A Woman of Faith

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Exodus 2:1-10

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman.[2]The
woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby,
she hid him for three months. [3]When she could hide him no longer she got a
papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child
in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. [4]His sister stood at a
distance, to see what would happen to him. 5 The daughter of Pharaoh came
down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw
the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. [6]When she opened it,
she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of
the Hebrews' children,' she said. [7]Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter,
'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for
you?' [8]Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the
child's mother. [9]Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for
me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed
it. [10]When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she
took him as her son. She named him Moses,-'because', she said, 'I drew him out
of the water.'

1. A Great Mother

There is an old saying. "Behind a great figure there is a great mother." The mother in today's scripture is a good example of a great mother. This story tells us that faith and the wisdom of a mother saves not only her son but also God's people. Let me briefly tell you the background of this story.

According to chapter one of Exodus, Jacob and his family emigrate to Egypt after Jacob learns that his son Joseph is alive in Egypt and becomes one of the top leaders of the country. When Jacob and his family move to Egypt, the total number was 70. But later, his family becomes numerous and the whole region of Goshen is full of them. Many years later, a new king comes to power in Egypt. He does not know anything about Joseph. He worries that the people of Israel will be on the side of their enemies when a war breaks out. So the king begins to force the Israelites to make bricks and mix mortar and work in the fields. He also says to the two Hebrew midwives. "***If a Hebrew woman gives birth to a girl, let the baby live. If the baby is a boy, kill him***" (1:17 CEV).

2. The Birth of Moses

A boy is born in such a critical circumstance. It is very interesting to notice that the author of Exodus does not say the name when he describes the birth of a baby. We know the baby's name is Moses. The writer just simply says that "***a***

man from the Levi tribe married a woman from the same tribe" (2:1). Although their names are not mentioned here, these two are Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20). As you know, Moses has an older brother and a sister. Their names are Aaron and Miriam.

In today's scripture, the baby Moses is described as "***a fine baby***" (2:2). What does that mean? Acts 7:20 says, "***He [Moses] was no ordinary child***." And Hebrews 11:23 says, "***They [Moses' parents] saw that the child (Moses) was beautiful***." What the passage tells us is that Moses' parents seemed to have sensed that Moses was born according to God's special plan. Moses parents knew that Moses would be killed if he was born. Every day, his parents would wonder whether they could keep Moses at home one more day. After three months the family could no longer keep Moses hidden. So Moses' mother makes a basket out of reeds and covers it with tar. She puts Moses in the basket and places it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. Moses' older sister Miriam stands off at a distance to see what would happen to him.

About that time, a king's daughter comes down to take a bath in the Nile. She sees the basket and sends one of her servant girls to pull it out of the water. When she opens the basket, she sees a baby and feels sorry for the baby. She notices that the child must be one of the Hebrew babies. At onces Miriam, Moses' sister comes up and asks, "Do you want me to get a Hebrew woman to take care of the baby for you?" "Yes," she answers. So Miriam brings her mother to the king's daughter. She says Moses' mother, "take care of this child, and I will pay you." Moses' mother takes care of Moses until he is old enough to care for himself. She takes him back to the king's daughter and she names the baby "Moses" because she says, "I pulled him out of water."

The author of Exodus does not say that Moses' parents were worried about the baby while they kept Moses at home. But I can imagine that they would pray for Moses every day. His mother would have likely prayed for him for long periods of time each day. Although it would be dangerous to put the baby in the basket and place it in the river of Nile, she beieves that God would take care of the baby. She is truly a woman of faith.

3. United Methodist Church's 50th Anniversary

Last Monday, April 23, is a very special day for us. Do you know what day this is? On April 23, 1968 the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church joined to form a new denomination, the United Methodist Church. Last Monday, the UMC celebrated the 50th anniversary of the church. On April 23, Bishop Reuben H. Mueller, representing the EUB church, and Bishop Lloyd C. Wicke of the Methodist Church joined hands at the constituting General Conference in Dallas, Texas. In unison, the two bishops, 1,300 delegates and 10,000 visitors recited these words: "Lord of the Church, we are united in Thee, in Thy Church and now in the United Methodist Church. Amen."

