

A Faith That Works #3

Exodus

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Bible Text: Exodus 1:22—2:10
Preached on: Sunday, March 15, 2009

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If you have your Bibles with you tonight, I would like you to turn with me, if you would, to the book of Exodus. We are starting in chapter one, the last verses, verse 22 and we will be going through chapter two and verse 10.

Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.”

Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. 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. And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him.

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. 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.”

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?”

And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. 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.

When the child grew up, 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."¹

Would you bow with me as we go to the Lord in prayer?

Heavenly Father, how we praise you and thank you for the precious Scripture that you have given us to deal with this evening. And we pray, heavenly Father, that you would take it and use it to strengthen us in our faith, to help us, Lord, that we might have a faith that would be more like Amram and Jochabed, that, Lord, we would trust in you and trust in you completely and, Father, that our trust would not be passive, but would be an active faith, a faith that works.

Heavenly Father, just guide and direct us through this passage tonight. Open our eyes that we might behold wonderful things here in your Word that would change us and make us more like Jesus. We just love you and just pray that you will help me as I share truths tonight that they would bless the hearts of your people, heavenly Father, that Christ would be exalted truly. It is in Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.

You may be seated.

On the 18th of April 1945, five days after Franklin Delano Roosevelt had died, Sir Winston Churchill stood before the parliament in England, London and he said the followings statement.

"In Franklin Roosevelt there died the greatest American friend the British Isles have ever known. He died in the harness and we might well say, in battle harness. What an enviable death was his."

In Churchill's mind that famous president died an enviable death. Now what did he mean by that? I think it had to do with timing. Hitler had died. The evil empire was in smoking ruins. The war in the Pacific was rolling to a very quick victory and the forces of tyranny were not going to swallow up the free world.

So as Franklin Delano Roosevelt was entering into eternity, he had accomplished his goals. And Sir Winston Churchill said about that that that was an enviable death.

Now I am looking tonight at the birth of Moses. And I would have to say that the birth of Moses was the exact opposite of the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that his birth was not an enviable birth. It was an unenviable birth.

Why would I say such a thing? I would say that because this was a very dark and black time in the history of the Hebrew people. It was a time when the paranoid Pharaoh had made a decree that all the baby boys, the Hebrew baby boys would be killed as they would be drowned and fed to the crocodiles in the Nile River.

¹ Exodus 1:22—2:10.

I don't know about you, but that sounds pretty brutal, pretty demonic and a pretty horrible thing to take place.

Did you realize that the Chinese Communist government has been doing essentially the same thing for the last sever decades? If a child is born that has a birth defect or if a child is born just female, often times they will take that baby away from the mother and place that baby in a room where the mother cannot hear the child. They will allow that child to starve to death and die.

If a woman in China has had over two children, then any other children that she might have or any time she is expecting a baby they just abort the baby and then they sterilize the mother to be sure that she has no more children to try to keep the population in check.

Wickedness, folks, has not changed through the ages. I believe that the Chinese government, what they are doing is just as vile and just as filled with satanic horror as what was going on in Egypt back during this time 3400 years ago.

I never thought that I would have to say this, but we are now right now under a government that would have very little problem with doing exactly what the Chinese have been doing for several decades and that is the doing away with children that maybe thought to be unwanted. Our president promotes infanticide. That is taking a healthy new born baby that has lived through a botched abortion, taking him and putting him in a separate room, letting him starve to death. That is infanticide.

Alan Keyes is a man I respect very much has recently said, "A man that would do that and get himself involved in that kind of brutality has absolutely no conscience."

Philip Ryken said the following. He said, "Pharaoh's attempt to annihilate the Israelites gives us insight into the power of evil which is never satisfied, but always lusts for more. Each time Pharaoh's plans were foiled he devised a scheme that was even wider in its scope and more deadly in its execution. Plan A was to beat the Israelites into submission with the rod and slavery. Plan B was to have their male offspring killed in secret. Possibly Pharaoh thought that Hebrew girls would be assimilated by intermarrying with the Egyptians. Once both of this first two plans failed, plan C was death by drowning in the Nile. With this final genocidal solution Pharaoh's murderous depravity was out in the open. He would not stop until all of Egypt was implicated in his crimes against humanity. This is the way evil spreads unless it is stopped. What a man at first only dares to do in private, he gradually becomes unashamed to do even in public with the result that many other people get pulled into the abyss of evil."

Folks, this was a terrible, horrible black day in Hebrew history. The Hebrew slaves were no match for the mighty Egyptian warriors. And they had no power over the decree that the Pharaoh had made that their boy babies must die.

