

3M

exodus 2.1-10

Find your way to Exodus chapter 2 this morning.

We know that the general theme of Exodus is God bringing His people out of slavery in Egypt, but really the whole book is full of story after story of God's deliverance. Even just one chapter in we've been reminded of Joseph who saved his family and the nation and the midwives who saved the baby Hebrew boys.

Now in chapter 2 we meet the great deliverer of the Old Testament - Moses - who's in trouble the moment he's born and in need of deliverance himself.

Let's look at our text and see what we see.

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 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."

When we look at this story there are 3 different characters we could put ourselves in the place of: Moses, his mother and Miriam, his sister.

Each one of those characters shows us things about our Christian life today.

Let's start with Moses. There are a couple of simple ideas we can think about if we put ourselves in his position.

The first is that if you're a growing, healthy Christian, then people are going to take notice of you. If unbelievers are never asking you questions or bringing up your Christianity, whether it's because they don't understand it or they want to make fun of it or they want to know more

about it, if we're not having those sorts of inquiries, then it's very possible that we're not living a healthy, growing Christianity. As Moses grew, he became louder and more noticeable.

You look in the Bible and you find that, because of who we are in Christ, we don't have to *try* to be conspicuous to be conspicuous. It's a normal part of the Christian life. So, if we blend in with the world around us, there are probably some adjustments that need to be made.

Second idea we can pull from Moses' example is that even the deliverer needed deliverance. Every one of us is in need of Christ's help and intervention. Whether we're called to minister to one person or thousands of people, what we all have in common is that we need the Lord to walk with us today. So we've got to lay down our pride and never pretend like we could accomplish life on our own. We all need God to cover us and direct us.

Now let's look at Moses' mom.

Exodus 2.1-2 - 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.

Moses doesn't give us a lot of detail about his parents. We saw them mentioned in the Hall of Faith when we were studying Hebrews. What we know from those other passages is that Moses' parents saw him lying there and in their eyes he was a special, beautiful, wonderful baby and they were not going to let him die or let his life be squandered, despite the danger it posed to keep him alive.

It was a rough time to be having a family, but Moses' parents, specifically his mother, didn't see him as a burden, but she saw him as beautiful.

How does this relate to us?

Well, as Christians, we've been given a new life by God to tend and to grow. You could look at this little baby as our faith or our calling or our ministry, or just our Christianity as a whole. And we should see our lives with the Lord as a privilege. It's not a burden, it's a beautiful thing that we should cherish and protect.

Here's how Moses' mom did it:

Exodus 2.3 - 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.

A moment of decision came in her life. She was at a point where things could not stay the same. In that moment she did a couple of important things.

Number one - she chose to put her faith in God when it came to the life of her baby. The family didn't have a lot of options, but the plan they did come up with, at least from a human perspective, didn't have a very high probability of success. It was contingent on God's intervention on behalf of this innocent child.

Now, Moses' mother *did* do something. She took steps and made a plan and put it into action. She didn't just say, "Well, we'll just wait and do nothing and trust God to take care of it." It's easy to do nothing and call it faith. And sometimes God asks us to wait and delay action, but often times faith means doing something. And certainly, as we see God's providence working out through this story, we know that the Lord was directing her in what to do and she did it.

So, on the one hand, she was faithfully taking action, but on the other hand she wasn't simply doing what made the most sense from a human perspective. That balance is really hard to be in, but that's what walking by faith is all about.

The second important aspect of her actions was that she did something that was in line with what God had done before.

These people in Exodus had a very limited revelation of God. It was an entirely oral tradition. Moses is the guy who wrote the first 5 books of the Bible, so they were definitely at a disadvantage compared to us, but undoubtedly Moses' mom knew about Noah and his ark that God had used to save His people through the flood. So what does the mother do? She makes an ark and puts her baby inside.

The Bible is so important because it shows us who God is and what He's done. It shows us how He does things so that when we *do* have to take steps of faith, we can understand what sort of actions are in line with Him and what sort of actions are not characteristic of Him.

So, when I find myself at a moment of decision in life, whether due to some trial or just some sort of life decision, and if I feel like I'm being led in some direction by the Holy Spirit, can I also give a Biblical defense of what I'm doing? If I can't, then probably the Holy Spirit isn't the one motivating me to do it and, therefore, I'm heading in the wrong direction.

