**The Women Behind the Exodus Series**

**“Jochebed – Letting Go and Letting God”**

**Exodus 2.1-10**

**Introduction**

Currently we are looking at four women used by God during the time of the exodus of the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. As you recall God had brought the children of Israel to Egypt to escape a famine. But over time the population of the children of Israel outgrew the population of the Egyptians and the king of Egypt became concerned that the people of Israel would take control of the country. So, the king ordered the Israelites to be made slaves and appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. His idea was to impose upon the Israelites such a high level of labor that they would be too tried to procreate.

But his plan didn’t work so he devised a new plan and ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill every Hebrew boy immediately after birth. But God used two Hebrew midwives by the name of Shiphard and Puah to implement a plan with the other Hebrew midwives that allowed the baby boys to live. Because these midwives were willing to do the right thing the Bible tells us that *God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.* (Ex.1.20) Since the king couldn’t count of the midwives to do his evil work, he decreed a new plan for all the people saying, *“Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”* (Ex.1.21) By the order of the king of Egypt if anyone found a baby Hebrew boy they were to throw the baby into the Nile River to drown and eventually eaten by crocodiles.

This brings us to today’s text, Exodus 2. 1-10:

*Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi.****2****The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months.****3****But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.****4****His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him.****5****The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it to her.****6****When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.”****7****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?* ***8****Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go ahead.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother.****9****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.*

***10****The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, “Because I drew him out of the water.”*

**The Woman – Jochebed**

The book of Numbers tells us that the woman’s name is Jochebed and she is married to a man by the name of Amham. From other scriptures we know that Jochebed already has a daughter named Miriam, who is probably around ten years old at this time, and a son named Aaron, who is probably around three years old. Both Miriam and Aaron had been born before Pharaoh imposed his murderous edict. Now Jochebed finds out that she is pregnant with her third child. The announcement of being pregnant is supposed to be a happy occasion but the king’s new law casted a shadow of despair upon the whole family. Today we have “gender reveal parties” where we cut cakes, open boxes of balloons, shoot power into the air, and all sort of creative ways to let everyone know the gender of the coming child but in those days you had to wait. Pregnancy in and of itself causes all sorts of anxiety but the king’s edict must had made things a hundred times worst.

After nine months the day finally comes when Jochebed *bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months.*Every one thinks their newborn baby is beautiful. No one ever says, “That is one ugly baby!” But something must have been special extra special about this baby boy. Actually, in the original the word translated here as “*beautiful*” denotes something more than just physical beauty. Stephen in the book of Acts helps us out when he writes, *“he was no ordinary child.”* (Acts 7.20 NIV) So, maybe God impressed upon Jochebed that He had extra ordinary plans for her son. But everyone thinks their baby is extra special. I’ve never heard a mother say, “Well, I’m sure he’ll be a loser.” No! Every parent has high hopes for their children, especially when they are little babies.

The book of Hebrews gives insight on what was going on here when he writes, “*By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.”* (Heb.11.23 NIV) It seems that the writer of the book of Hebrews is making the point the Jochebed and her husband were walking “*by faith*.” “*By faith Moses’ parents . . .were not afraid of the king’s edict.”* Their faith in God overcame their fear of the king’s edict. This work of God’s grace to fortify our faith in the midst of fearful opposition is something that every believe must seek God for. “God by Your Spirit to fortify my faith so that I am not afraid of what is confronting me.” Jochebed and her husband came to the firm conviction that “*The Lord is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me?”* (Ps.118.6) With full assurance they declared, “*In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?”* (Ps.56.11)

They had faith that God would make a way where there seemed to be no way! *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.* (Heb.11.1) And Jochebed and her husband could not see how God was going to make a way but they had faith in the Almighty God! They had faith that God would make a way so they held on to that baby boy for three months, concealing his gender from those around them, and waiting for a plan to follow.

**The Plan**

Now it doesn’t seem like God gave Jochebed any special revelation or prophecy to develop a plan. The text just reads, “*But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.”* (2.3)

After three months she knew that she couldn’t hide the child any longer. She had held on as long as she could but now it was time to let go. She hadn’t abandoned her faith but she knew that she had to let go and trust God. There are times when we know that we can’t hold on any longer. You’ve worked so hard and invested so much but you know in your heart that it is time to let go and trust God. It is difficult for us to trust God during times of transition. But we must seek God for faith while we hold on and for faith as we let go.

Jochebed took all the precautions necessary to keep the child safe by covering the wicker basket with tar. She chose the location to place the child in the reeds by the bank of the Nile where she knew the basket would not float away. Maybe she knew that king’s daughter bathed there. Maybe she knew that Pharaoh’s daughter would have compassion on her beautiful baby boy. But just in case something went wrong she positioned Moses’ big sister, Miriam, close by to see what would happen. Maybe she had told ten-year-old Miriam what to say to Pharaoh’s daughter if things worked according to plan.

Regardless of what Jochebed knew or didn’t know, the whole plan was a perfect balance of faith in God, trust in His providence, and taking action. Letting go and letting God doesn’t mean that we just sit back and do nothing. Letting go and letting God requires faith, trust, and action. And that is what we see in Jochebed!

So with her baby boy laying in a basket among the reeds on the bank of the Nile *the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it to her. When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had 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 a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?* *Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go ahead.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go ahead.” So the girl 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. The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, “Because I drew him out of the water.”* (2.5-10)

**The Future**

Everything went as planned – even better than planned. The baby not only lives but his mother still gets to care for her child and gets paid! The baby lives and not as a child of slaves but as a Prince of Egypt. Moses would be educated in all of the learning of the Egyptians and become a man of power in words and deeds. (Acts.7.22) The one who was drawn out became the one that God used to draw out His people from the bondage of slavery. Truly, “*The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”* (Prov.16.9) *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.* (Jer.29.11)

It seems that Jochebed had an ongoing relationship with Moses throughout his life. Again the writer of the book of Hebrews gives insight behind the relationship between Moses and his mother. *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.* (Heb.11.24-26)

Jochebed taught Moses about his true heritage as member of God’s family. She taught him the virtue of holy living instead of enjoying the passing pleasures of sin. She taught him how to endure ill treatment. And she taught him that the greatest treasure in this life is Christ and to look to Him for rewards. But it seems that Jochebed not only taught these godly principles to Moses but also to her daughter, Miriam, and her other son, Aaron. As Jochebed raised her family she invested herself into the lives of a future prophetess (Miriam), a future high priest (Aaron), and a future liberator and nation leader (Moses).

**Closing Thought**

How was Jochebed able to stand firm in her faith and accomplish so much? Was she a strict disciplinarian? Was she a nurturing mother? Was she an overachiever? We really don’t know any about her personality or parenting style. But we do know that her name means, “Jehovah is my glory.” The Lord is my glory. This must had been to guiding purpose for her life. The Lord is my glory. *Whether* *you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* (ICor.10.31) She knew that a person number one purpose in life was to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The Lord is my glory. Can you say that about your life today?

**Transition to the Table**

* Let go of the fears in your life and let God give you the faith you need.
* Let go of the thing you are holding on to and let God work wonders in your life.
* Let go of your attempts to earn forgiveness and salvation and let God bless you with Christ’s atonement.
* Let go and let the Lord be your glory!

**Benediction**

*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.* (Gal.2.20)