But as we look at chapter two of Exodus tonight, I want us to look not so much at Moses

faith. I want to look at his parents' faith, Amram and Jochabed. If you read that in the Scripture it looks like Jochabed, but the J is pronounced like a Y. And over in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 23 we have a commentary on Moses' birth. Let me read that to you.

“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.”²

So this evening I want us to dig in to the parents' faith. I want us to take a look at what the Scripture has to say about how they developed a faith that works, a faith that was real.

Hebrews chapter 11 is the greatest chapter in the Bible on the subject of faith. And in Hebrews 11 what we have is a list of men and women of God down through history who loved God and who served God and who desired to bring glory to God. And we see that these people who had a very living and very vibrant faith.

Now why did the writer of Hebrews write the 11th chapter? Why did he spend all this time on faith? Because at that time there were some people, as there are today, who would say, “We are Christians because we have an intellectual understanding of the gospel facts. We are Christians because we believe that Jesus died and that he rose again. That makes us believers.”

And so the writer of Hebrews said, “No, wait just a minute.” He said, “If you want to see what real faith is,” he said, “look at these guys here. Look at this list of men who loved God, glorified God and served God. Look at their faith to living and very vibrant faith.”

Now I want to share with you four points tonight concerning Amram and Jochabed's faith, particularly the lady Jochabed.

The first thing I want us to see is faith's perception. Look with me at verse two.

“So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months.”³

Jochabed already had two children. The oldest was Miriam. Miriam was probably 12 or 13 years old at the time. And then there was Aaron. He came along later. He was probably about three. So she already knew the joy of having children. But now she has another baby in the womb and she is very, very concerned that this baby may have the death sentence on his life. She is very concerned about this baby because she knows the decree that Pharaoh has given that all the baby boys, Hebrew baby boys are to be thrown into the Nile River and drowned to death. So surely she is probably hoping for a girl. For the girls did not have that edict placed upon them. And surely she is just hoping and praying that this baby will not be a boy, that it will certainly be a girl.

² Hebrews 11:23.

³ Exodus 2:2.

I am sure that she had also probably been a great comfort to many of the other Hebrew women who had little babies that were born and they were little baby boys. Surely she was with them as the Egyptian soldiers would come and rip the baby boys out of their arms and take them down to the river and throw the babies in and drown them. Surely she would take those young mothers in her arms and hold them and comfort them as they just shook with sobs.

As she was holding them, I am sure she probably thought this could be me and this very well might be me. What happens if I have a baby boy? What happens if my little baby is slaughtered by the Egyptian soldiers? Well, then the baby was born and to her distress the baby was not a girl, but the baby was a boy. And I am sure she wondered to herself, “God, why did you do this? Why couldn’t this have been a girl? Is this some kind of cruel joke that you are playing on me to have a baby born that is a boy at this time with a death sentence on his life?”

That is what we would think, but oh, no. She looked at little Moses and the Scripture says that she saw that he was a beautiful child and she hid him for three months.

Now I know when babies are born I know how parents and grandparents are. And when a baby is born, always the parents and the grandparents are going to say, “I got the most beautiful baby in the world. Look at this baby. This baby is absolutely beautiful.”

I remember when my first grandchild was born. Jake and Julie had a little boy. His name was Liam. And we were there in the waiting room waiting for the baby to be born and all these others babies were born first and the parents and grandparents would come back after seeing the child and every single of them came back and you wouldn’t believe it.

“What a beautiful child. This child is absolutely beautiful.”

Not one of them came back and said, “Oh, my goodness. What an ugly kid.”

I mean, that never happens. Nobody came back and said, “Looks like the ugly stick hit that kid.”

I mean, that didn’t happen. Everybody thought their child was beautiful.

Well, the word for beautiful here that is used to describe Moses is not a word that just means physically attractive, but it means unique and special, unique and special. And I call this faith perception. What does that mean? It means that a true God given faith gives you the ability to perceive and to see things that the physical eyes cannot normally see. That is spiritual perception.

When we sing with a great hymn *Amazing Grace* one of the phrases in that song is, “Once I was blind, but now I see.” And one of the verses that Tim read tonight in our call

to worship, Psalm 119 verse 18 says, “[Lord] Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.”⁴

In John chapter three verse three Jesus said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”⁵

Often times when a person is converted, comes to Christ, how does he explain that conversion? I says, “I have seen the light.”

Well, we have got psalms and we have got Scripture and we have got experiences that talk about a seeing, but the seeing that they are talking about there is not physical seeing. It is spiritual perception. It is when God pulls back the veil, lets us get a little peek into the kingdom where God reveals his truth not just to your physical eyes, but to your heart.

