



Sunday, May 10th

Preacher: Pastor Howard-John Wesley

Sermon Title: Moses' Mothers - Wandering in the Wilderness Part 4

Scripture: Exodus 2:1-10

Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

Sermon Summary:

Pastor Wesley gave us a powerful and poignant Mother's Day sermon as he taught us that, "too often the greatness of a man or woman is sadly detached from the name of another woman who should receive credit for the contribution they made to make that person great." As we continue our series, Wandering in the Wilderness, we take another look at Moses, who is perhaps the greatest person in the history of Israel. On this Mother's Day it's important for us to recognize that Moses' life was never shaped by another man, but instead by a group of women.

The 2020 lesson from the book of Exodus is that we should never tell our story of greatness and leave out the names of the women God has used to fulfill God's greatness in our lives. Let's take a moment to celebrate the 5 women who played a mothering role in Moses' life so we can appropriately celebrate all of the women in our lives:

- 1) **Shiphrah & Puah** - Two Hebrew midwives who disobeyed Pharaoh and allowed thousands of Hebrew children (including Moses' father) to survive. Shiphrah and Puah teach us to celebrate the ancestors who put themselves at risk and paved the way for us to be who we are today.
- 2) **Jochebed** - Moses' birth mother who gave him away instead of raising him. Many of us were hurt by the actions of the Jochebed's in our lives, but Pastor Wesley encouraged us to "love her for who she is and forgive her for who she wasn't." This Mother's Day we are encouraged to look past our hurt and see her humanity.
- 3) **Bithiah** - Pharaoh's daughter who pulled Moses out of the water. On Mother's Day we celebrate the women who didn't birth us, but nurtured us, provided for us, and celebrated us.
- 4) **Miriam** - Moses' sister who ensured that Moses was protected. We thank God for those who protected us. Miriam also made sure that Moses was aware of his Hebrew identity. Moses is an African who lived in the palace, but left the palace because he was convicted to stand in solidarity with his people. We all need a Miriam in our lives who will remind us of our identity and our responsibility so we can fully walk in God's calling for our lives.

In conclusion Pastor Wesley also offered a word of encouragement to single women who desire marriage or motherhood. He said that Miriam also shows us that matrimony, marriage, and biological motherhood are not the only way for you to become great in this world.

Life Application Questions:

1. It was said in the sermon that Jocabed brought Moses into the world, but was unable to nurture and raise him. Pastor Wesley said that one way to move forward from a similar situation is to "love her (Mom) for who she is, and forgive her for who she wasn't... because she may have done the best she could with what she knew." Reflect on your relationship with your Mom. What areas needed love? What areas needed forgiveness? Consider talking to Mom or to The Lord if needed for closure.
2. Pastor Wesley named several women who no longer live but he said "when we name the dead, they never die." Women like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, Dorothy Height, Madam C. J. Walker, Ruby Dee, Mary Mcleod Bethune and many more. Name some dynamic women who are no longer here but have influenced your life directly or indirectly. Reflect on how they have inspired you.
3. We learned that Miriam was responsible for reminding Moses of his identity. This set the stage for Moses to say yes to the call of God in Exodus chapter 3. Who in your life is currently reminding you of your identity and your responsibility? Are you making enough time to hear their voice as a counter-influence to the other voices around you?

Spirit Work:

1. Pastor Wesley said that we should never tell our story without sharing the names of women that God has used in our story. He named the five women who played a key role in the life of Moses. Study what the scriptures say about these women below. Then compare the lessons that you learn about them with the women who have impacted your life.
 - a. Shiphrah and Puah - Exodus Ch. 1: 15-21
 - b. Jocabed - Exodus Ch. 2: 2-3, 9b-10; Hebrews 11:23
 - c. Miriam - Exodus Ch. 2: 4, 7
 - d. Bithiah (Pharaoh's Daughter) - Exodus Ch. 2: 5-6, 8-9a
2. Child of God, Pastor Wesley gave us insight into how to finally remove ourselves from the "Jochebed Wilderness." Commit that there will not be another Mother's Day choking back silent tears. Ask the Holy Spirit for the words of your own deliverance. Ask for the power to "love her for who she is and to forgive her for who she was not." Say of her in her humanity: if she could have done better, she would have done better. Do the work, child of God, in the Spirit.
3. Naming the Dead. Typically on Mother's Day we celebrate the living mothers, grandmothers, and mother figures in our midst. This week consider ways you can celebrate the mothers in your life who now rest with the Lord. Take some time to name the dead. Offer prayers of thanksgiving, take a journey through old photo albums, call relatives and share stories with others who were mothered by them. In all things let's give God thanks for the ancestors who paved the way.