses now going to a pagan palace and raised in all the schools of Egypt, which was the finest education he could have had. God was preparing him and equipping him to write the first five books of the Bible. God was preparing him for what His purpose and plan was in his life.

And God rewarded this godly woman, this willing mother, this woman of faith, who was devoted to her task. Her three children, that we know about in Scripture, were used by God. Aaron, was the first Levitical priest. He was the father and the foundation of the Levitical priesthood. Miriam, the sister of Moses, became a song writer and a worship leader. Then there was Moses.

Can you imagine having that bumper sticker on your chariot? “My son is the deliverer of God’s people.” What a blessing that is!

In a way, Moses became a picture of Jesus. And Moses actually said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me...Him you shall hear.” So Moses was a prefigure or picture of Jesus, who would come and be the deliverer of us from our bondage.

Hebrews 11:24-25 gives us some insight: “By faith Moses...”—this is not “by faith his parents”; it is now “by faith Moses”—“...when he became of age...”—40 years old—“...refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”

Isn’t that what we want for our children? Don’t we want our children to grow up and make a choice, a decision, choosing to be identified with God and God’s people rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season?

I can’t tell you that I want anything more for my kids and my grandchildren—and as a mother, you want the same—than for them to make a choice to choose God, for them to make a choice to follow God, for them to make a choice to be identified with God and with His people.

How did Moses get that faith? He got it from his mother. Where did Moses learn that faith? He learned it from his mother, because mothers are the makers of men.

In 2 Timothy 1:5, Paul writing to his protégé, Timothy, said, "I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also." Timothy's faith came from his grandmother. Thank God for grandmothers! I believe many times children come to know the Lord because of the influence and prayers of godly grandmothers. Then Timothy also had a godly mother. And it was in Timothy also. What a blessing that is!

How God blessed and rewarded Jochebed! And how God wants to bless and reward you as a mother today. If you, too, will build a godly marriage, build a godly home, if you will live by faith, if you are willingly devoted to your children and if you walk by faith and obedience to God, He will reward you. God will, and is, saying to you, "Take this child and love it for Me. Take this child and train it for Me. Take this child and discipline it for Me. And I will reward you."

Proverbs 31:28 says about this mother: "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her."

Let's pray.