Jochabed looked down in the face of this little Hebrew baby boy and faith welled up in her soul. She said to herself, “This baby was not born to die. There is something special about this child. There is something unique. He has got the calling of God on his life. This baby is going to grow up and God is going to use him in a very special way.”

And God was just putting this in her heart, sharing with her that this baby was going to be different.

Amram and Jochabed risked everything to save this baby’s life. They knew if they got caught hiding this baby that they could be killed themselves, but they tried to keep him quiet, did everything that they could to keep the baby quiet, keep him away from Hebrew informers, keep him away from the Egyptian soldiers that would come into the house to check things out so they would be sure that this little baby would live.

It was God who hid that little baby for those three months. They did what they needed to do. They did all that they could do, but God protected the baby by hiding that child.

I shared this with you before. Back in 1987 I went on a mission trip over to Romania when Romania was behind the Iron Curtain under Communism and the missionary that was taking us over there, Brian Bounds, told us before we went. He said, “Listen, when we cross over into Romania be sure that you don’t have anything that has to do with Christianity in your suitcase or on your person.” He said, “If you have got a Bible leave it back behind in Austria.” He said, “If you have got a New Testament, don’t bring it. Any literature, any gospel tract, don’t bring them across the border.” He said, “If you do and they catch you, then you are going to be detained and they may imprison you.” He said, “Whatever it is, you are not going to like it.”

And so I had a little New Testament and I gave it away to a young girl when we were in Czechoslovakia and besides that I didn’t have any other Christian paraphernalia or Christian literature with me. So I had packed my suitcase and I thought everything was

⁴ Psalm 119:18.

⁵ John 3:3.

fine. And so we get ready to cross over and go into Romania and we were there at the checkpoint and the guard opens my suitcase up and when he did I saw a piece of sheet of notebook paper and I knew I didn't put that sheet of notebook paper in there. I had no idea what it was, how it got in there. I was trying to look at and I could see there was some writing on it. I had no idea what it was.

And the guard looked through everything in my suitcase. He put his hand on that piece of paper, looked on everything on this side and then he flipped it over, put his other hand on that same piece of paper, looked at everything on the other side and went through it with a fine toothed comb, closed it back up and told us we could go.

Well, I was very, very curious to see what in the world that piece of paper was. And so finally we got a stopping place and I opened up my suitcase to check it out and it was a drawing that my daughter Beth that was seven years old at the time had made for me. And it was a picture of Jesus standing beside the empty tomb and it said, "Don't be afraid, daddy. Jesus is alive."

And I thought, how in the world did they not see this? There is no doubt in my mind that God closed the eyes of those guards so that they would not see that and we could just move right on.

I believe that Jochabed experienced faith's perception. God opened her eyes to the fact that that baby was unique and special and one day would be mightily used of God. At the same time he closed the eyes of the Egyptian soldiers so that they did not see the baby and the baby was hidden.

The second thing I want us to see is faith's plan. Look at verse three.

"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."⁶

With great care and tenderness Jochabed made a little basket out of the reeds or bulrushes and then she took pitch or bitumen and she covered over the inside and waterproofed it.

It is very interesting. The word for pitch here is the Hebrew word כפר (kaw-far'). And it is also translated as atonement. It means to cover. To me that is a very beautiful thing because what did the pitch do in that little basket? It protected, it kept the water out. It kept the danger out so the baby could live. And what does the atoning blood of Jesus Christ do for us? It covers over us. For what purpose? So that we will be protected against the wrath of God.

⁶ Exodus 2:3.

Well, then I imagine she put some soft straw in that little basket and then she probably put a little blanket in there and then she took it and put Moses in the little basket and she brought it over and she placed it in the reeds in a very special place.

Now, I don't know if any of you saw the little animated movie called *The Prince of Egypt* or not. It is a cute little movie. But when it got to this scene they took a little liberty with it and they have got Jochabed taking that little baby with Moses there and just throwing it out into the river, lands in the middle of the Nile River, hits a big current and goes... I mean he goes flying down that river. Looks like one of the Carrowinds rides. And there are alligators and they are snapping at him and trying to get him and he is about to fall out of the basket and I mean that thing is just flying down the river.

Well, be assured that is not the biblical account. The reeds that are here are flexible, but they are also very sturdy. And she very carefully places him not in the middle of the current where the basket can float down the river, but she places him inside the reeds so that it is kind of stuck there and she not only places it there, but she places it at the perfect place where she knows that the princess of Egypt is going to come and bathe, that the princess comes. And this is the place where she would see the little basket.

