

# Parenting by Faith

**Text:** Exodus 2:1-10, Heb. 11:23, Acts 7:20

## Introduction:

1. Context: Joseph and his generation have died and the great exploits of Joseph for the nation fade from memory. Another Pharaoh assumes the throne who knows not Joseph.
2. The multiplication of the children of Israel concerns Pharaoh so he tries to suppress their growth in three ways:
  - He enslaves and oppresses them but they continue to multiply.
  - He makes a covert order to the Hebrew midwives to kill any Hebrew boy that is born. The midwives disobeyed the order due to their fear of God.
  - He makes a public order to all Egyptians to cast any Hebrew baby boy into the Nile river which was infested with crocodiles.
3. Into this dark and dangerous scene, a precious baby boy is born to godly parents, Amram and Jochebed.
4. Hebrews 11:23 informs us that the secret behind the account of Exodus 2:1-10 was this couple's faith. In this lesson we are going to consider 5 aspects to their faith as parents that will inspire and help us to be better parents for God's glory.

*Their faith was a faith that was...*

## I. PRESENT (VS. 1; Heb. 11:23)

### A. The Distinction of their Faith

1. Their faith stood out in distinction to the evil and ungodly environment they lived in. It stood in distinction to:
  - a. The paganism of Egypt. Unlike the majority who believed in false gods made with hands, they believed in the One True God, the Creator, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
  - b. The paganism of Israel. Many of their fellow Israelites had succumbed to the influence of Egypt and turned to idolatry. Joshua 24:14 "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, **and in Egypt**; and serve ye the LORD."
  - c. What a blessing that in the midst of all that heathen darkness, Moses was born into a home where the light of God's truth shined brightly. "Faith is the greatest blessing and the greatest heritage we can give our children." (Butler)

2. What about you? Which God do you serve? Do you serve the gods of this age or the One True God?

### **B. The Definition of their Faith**

1. What is faith? It is defined for us in Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
2. How important is true faith? Hebrews 11:6 says, “But without faith *it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
3. Unbelief is what damns a person for eternity.
  - a. Mark 16:16 “...he that **believeth not** shall be damned.”
  - b. Rev. 21:8 “But the fearful, and **unbelieving**, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
4. How does one come to true faith? You need to:
  - a. Recognize you are a sinner and that you cannot save yourself (Ecc. 7:20; Rom. 3:10, 23; 5:12; 1 John 3:4; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).
  - b. Realize Christ died in your place and rose again (Rom. 5:8; John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:3-4).
  - c. Repent, turn to God from your sin – Acts 3:19 “**Repent ye therefore, and be converted**, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;” (Acts. 20:21; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3).
  - d. Receive Christ and eternal life as a free gift (John 1:12; Rom. 6:23; 10:9-10, 13; Eph. 2:8-9).

*It was a faith that was...*

## **II. PERCEPTIVE (Vs. 2A)**

### **A. They Saw the Child’s Beauty – ‘goodly’**

1. Moses is described as “a goodly child” (Ex. 2:2), “a proper child” (Heb. 11:23) and “exceeding fair” (Acts 7:20).
2. No doubt their hearts were stirred at the sight of this child which was “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14) and a precious gift from God to them (Psalm 127).

### **B. They Saw the Child’s Destiny**

1. Their zeal to conceal him was motivated by a higher principle than the natural beauty of the child. As godly parents, they were given insight into the future of the child. They were able to discern that God’s stamp of approval was upon their child and they would seek to

preserve Him for the Divine purpose. The phrase “exceeding fair” in Acts 7:20 literally means “fair to God”

2. As an old commentator once put it, “A voice whispered in the mother’s heart that the child was special to God.” Or as John Butler puts it, “The eye of faith could see something special about Moses. There was the touch of God upon him.”
3. Challenge: Let us always remember as parents that our duty is to prepare our children for God’s will for their lives not ours! Be a channel God can use to prepare them for **His** purposes, not an obstruction to what God wants to do. Get yourself out of the picture dear parent!

*It was a faith that was...*

### III. PROTECTIVE (VS. 2B-4)

Take note of the four key characters who worked together to see this precious little life protected from destruction. There was...

#### A. The Headship of a Leading father (Heb. 11:23)

1. Heb. 11:23 “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of **his parents**, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.” In this verse, faith is attributed to **both** the father (Amram) and the mother (Jochebed). This was no lopsided marriage with one spouse fervent for the Lord and the other disengaged, apathetic and weak. This husband-and-wife team was **working together** to protect this child from harmful influences. They ‘hid’ him. The word means to store up, to treasure, to conceal for a definite purpose. As parents we are to protect our children from the world.
1. In God’s Divine order, the husband and father is the head of the home.
  - a. Eph. 5:23 “For **the husband is the head of the wife**, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”
  - b. 1 Cor. 11:3 “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and **the head of the woman is the man**; and the head of Christ *is* God.”
  - c. Remember men. Leadership is more about responsibility than it is privilege!
2. Men sometimes don’t lead for a number of reasons:
  - a. Their wives won’t let them! Sister, remember to encourage your husband’s leadership (Eph. 5:22 – “Wives, submit yourselves...”). Feminism, while historically advocating against

some terrible injustices against woman, has propagated many lies that have all but destroyed male leadership.