4. The Mother of Methodism

As you know, John Wesley is the one who was called to create Methodist movement in England. But do you know who is called the Mother of Methodism? Susanna Wesley is called the Mother of Methodism. She is the mother of John and Charles Wesley. Without her, the United Methodist Church would not be born. Her life and faith journey shaped Methodism in ways we see today.

Susanna Annesley was born on January 20, 1669 in London, England. She was the youngest of 25 children. Her father was Dr. Samuel Annesley, a noted scholar and devout Puritan clergy. Susanna married a minister of the Church of England, Samuel Wesley when she was 19 years old. In the following 19 years of marriage, Susanna bore 19 children. Only 10 of them survived. Susanna was responsible for the children's education and spiritual formation. She created times for school, meals, family prayer, and bedtime. Every activity was planned in her household. Each day, the family began with prayer and Psalms. Each child was taught to read from the Bible by the age of 5. She resolved to spend one hour alone with each of her children living at home per week.

Susanna's two sons, John and Charles, became the most influential men of their time. John Wesley says, "I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians of England." Susanna would be busy with her children, but at the age of 30, she determined to increase her private devotional time to 2 hours per day. As Moses' mother prayed for Moses and her children, Susanna's dedication and her prayers made a big difference in the lives of John and Charles Wesley and Methodism. Susanna is a woman of faith.

5. The Historic Korea Summit

Last week, you may have heard the news that the leaders of North Korea and South Korea met for the first time in over a decade. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korea's President Moon Jae-In met at the line that separates the divided Koreas. Kim stepped over the raised Military Demarcation Line, entering territory controlled by the South for the very first time. The two leaders had meetings with officials and signed the Panmoonjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification on the Korean Peninsula. The document commits the countries to a nuclear-free peninsula and talks to bring a formal end to the Korean War after 68 years.

As you know, the World War II ended in 1945. Since then, the Korean peninsula is divided in South and North. This historic summit will bring a big impact on so many Korean people. In South Korea, there are 60,000 people who have been waiting to see their family in North Korea. They have been waiting for the unification of South and North Korea throughout a lifetime. How did this historic summit happen in Korea? Many people have different interpretations. However, I believe that there are many Christians who have been praying for a

nuclear-free peninsula. Last week's summit is the answer of their prayers. Those who have been praying for Korea for 70 years are men and women of faith.

6. Conclusion

What do we see in the story of the birth of Moses, the birth of Methodism, and in the Korea historic summit? In chapter two of Exodus, we do not find the word "God" at all. We do not know exactly what God has done in the process of forming the United Methodist Church. We might give full credit to the political leaders of South and North Koreas for their Panmoonjom declaration. But we need to see the hands of God behind the scenes. In human history, we notice that God uses his people to make God's world a better place to live. God used Moses' mother, sister, and brother. God used Susanna Wesley and her two sons, John and Charles Wesley for Methodism. For Korean peninsula, God used many Christians and political leaders in South and North Korea.

7. Application

When we face challenges, we need to first ask God to show us His plan and wisdom instead of trying to make decisions based on our own knowledge and ideas. The author of Exodus does not tell us what God was doing for the people of Israel. We know that God has a bigger picture and plan for everything. We know that there is nothing impossible to God. But sometimes we forget that and try to figure out what to do on our own. God searches for men & women of faith.

I am sure you may be familiar with the Hymn 130, "God will take care of you." Do you know how the hymn was made? The Reverend Walter Martin, a Baptist evangelist, was invited to preach at a church. That Sunday morning, Mrs. Martin became suddenly ill, making it impossible for her to accompany her husband to his speaking engagement. Mr. Martin seriously considered cancelling his speaking assignment, since it would require him to be gone from his wife for a considerable time. At that moment their young son said, 'Father, don't you think that if God wants you to preach today, He will take care of Mother while you are away?'" Mr. Martin thought that his son was right. While he had been gone, his wife wrote the words inspired by their son's statement. When her husband returned, he found his wife much improved. Before retiring to bed that evening, he wrote the music to his wife's text. Please listen to the wonderful hymn of faith.

"Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through every day, o'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you." Please join me in singing of the 4th stanza. "No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through every day, o'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you." Amen.