Once again, Philip Ryken said, "God was at work in the baby's basket. At one moment in history God's entire plan for triumphing over evil was riding down the Nile River in a little papyrus basket. While it was common for a baby to be put in such a cradle, it was unusual and not all together safe to turn the basket into a boat. His mother made it as safe as she could, of course, but ultimately it was God who protected the precious cargo of redemption. However frightening and experience it was Moses himself who was crying when they found him, he was never safer than he was in that basket. God was right there working out his salvation."

How important that is.

Here we see a woman who had great, great faith in God. But it was not a foolish faith. She took steps to devise the very best plan that she could. She did everything that she could and then trusted in the sovereign God to do the rest.

And I want to stop right here of a minute and just talk about the tension that some people try to place between careful planning and a heart filled faith. And a lot of people try to say that they just don't go together, that real faith is just letting go and letting God, that if you have real faith you just don't do anything, that real faith is totally passive where you just sit back and do nothing and just trust God for... to do whatever he needs to do? Is that what real faith is? Or is real faith trusting God and then doing all that you can do?

I know Doug Koonz is.... if you have ever been to his house in the summer time he always makes a beautiful garden. I love his cantaloupes and his watermelons. He has got a beautiful garden growing out there. But what if this year Doug says, "You know, I am just going to trust God for my garden. This is what I am going to do. I am not going to

plow up the land and I am not going to pull up the weeds and I am not going to plant any seed. I am just going to trust God to grow it up.”

Well, if Doug Koonz does that then I am not going to have any watermelons and cantaloupes from his house this year. That is just not going to happen because it is not going to grow.

God has given us laws to follow and one of the laws is the law of sowing and reaping.

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”⁷

If you don’t sow seed, you are not going to reap a crop.

The old motto of the soldiers in the Revolutionary War is probably very applicable here. Trust in God, but keep your powder dry.

To walk by faith does not mean you stop thinking. To trust God does not mean to be lazy and apathetic. What a distortion of biblical faith that is. Acting foolishly or thoughtlessly and then expecting God to bail you out and take care of your mess is not faith. It is just presumption.

Do all you can in obedience to God and then you trust God to do what you can’t do, to accomplish what you can’t accomplish. Faith and careful planning go hand in hand. They always have.

The third thing I want us to see is faith’s passion. Look at verse four through six.

And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him.

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. 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.”⁸

Folks, it is not enough just to plan, but it is taking that plan and passionately putting that plan into action. I have to believe that Jochabed rehearsed that plan with Miriam over and over and over again. And she said, “Now this is where you have got to stand. And when all this takes place, then this is how you have got to act. You have got to be spontaneous. You have got to act surprised when all this happens.”

Then it did happen. The Egyptian princess had gone down to take her bath and when she went down to take her bath she looks over. She sees the basket there and she inquires or

⁷ Galatians 6:7.

⁸ Exodus 2:4-6.

gives a command to one of her maids, “Go over there and get that basket and bring it back to me.”

Chuck Swindoll said, “No mother reading these words has any trouble imagining the feelings of Jochabed at that moment. Can’t you see her behind a tree or perhaps behind some reeds at a distance standing on tip toe clutching her hands together, holding her breath? Can’t you imagine her dry throat and her heart pounding? How could she know what the Egyptian woman would do? She might have her hunches, but how could she know? The princess might just as easily obey her father’s stern decree, plunge the baby into the water and drown him right here. There is no guarantee.

All Jochabed could do was trust God to give that Egyptian woman a mother’s heart.

Well, the maid brought the baby over to the princess. The princess has got the little basket there. She takes the blanket that she moves off the baby and she looks down and there is little Moses, big, beautiful little browned eyed Hebrew baby boy and she looks at him for just a minute and then all of the sudden he burst out in tears. And what happened there?

I think this is Holy Spirit timing. Maybe God sent a little angel to pinch him on the bottom. We don’t know. But whatever. He starts crying and as soon as he starts crying the princess’ heart just absolutely melts and she says to herself, “He needs me. He must be hungry.”

Well, that was the cue for Miriam. Miriam goes running over to her and says, “I am over here and just wondered if you might need a wet nurse, a Hebrew lady who is still producing milk. Would you like me to see if I can find one.”

And the princess says, “Hey, that will be great. You go and get one and I will pay her wages to do this.”

And so Miriam nonchalantly walks away and goes over and finds Jochabed that is probably behind a tree.

Can you imagine what is going on in Jochabed’s heart? I imagine she is wanting to jump up and give Miriam a high five. She is probably wanting to jump up and hug her neck and scream and yell and shout, but she can’t do that. She has to be very nonchalant. And so she walks over to the princess as a very obedient, but yet very disinterested slave woman. She had to remain cool. She couldn’t show any kind of emotion. She couldn’t look at the baby and have compassion and tenderness in her eyes because that might give her away. She had to do everything she could to protect her little boy.

