

That's My Mother

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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 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." (Exodus 2:1-10).

1. The Aspects of Mothers

Happy Mother's Day! Whether our mothers have passed or are alive, many of us have a reason to be proud of our mothers. Today, I'd like to highlight one important aspect of mothers. Mothers never give up on their children.

I have an older brother. When he was a baby, he got sick and had little hope for survival. My mother didn't give up. She searched for medicinal plants. My brother ate the plants and miraculously survived. Mothers don't give up on their children. My mother is just one example of this aspect of mothers.

2. Mother of Moses

Our passage today highlights the same aspect of Moses' mother. Moses was born in Egypt. Genesis tells us that the family of Jacob moved to the most fertile land in Egypt, Goshen. The descendants of Jacob enjoyed living there. They were fruitful. The descendants of Jacob numbered six hundred thousand men when they left Egypt for the Promised Land 430 years later. We need to remember that women were not included in six hundred thousand.

The king at the time of Moses did not know Joseph who made a big impact on Egypt. He feared that the people of Israel would overpower the Egyptians. He forced the Israelites to build storage cities and used them as slaves. Two midwives were ordered to kill Hebrew boy babies; however, the

midwives did not obey because they feared the Lord. Moses was born during this crisis.

The Israelites continued to increase. Pharaoh enacted more aggressive policies and ordered to throw the boy babies into the Nile River. When Moses' mother saw her son, "**he was a fine baby.**" She hid Moses for three months.

Do you know what the term "fine" means in this passage? It doesn't mean healthy or cute. It is "*Tov*" in Hebrew. The term also means excellent, beautiful, or good. But it has a deep meaning of goodness, which is why Jochebed and his father Amram hid Moses, so that he would not be killed.

God uses this term in Genesis to denote a deep sense of excellence in God's creation. "***Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good [tov]***" (Genesis 1:11–12).

Here the term "*Tov* (good)" does not simply mean that God was satisfied with his creation. But *tov* implies something which fulfills the purpose for which it was created. Moses' mother felt that Moses was born with God's purpose for his life.

Moses' parents realized that God had a plan for Moses. This is why they hid the baby and were willing to take great risks to make sure Moses stayed alive. After three months, it was no longer safe to hide Moses. Moses' mother placed him in a basket among the reeds of the Nile River. She hoped that someone would find and protect the child. As a Levite, I am sure she trusted that God would keep Moses safe.

At the same time, Pharaoh's daughter came to the Nile to bathe. She saw the basket and found the baby crying. She felt sorry for the baby. Moses' sister was nearby and offered to secure a nurse for the baby. Pharaoh's daughter said yes. Moses' mother was reunited with Moses.

Pharaoh's daughter said, "***Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.***" So Jochebed nursed Moses and when he grew up, Moses was brought to Pharaoh's daughter. She named him Moses because she drew him out of the water.

3. God Never Gives Up

People say that "God created mothers because he could not be everywhere." As Christians we believe that God is everywhere. Why then did God create mothers? My answer is that God created mothers not only to care for their children but also to teach their children God's purpose. Mothers care for their children before and after the child is born, as an extension of God in the world and remind them of God's purpose.

The characteristic that mothers never give up is a reflection of God. God never gives up on his people. Isaiah 49:15 says, "***Can a woman forget her nursing child or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these might forget, yet I will not forget you.***"

The Israelites thought that God had forsaken and allowed them to be exiled to Babylon. But Isaiah stresses that God would never forget them, just like a loving mother never forgets her children. In the same way, God never gives up on us. God is there to care for us in any situation.

4. Jesus Never Gives Up

What about Jesus? Did Jesus ever give up on his disciples? John's Gospel chapter 21 tells us that the resurrected Jesus showed himself to the disciples when they were fishing at the Sea of Tiberias.

Jesus asked Simon Peter, "***Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?***" John said to Jesus, "***Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.***" Yet Jesus asked the same question three times. Why did Jesus ask Peter the same question three times? It is because Jesus wanted Peter to know that Jesus forgave Peter's three denials of Christ. Even Jesus was disappointed by the disciples, Jesus never gives up on his disciples. Jesus would never give up on us as well.

5. Conclusion

The story of Moses' mother's love for her son touches our hearts. Moses' mother knew that Moses was a special child to be used to deliver his people. Moses was drawn from the water by the grace of God and through Jochebed's wisdom. Moses would reflect for us the Messiah, Jesus our Lord.

6. Application

Do you remember what your mother did to protect and save you? Let me share with you my story. I was born the same year the Korean War broke out on the Korean peninsula. I can't imagine the difficulties my mother faced to protect me and my older brother during the Korean War. Five million people died in the Korean War. I would not be here today without God's grace and my mother's sacrifice.

When we read the story of Moses, we learn what Moses' mother did for Moses. When Moses thought about her mother, he would be so proud of her. He would say, "that is my mother." When we think of our mothers, we would say the same. "That is my mother." Moms give us an image of God's care and remind us of God's purpose for us. As we celebrate Mother's Day today, we give thanks to the Lord for our wonderful mothers. Amen.