

EVERY MOTHER'S BEAUTIFUL BABY

Exodus 1: 8-21, 2: 1-10, Numbers 26: 59, and Hebrews 11: 23-29

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Happy Mother's Day to every mother here, every expectant mother, every daughter hoping to marry and be a mother, every woman who has been a spiritual mother, a baby-sitter, a nanny, any woman who has been mothering in some way in your life, and every woman who has longed to be a mother. I have come to remind us all, that every mother's child is a beautiful baby and a gift from God. Living back in 1571 BC, in the days of Amram and Jocebed, 3,593 years ago, may seem unthinkable, but the times, like today, were times of extremely violent persecution and extremely courageous resistance. The setting for our text was when the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt, and there was a different king, a different Pharaoh. This Pharaoh commanded the two Hebrew midwives, "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." These amazingly courageous midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, feared God and disobeyed Pharaoh at the risk of their lives. Shiphrah's name means to glisten, to be beautiful, to be bright, and garnished or adorned with brightness. Puah's name means to glitter brilliantly. Talk about two women shining for the Lord, these two midwives shone with courage, facing death themselves by defying the Pharaoh's decree! Because they were pro-life before the word was ever known, God blessed these two women.

We read in Exodus 1: 21 an astounding response of God to these two midwives, Shiphrah and Puah. We read, "And because the midwives feared God, He gave them families. Pastor George Rawlinson wrote his famous commentary on Exodus in 1882. He was the pastor of Westminster Chapel and the Camden Professor of Ancient History at the University of Oxford. He wrote, "God blessed Shiphrah and Puah by giving them children of their own, who grew up, and gave them the comfort, support, and happiness which children were intended to give. There was a manifest fitness in God's rewarding those who refused to bring misery and desolation into families by granting them domestic happiness themselves." As I begin this message, let me testify to you all that God supports and applauds all of us who stand up for life, individually, and as churches. And I promise you, Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever—Hebrews 13: 8, and He will reward each one of us as He rewarded Shiphrah and Puah for standing for life. In my years as pastor here, I have been appalled and saddened to see the billboard out next to Chopsticks that is advertising help with access to abortion—here in Sweetwater County. Beloved, today, over 63,000,000 abortions have happened in America since January 22, 1973. On January 21, 2022, the gruesome count for our United States was 63, 459 781. God give us millions of Shiphrah's and Puah's to cry out to God and to our country and Supreme Court, "Let Their Hearts Beat!"

Along with Shiphrah and Puah, God sent another wife and mother to Israel during those dark and evil days in 1571. He gave Amram a shining wife, Jocebed, whose name means "Jehovah-gloried, Yahweh raised up, or she in whom God's glory shines." God is seeking for millions of Jocebed's today! On this Mother's Day

2022, the Lord is still calling out Jocebed's, mothers in Israel, to be mothers for Jesus, Christian mothers with the faith and courage of Moses' mother to stand against the wiles and schemes of the devil. In our text today in Exodus 2: 1-10, God has revealed to me four essentials for becoming a biblical Jocebed for Jesus. What will it take in your life, mothers to become a Jocebed for Jesus?

TRUE JOCEBEDS SEE EVERY BABY AS BEAUTIFUL, NEEDING NURTURE AND PROTECTION. (I.) Notice verse 2. “The woman, Jocebed,

conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months.” Hebrews 11: 23 adds, “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.” On this Mother's Day, let me tell you that every baby ever born is a Moses' kind of baby—every child is beautiful. James 1: 17 tells us, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” No variableness, no shadow of turning. Every child is God's beautiful gift from God, a child needing nurture, love, protection, and special attention. In a world where you grow up to be a slave beaten over and over in a day, wasn't early death a relief? Never! Never! Never! Historically, at the time, the Egyptians feared invasion from the Hittites of the north. If the Hebrews among them joined with the Hittites, it posed a significant threat to their security. The Jews numbered now into the millions. Exodus 1: 7 tells us, “But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.” For Pharaoh, it must have been a real question. To get to Pharaoh, the Hittites coming to invade him would have to pass through Goshen. Would the Hebrews join forces with the Hittites? Not if Pharaoh could help it! So, he took the millions of Hebrews from the tending of their flocks and pasturelands, from their quiet pastoral life, and he pressed them into slavery, into drudgery, building cities, storehouses, and what was needed was bricks.