Jochabed not only had a plan, but she carried that plan out with passion. And, folks, that is faith. Faith is not just wishful thinking. Faith is finding out what the will of God is and then giving in that will and being passionate about it.

The last thing I want to see is faith's prize, verse nine through 10.

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.

When the child grew up, 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."⁹

Does God not have a sense of humor? I mean, this is great. The king is afraid that all these Hebrew babies are going to grow into big strong men that they are going to rebel against him and that they are going to disrupt everything and ruin Egypt. And so what happens? He kills all the Hebrew baby boys except one of them lives.

And why does this one live? Well, this one lives because his own daughter pulls him out of the river, saves his life and then pays his mother to take care of him and to rear him and to train him through his preschool years.

Man, don't you know Satan hated that? Don't you know he hated that? The Pharaoh is using his own money to help a Hebrew woman raise her own child who is going to grow up and be used of God to make a mockery of Egypt and to make a mockery of Egypt's false gods.

That would be like Hitler's aunt adopting George Patton into her family and giving him a military education. I mean it is just crazy.

Well, let me tell you this. Jochabed put a lot more into Moses than just mother's milk in those years. She implanted in him principles of God's Word. She implanted seed, spiritual seeds that would take root in that little heart.

Don't think that that is not important when your children are little. Man, those things stick.

Now later on when Moses went on to be trained by the secular worldly Egyptian education there was something that he had deep in his heart that helped him to stand strong even in those difficult times.

We continue to see Jochabed's faith as the time goes by, because the baby grows up to be a little boy and the time came when it was time for him to go and become the son, the adopted son of the Pharaoh's daughter. I am sure that Jochabed's heart was absolutely broken as the Pharaoh's daughter calls for her son and says, "Now is the time I am taking him to be my adopted son."

⁹ Exodus 2:9-10.

And I can see her just kind of cleaning him up, slicking down his hair, putting on a new tunic. They walk out of the Hebrew slum together and they walk up toward the Pharaoh's palace with little Moses there at her hand.

Jochabed's heart is about to break with sorrow, but she knows that God is in all this. All the rest of the baby's boys that are Moses' age have died. But he is living for a reason. God spared his life. God has a plan for this little boy and she knows that.

So although her heart is broken, although this is extremely tough for her, she is trusting the Lord. And she goes and she hands the baby to the new adopted mother and she wonders, what does God have in store for my child?

You that are young parents, there is a strong, strong lesson for us here and that is when you have your children as small children, spend time with your kids. Spend time with them and plant in their hearts spiritual seed. Don't let somebody else do it, but you do it.

Who loves your kids more than you? Nobody loves your kids more than you except the Lord. Spend time with them.

Susannah Wesley had 12 kids and all 12 of her children, John Wesley and Charles Wesley being the most renowned, but all of her kids came to a saving knowledge of Christ. Somebody asked her one time, you know, "Well, what did you do?"

And she said, "One of the things that I learned was this, that I had to break my children's will by the time they were two years old. If I didn't do that," she said, "I knew I was going to be in trouble."

And that is important. And she didn't say crush the child's will, but just break the child's will so that child learns to be submissive to his God given authorities even before they are two years old. How important it is for us as parents and grandparents to be implanting spiritual seeds into the hearts of our kids. Amram and Jochabed had faith that worked. Their faith was not passive. It was a faith that was perceived and planned, that was passionate and that was prized. For God greatly rewarded their faith.

We, too, are living in a very dark spiritual time. And Satan is not dealing with us in such a way as he is drowning our kids in the Nile River, but he is certainly trying to drown them in a sea of garbage that the world has out there for them today.

What do we need to do? We need to love our kids. We need to spend time with our kids and we need to do all that we can to plant those spiritual seeds in their lives.

By the way, if your child is older and you see that your child is not yearning for the things of the Lord, don't give up, don't give up. Keep planting those seeds. Keep loving those kids and stand in faith for their faith.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Heavenly Father, how we just praise you tonight and thank you for your precious Word. We pray, Father, as we are getting ready now to enter into our time where we celebrate the Lord's Supper that you would manifest your presence to us in a very special way. And, Lord, may we celebrate it with great joy tonight as we remember back to what you have done for us on the cross and as we look forward to that time when we will see you face to face as you have promised that you are coming again. And in the Lord's Supper we are to enjoy that promise.

Guide and direct us, Lord, and help us that we might have a faith like Amram and Jochabed, a faith that works. We will give you praise for what you do for us. It is in Jesus' precious and holy name we pray. Amen.