- b. Their own selfishness and self-centredness. Some men make personal peace their god in life. They don't want to ruffle anyone's feathers by taking a stand only because they don't want their own feathers ruffled!
- c. Their own spiritual apathy and lukewarmness. It is very hard for the wife and children to rise above the spiritual temper of the leader of the home. One of the great blights in Christian homes today is weak men who are more interested in their hobbies, sports and pleasures than the things of God.

#### **B. The Handiwork of a Loving Mother (Vs. 3)**

2. She made an "ark of bulrushes". This little vessel, crafted by maternal hands, was what kept the river of death from touching the precious little bundle inside.
3. Some say "you can't protect your kids from everything". While this is true, that shouldn't prevent us from protecting our kids from some things!
4. This involved disobeying an ungodly law in Egypt. We are duty bound to uphold civil law so long as it doesn't go against Divine law (Romans 13:1-7) but if it does, we are to "obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29) It appears from Acts 7:19 that some of the other Israelites went along with the king's edict and cast their own children into the Nile River.
5. J. Grant: "There is surely significance in the fact that although the parents chose to place their child in the Nile, the river of death to the Israelites, they also sought to preserve his life. The principle here is of utmost importance. The river could not be avoided, but they worked to ensure that he was kept safe in it. Is this not a work in which godly parents have been engaged throughout the ages? They live with the knowledge that their children cannot be hidden from the world in later life, so they seek to ensure that when the day comes to leave home and enter that world, which is death to those who succumb to it, they are prepared and fitted to survive it. The ark must be placed in the river, but the river must never be in the ark else it will end the life of the child."

#### **C. The Help of a watching sister (Vs. 4)**

1. We need to pray for the older children in our families. There is a lot of emphasis in Scripture on the firstborn. If Satan can topple the firstborn, or an older sibling, it can have a domino effect in families.
2. Challenge to older siblings: Don't be selfish and view your younger siblings as a pest to be avoided all the time! Be a spiritual leader and watch out for them. Encourage them in the Lord.

#### **D. The Hand of an All-Powerful God**

1. While God's Name is not specifically mentioned in these verses, the account is designed to draw our attention to God's unseen hand, moving in these events. In fact, God is the most important Person in this account.
6. As parents, there is only so much we can do. We are totally dependent upon God to intervene in the lives of our children if they are going to turn out for Him. Moses parents placed their child completely in God's hands. Sometimes we have to give something up in order to get it back, surrender it in order to receive it. God often moves when we are placed in a position of utter dependence upon Him. Illustration: Abraham placed Isaac in the place of death, upon the altar.

*It was a faith that was...*

#### **IV. PROVIDENTIALLY REWARDED (Vs. 5-9A)**

The faith of these parents in an impossible situation moved the heart and hand of God on their behalf. "The great lesson of this incident is the presence of God's wonderful Providence, working out its designs by all the play of human motives." (Maclaren)

##### **A. God's ways are Mysterious – the events (Vs. 5-6)**

1. An unlikely method (Vs. 1-4) – the river of death becomes a river of life.
2. An unlikely event – the timing of this event could not be orchestrated by man.
3. An unlikely individual – Pharaoh's daughter
  - a. Would not be expected to save one of the Hebrews and defy her father's decree!
  - b. Think of the irony of it, the nation which oppressed the Hebrews paid for the bringing up of their deliverer!
  - c. The Divine influence upon her heart – Proverbs 21:1 *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it withersoever he will."* The word 'compassion' means to feel with. God used the maternal instincts in this woman to stir her to protect Moses.
4. The events surrounding the walk of faith for the believer are not cast upon blind fate and chance but are orchestrated by a Sovereign, Almighty God.
5. Hymn – God moves in a mysterious way (Cowper)

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform; He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm; Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill; He treasures up his bright designs, and works his sovereign will; Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds you so much dread are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head; Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but

trust him for His grace; behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face; His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour; the bud may have a bitter taste but sweet will be the flower.

### **B. God's ways are Miraculous – the outcome (Vs. 7-9a)**

1. Pharaoh's daughter defies her father's edict (Vs. 7-8).
2. Pharaoh's daughter pay's Jochebed to raise the baby! (Vs. 9a)
3. We are constantly reminded that our impossibilities are not constraints upon the power of God but occasions for its display and demonstration.