One other important side note about what we see Moses' mom doing here: commentators point out that in her action to place Moses in a little ark in the river she was actually obeying the decree that Pharaoh had put out. Maybe not the *spirit* of it, but she was obeying the letter of the law that's seen in the last verse of chapter 1.

Right now Christians are talking a lot about civil disobedience, and that's fine. There are certainly instances of believers disobeying their government. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego are quintessential examples, but there are also many examples of Godly obedience to wicked governments, even in the face of direct persecution. Scenes like this one.

When governments decree things that are wrong or things we *think* are wrong, it's natural for us to want to disobey, but we're not always to disobey. God can use obedience too, like He did here or when Paul would submit to floggings and beatings. Or when Jesus submitted to illegal trials for crimes He didn't commit.

We're not asked by God to always obey an evil government, but we're not asked by God to always disobey it either. And I'm talking about situations like this where the government really is doing something wrong. We're commanded to be willing to be directed by God about whether we obey or disobey according to His will, rather than our preference.

So, we've seen Moses and his mother, but Miriam does a couple of things as well. Look at verse 4.

Exodus 2.4 - And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

Certainly she was worried about her little baby brother. But her watchful concern reminded me of the question we're posed in the New Testament: Who is my brother? Who is my neighbor? Moses in the little ark kept reminding me of the man who had been beaten and robbed in the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

The first lesson we learn from Miriam is that compassion is so important in the Christian life. Despite who a person is, we're called to show compassion to those who are suffering, and there are a *lot* of suffering people in this world.

Now, we can't save everyone. You and me as individuals can't provide clean water for every thirsty person on earth. We can't save all of the more than 12 million people who are being trafficked around the world right now. We can't help everyone, but we better not be like the Levite or the priest in the parable who just walked by the man who was beaten and naked on the side of the road.

The response to human suffering is not, "Well, what are you gonna do?" The proper response is, "Ok, what am I going to do?!?" Because compassion goes beyond just words or kind thoughts. Job chapter 6 shows us that. And it's essential that we move past any bias or prejudice or indifference that we might have and act compassionately because God uses those actions to save lives and save souls. You see it here in our text, or we think of the spies' compassion for Rahab and her family in Jericho, or you think about a ministry like Operation Christmas Child that reaches out to millions of kids each year.

So, like Miriam, when we see someone who needs help, either next door or around the world, it's important we involve ourselves to help and save like she did.

Exodus 2.5-10 - 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 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."

This is really cool. This is one of the funnest stories in the Bible of God working something out.

Before we take a look at what Miriam did, take notice of how awesome the Lord is.

This story perfectly illustrates that God is able and He is faithful. When we think all hope is lost, the Lord can just turn everything upside down and redefine the entire situation. And that's an exciting thing.

In verse 3, Moses' crying was going to get him killed, but by verse 6 it was what saved his life.

The world looks at Moses' mother and says, "We're going to kill your baby!" The Lord says, "Actually, you're going to keep your baby and you're going to get paid to nurse him!"

And here, despite the circumstances, God did something that was just unfathomable. We never would've been able to figure this out or make this happen. But His ways are higher than our ways and His power is never hampered.

So, seeing God's potential, let's bring it back down to us by looking at the part Miriam played in this scene.

When she got the chance, when she saw her opportunity, she didn't play it cool or lay back, she swung for the fence!

It's not healthy for us to live a timid Christianity. It's easy, but it's not healthy. We're not given a spirit of timidity.

Each of us are gifted in some way, each of us are given opportunities, some of them small, some of them not so small. When we find ourselves in the moment where we have an opportunity to minister or exercise our gifts to serve the Lord, go for it! Swing big!

Miriam's play here was a long shot, but God loves long shots. And if we never swing, we're never going to hit a spiritual home run.

So, just like last week, we see again that God wants to do fantastic things in the lives of His people. But it means we can't just wear the uniform and then sit back and do nothing. None of us are bench warmers as far as God is concerned. We've got to not only wear the uniform, but we've also got to step up to the plate, remember our spring training, listen to our Coach and swing for the fences. If we are willing, God is able.