Under Egyptian taskmasters, the men were brutally forced to dig out the stiff clay, and knead it with straw with their hands and feet, shape it into molds, and produce an ever-growing tally of bricks. Under scorching heat from the sun and under the constant threat and whip of the lash, the Egyptians beat the Hebrew men. We read in Exodus 1: 12, “But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad.” Pharaoh had a plan, but God had the final plan. God had promised Abraham that his seed would be as the stars of heaven and the sand on the seashore. Whether it is Pharaoh against Moses, or Herod against Jesus, the Messiah, the Lord's Christ, God still has His Amram's and Jocebed's. God still has His Mary and Josephs, and many more who will not capitulate to the enemy. They believe in God's beautiful gifts and giftings in every child. For them, and hopefully for all of us, there is no horizon so bleak that any of us can fail to see the face of God in the face of every little child made in His image. Jocebeds by faith see the image of God in every baby, in every child, and in every person, and although God's image is marred by sin, every baby is beautiful and in desperate need of nurture, love, and protection. Every child is a child to save before it is too late. Every child is to be held onto tightly, protected from abortion. Secondly,

TRUE JOCEBEDS PLACE THEIR CHILDREN IN THE BASKETBED OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND SET A WATCH FOR WHAT HE WILL DO.

(II.) Notice verses 3-4. "When she (Jocebed) 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 riverbank. And his sister (Miriam) stood at a distance to know what would be done to him." What a moment this had to be for Jocebed and Amram off working knowing what his wife was doing that day! We all know there are moments in history before the dawn of a new day, when in the lingering night as dawn and night struggle for mastery, God sovereignly stands over our sleepless beds and promises us His final victory. On this day when Moses was three months old, here stood Jocebed, with little Aaron beside her at her home, after she placed Moses in the bullrushes. Jocebed placed Miriam at a distance where she could watch the basket bed. Moses' countenance was too lovely to risk being discovered in her home, or his cries being heard. So Amram and Jocebed did something that forever places them in God's Hall of Faith—Hebrews 11: 23. The writer of Hebrews has it chiseled by divine immortal strokes in this sacred corridor of faith. We read, "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."

God is seeking for Christian homes with godly Dads and Moms who trust God and entrust their children into His sovereign hands, rather than live in fear of the enemy's plots. Beloved, if you know Jesus, God has His sovereign hand on each of our children. When our first baby was born soon 52 years ago, Jinny asked me, "What do you think of our baby daughter?" My only response was, "Jinny, she's beautiful." I have said that of all seven of our children. Just because our children grow up, get married, and have their own homes, we have to keep releasing them, and laying them down every morning into the basket bed of God's sovereignty. Whether they are walking for God, or walking away from God, whether they are on mission for God, or off mission for God, whether they are well and strong, or deathly sick, whether they are successfully employed, or hurt, in an accident and in danger of bleeding to death, and even when we have no idea if they are going to live or die, God is looking for Amrams and Jocebeds who will entrust our beautiful children into the sovereign hands of our all-loving, merciful Father. Thirdly,

TRUE JOCEBEDS FOLLOW GOD'S DIVINE PROMPTINGS AND IMPULSES DURING CRITICAL TIMES.

(III.) Look again at verse 3. Jocebed made a paper boat, a papyrus ark by weaving together rushes of papyrus. Then she made it strong and waterproof in its flimsy texture, by coating it with tar and vegetable pitch, then daubing it with faith and love, and doubtless with a long kiss. When Jocebed placed her beautiful baby boy in the reeds by the bank of the Nile River, she must have chosen a place where she felt the basket-bed would not readily float away into the path of an open-mouthed crocodile. Everything now was resting on Romans 8: 28 before that verse was ever given by God to the apostle Paul. Everything was riding on the God of Israel who showed Jocebed how to design the basket bed for Moses. Critical times and divine promptings and divine impulses come to Amrams and Jocebeds who are surrendered to the Lord.

Years ago, in the late 1800s, God sent someone to preach the Gospel in Fairbanks, Alaska. His or her name who went first, I do not know, but a church was started there. Meanwhile, there was an Eskimo girl, born in 1860, in a part of Alaska, then owned by the Russians. Her name was Minnie Neadercook Tucker after she married an Englishman named Sam Tucker. Minnie gave birth to eight children in her igloo and in God's sovereignty, became an Eskimo midwife. Her trademark as a midwife was, "My hands are always warm. Babies like my hands. The mamas do too." After her husband Sam died, Minnie moved to Fairbanks when she was 99 years old, still a midwife. Immediately, Minnie heard about some preachers in Fairbanks, and following a divine impulse, she attended a little church in Fairbanks to hear what they were saying. Hearing the Gospel for the first time, Minnie was saved at the age of 100. Now, for the first time, Minnie learned to read and write. She wrote the Name of Jesus all over her house, on cracker boxes, calendars, and paper bags. The picture on our bulletin cover is an historical picture of Minnie Neadercook Tucker at age 110. I first learned of Minnie in the year 2000, and in a trip to Alaska with Jinny in 2011, we bought three books about her, written by her daughter, Edna Wilder, "Secrets of Eskimo Skin Sewing," in 1976, "Once Upon an Eskimo Time," in 1987, and "The Eskimo Girl and the Englishman," in 2007. Minnie died at age 117 and she went Home to be with Jesus. It can happen in your life and mine when we choose to follow the divine impulse, the divine nudge, or the divine prompting of God.