*It was a faith that...*

## **V. PREPARED (VS. 9B-10)**

### **A. The Opportunity for Moses' Preparation (Vs. 9b-10)**

1. Question: If you knew that you only had a 5-year window with your child, how would you teach him/her? Evidently Jochebed used this narrow window of opportunity well to instil truth into little Moses' heart.
2. The first 5 years – your child's brain develops more and faster than at any other time in his life. Your child's early experiences – the things he sees, hears, touches, smells and tastes – stimulate his brain, creating millions of connections. This is when the foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout life are laid down.
3. Vladimir Lenin: "Give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted."
4. Stalin Era Communist: Children, like soft wax, are very malleable and they should be moulded into good Communists... We must rescue children from the harmful influence of the family... We must nationalize them. From the earliest days of their little lives, they must find themselves under the beneficent influence of Communist schools... To oblige the mother to give her child to the Soviet state – that is our task. [Orlando Figes](#) *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, 2007, [ISBN 0-8050-7461-9](#), pages 20-31
5. Illustration: The antigod, antichristian agenda in much of our education system today (e.g., Gender Fairy). We are in an all-out war for the minds and hearts of our children today.
6. Martin Luther: "I am much afraid that the universities will prove to be the great gates of hell, unless they diligently labour in explaining the Holy Scriptures, and engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt."

7. “He who places secular knowledge, and the things of the world, before this study and sacred knowledge, prefers rubbish to treasure: for the mystery of the Gospel is treasure; all else is dung and dross.” (John Davenant)
8. **Challenge:** Parents need to seize the unique opportunity afforded in the child’s formative years to instil the Word of God into their hearts and minds. Be careful about handing that opportunity to people who don’t know Christ, don’t love your child as you do and who may do unrepairable damage by teaching them falsehood. **Mothers, don’t forsake your high calling to be a wife, mother, nurturer and homemaker (Titus 2:5; 1 Tim. 5:14; Prov. 31:10-31).**

**B. The Outcome of Moses’ Preparation (Acts 7:22-25; Heb. 11:24-27)**

1. Moses went on to be trained in the godless house of Pharaoh. Acts 7:22 “And Moses was learned in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**, and was mighty in words and in deeds.”
2. Despite the fact he was trained in Egyptian wisdom, we get a strong indication that Jochebed used the limited time she had with Moses well. Even after all that secular training, Moses still knew the truth in several key areas:
  - a. Moses knew he was a Hebrew, one of God’s chosen people (Acts 7:23).
  - b. Moses believed God would use him to deliver his people (Acts 7:25).
  - c. Moses, at the age of 40, rejected the wealth and fame of Egypt and chose a life of faith and separation with God’s people (Heb. 11:24-27).
3. Deuteronomy 6:6-8 “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt **teach them diligently** unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” As parents we need to cultivate a family culture where the grand and glorious truths of God’s Word are the frequent focus of our discussions.
  - a. “teach them diligently” = comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to sharpen or to whet” and is often translated that way in the O.T. For example:
    - i. Deut. 32:41 “*If I **whet** my glittering sword...*”
    - ii. Isaiah 5:28 “*Whose **arrows** are sharp...*”
    - iii. Psalm 45:5 “*Thine **arrows** are sharp...*”

- b. A whetstone is used for the sharpening of tools and is used figuratively for sharpening the wits or the mind. (J. Grant) We even use this sort of language to describe someone with “a sharp mind.”
- c. Children are likened to arrows in Psalm 127:4 – “As **arrows** are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his **quiver** full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.”
- d. The word picture implies the need for repetition and regularity in our teaching of the Word of God.
- e. Challenge: Are the minds of our children being sharpened by the Word of God or blunted by the entertainments and philosophies of this world?
- f. CNN Report from Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> 2015: On any given day, teens in the USA spend about 9 hours using media for their enjoyment. To put that in context, that means more time than teens typically spend sleeping, and more time than they spend with their parents and teachers. And the nine hours does not include time spent using media at school or for homework. James Steyer, CEO and founder of *Common Sense Media* in an interview said, “I think the sheer volume of media technology that kids are exposed to on a daily basis is mind-boggling. It just shows you that these kids live in this massive 24/7 digital media technology world, and **it’s shaping every aspect of their life**. I just think that it should be a complete wake-up call to every parent, educator, policymaker, business person and tech industry person that the reshaping of our media tech landscape is first and foremost affecting young people’s lives and reshaping childhood and adolescence.”
- g. F.B. Meyer, writing in 1890 warned: “Some of us dare not enter the theatre, or encourage others to enter...even when a play may be deemed inoffensive and harmless, the sensuous attractions of the place, the glitter, the music, the slightly-dressed figures of the actors and actresses, the entire atmosphere and environment, which appeal so strongly to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, break down some of the fortifications, which would otherwise resist the first incidence and assault of evil. **The air of the theatre, the ball-room, the race-course, seem so impregnated with the nocuous germs and microbes of evil, that it is perilous for the soul to expose itself to them**, conscious as it is of predisposing bias and weakness.”

## Conclusion:

1. Who or what is training your children?
2. Are you passionately fulfilling your God given role in your family (e.g., Dads, Mums and siblings)?
3. Are your children getting a Christ-centred, Bible based education? What are your priorities for your children? Do they know Christ?
4. Are we surrendered to God’s will for our children or are our own carnal goals and ambitions getting in the way?