About 25 years ago, in a Japanese leprosarium, a blind leper heard about Jesus, and he wanted to learn more. He had learned to read Braille, but his leprosy had destroyed his sense of touch in his hands and feet. He was divinely inspired to keep seeking to read the Bible, and he finally learned to read the Bible with his tongue. He found the Lord and followed the Lord. When there is still life, there's still hope in Jesus. When we follow His divine impulses, His divine nudges, and His divine promptings, as Minnie Neadercook Tucker, or this blind leper, or as Amram and Jocebed, God will not fail us, but will vindicate His promptings in our lives. 4thly,

TRUE JOCEBEDS ARE REWARDED FOR THEIR PATIENT WAITING FOR THE LORD'S SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION AND MIRACLES.

(IV.) Notice verses 5-10. Beloved, God always prepares good things for those who trust Him. God specializes in reversing seemingly irreversible situations. That's what God did when He sent Pharaoh's daughter to neutralize her father's plans. How was God going to educate a hated Hebrew boy in the wisdom of Egypt, and make it possible one day for him to have audience and easy access to Pharaoh? He can do it; our God can, and He did. It was God's hand leading that day as Miriam was watching and Amram was praying, and Jocebed and Aaron were praying. Look at Exodus 2: 5-6. We read, "Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women/maidens attending her 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." Beloved, this moment was more than a coincidence. It was supernatural—a God incidence. For the Israelites, this was God's miracle sent from heaven.

Now, Moses' big sister, Miriam, spoke to Pharaoh's daughter. What a moment it was! Read with me in Exodus 2: 7-9, and see what God was unfolding for Jocebed, Amram, Miriam, Aaron, and baby Moses. We read, "Then his sister (Moses' 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 (that's Miriam) went and called the child's mother, (that's Jocebed). 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."

Imagine Jocebed nursing Moses. Jocebed must have taught Moses all she could in Moses' first years, from three months to probably 4-5 years old, when most Hebrew women weaned their children. That was Jocebed's window to teach Moses every sacred thing she knew about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses was nursed on milk at his mother's breast and taught the sacred truth about God laying in her arms. Moses never forgot what he learned on his mother's breast or sitting on her knees. Yet, Jocebed's window to nurse and teach Moses was limited. Doubtless, Jocebed taught Moses to be loving and patient, something he never remembered as a young man of 40 years old, lessons God had to teach him for the next 40 years on the back side of the desert and wilderness of Midian, (Exodus 2: 11-24) God's supernatural interventions and miracles often take time. Yet, God never forgets what He's about, and what His divine plans and promptings are. In Exodus 2: 23-25, we read, "During those many days, (40 years in Midian, after Moses fled from Egypt after killing an Egyptian beating one of Hebrew slaves) the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew."

Any true believer come to see every conceived child in the womb and later born, as a lovely gift from God. Any of us can come to trust God and entrust our sons and daughters to the basket bed of God's sovereignty. Any of us can choose to follow God's divine impulses, nudges, and promptings in critical times when God speaks to us. Any of us can know the awesome rewards of patiently waiting on the Lord for His supernatural interventions and His miracles. Every believer can grow up to know what Moses knew—the meaning of his name was a sign of God's intervention. In Exodus 2: 10, we read, "When the child grew up/or was weaned, she (Jocebed) 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." When Moses ended his last 40 years as God's earthly deliverer of the Israelites in the 40-year Exodus, (at age 120) as he led those 3+million Hebrews, he said, (Dt. 33: 3) "Yes, He loved His people; all His holy ones were in His hand. "Now that's a hand-full! What a hand God must have! Oh, the joy of being one of His saints, one of His Amrams and Jocebeds, or His Moses. A pen is just a pen until it is in the hands of a poet like the Puritan, Richard Baxter. A sword is just a sword unless it is in the hands of Richard, the Lion-hearted. A violin with three strings broken in the tuning, is nothing unless it is in the hands of Paganini in the Royal Opera House in Paris, before the aristocracy—one of the greatest concerts of all time, played on one string. Five little hard rolls or loaves and two small fish are just one little Hebrew boy's lunch until his lunch was willingly placed in the hands of the Son of God, meet for the Master's use. Then 5,000 men, plus their wives and children, had more than they could eat. Put your children in God's hands. Many other hands may touch them, but if our children belong to God, no one can pluck them out of His hands—John 10:28-29. Be a Jocebed. The day is just as critical today. Happy Mother's Day! Bow your heads.