

The Story – Moses

We are moving from Genesis to the next book in the bible, the book of Exodus. Exodus means “going out.” The book of Exodus tells the story of the Jewish people, “going out” from Egypt where they had been enslaved, back to the land God promised them, the land God gave to Abraham. (You notice that sometimes in the bible Abraham’s descendants are called Hebrews, sometimes Israelites or the nation of Israel, sometimes Jews or the Jewish people). All those names are referring to the same group of people. The man whom God called to lead the Jews out of Egypt and into the promised land was named Moses and he is the main character in the book of Exodus and in our story the next three weeks. A friend shared a video with me this week that was perfect for this sermon. Watch this!

If you remember all the way back to Genesis 15, God told Abraham **“Your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves and afterward they will come out with great possessions.” Genesis 15:13-14.** That’s exactly what happened and Exodus is the story of God bringing his people out after those four hundred years!

You’ve seen the video, hopefully you’ve read the first two chapters of Exodus as part of the reading guide for this series so you know a little bit of the story. I want to point out a couple of things. First, let me remind you the family connection. We’ve got Abraham, his son Isaac, then Isaac’s son Jacob whom God called Israel, then Jacob’s son Joseph, the guy who rose to power in Egypt. Where did Moses come from? Joseph has a brother named Levi. Levi had a son named Kohath. Kohath had a son named Amram. Amram married a girl named Jochabed and they were the parents of Moses. I just want you to see we aren’t too many generations removed from Abraham and that these are his descendants. Also as I pointed out, God’s word to Abraham is coming to pass through the life and leadership of Moses. After 400 years in a foreign land, God is ready to bring his people out of Egypt and bring them home. It’s the story of redemption and we see it in the life of Moses and the events surrounding him. Notice first...

The power of a godly choice! There are multiple examples of this in the first two chapters of Exodus. Start with two ladies that most folks have never heard of: Shiphrah and Puah. They were Hebrew midwives and had been ordered by the Pharaoh (the king of Egypt), that if the Hebrew baby was a boy they were to kill him but if it was a girl they were to let her live. These Hebrew midwives had their orders. Their lives were on the line, but look what the

bible says about them: **“The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.” Exodus 1:17** They refused to obey the king! When the king asked them why they had let the boys live, they told him the Hebrew women were stronger than the Egyptian women – they gave birth before the midwives even got there! The bible says, **“So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.” Exodus 1:20-21**

The power of a godly choice. Imagine if Shiphrah and Puah had said, “They can’t expect us to risk our lives, to disobey the king of Egypt. Besides, it’s the law of the land. We don’t have a choice, we have to obey the king.” They would have aborted Moses, the one God had chosen as the deliverer for the nation. They made a godly choice, to fear God more than they feared Egypt’s Pharaoh. They made a godly choice, to obey the God of heaven and live by his values rather than to surrender to and embrace the values of Egypt. Think about it, they were living in a culture that had no regard for life, no regard for unborn life, for infant life. I know the story sounds brutal, that they were killing these infants. Of course if they had only had access to ultra sound they could have determined the sex of the unborn baby and simply aborted the males rather than waiting until the birth and then killing them. That’s how we do it in an “advanced culture” like America. In my opinion it doesn’t look like we’ve advanced too much in a few thousand years. The culture of Egypt sounds like the culture of America today, and these two women decided that they could make a difference. If not for the whole nation, at least for this mother, at least for this baby, at least for this family.

Your godly choices make a difference. I keep thinking of Rosa Parks and her choice on that Montgomery, Alabama bus all those years ago. One simple choice made by this little petite, African American woman, refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a city bus, that choice really birthed and galvanized the civil rights movement. Those small choices to choose life, to stand up for what’s right, to refuse to compromise, to refuse to bow down to the powers that be, the choice to obey God in the simple, daily choices, who knows what a difference your godly choice might make. Shiphrah and Puah’s refusal to surrender their values led to the deliverance of God’s people. Your choice makes a difference.

They weren’t the only ladies making a difference. Jochabed, Moses’ mother, decided she would not give up her child, she wouldn’t allow him to be murdered by the Pharaoh, so she hid

him for three months. At three months she made a basket (an ark) and placed the baby in it and put the basket among the reeds along the Nile river. Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe there and just as Jochabed had planned, the princess found Moses, she felt sorry for him and rescued him. Moses' sister was hiding nearby to watch out for Moses. She asked Pharaoh's daughter if she wanted her to find a Hebrew woman to serve as a wet nurse for the baby. As a result, Moses' mother was paid by Pharaoh's daughter to care for Moses until he was old enough to be weaned. How God provides! Jochabed no doubt used that time to tell Moses the story of his people, of his ancestors, to plant in his heart that he was in fact a Hebrew and not an Egyptian. Jochabed made a godly choice that would impact Moses and their people forever. These three Hebrew ladies, Shiphrah, Puah and Jochabed all went against the values and culture of the day in order to obey God and influence the next generation to live for God. What a difference a godly choice can make. What a difference a godly woman, a godly mother can make to shape a generation, to forge a new future.

Here is the second thing I want you to see. **Amram and Jochabed recognized God had a purpose for their son.** Exodus 2 says when Jochabed saw that Moses was a fine child, she hid him for three months. That doesn't mean if he had been a funny looking kid she would have let him drown, not at all. And it doesn't just mean he was a good looking baby. There was something more to this. In Acts 7, in Stephen's sermon before the Sanhedrin, he mentioned the birth of Moses and that when he was born, Moses' parents saw "he was no ordinary child." Hebrews 11 says the same thing of Moses, that his parents "saw he was no ordinary child." What did they see? I think they recognized the hand of God upon their son. They saw that the purpose of God was in Moses, that God had a plan for this child.

I think they saw what everyone should see when we look at one another: **God has a purpose for each of us.** They saw Moses and said, "God's got a plan for this boy and we want to see that plan fulfilled." The English Standard Version of the passage in Acts 7 that refers to Moses reads, "and he was beautiful in God's sight." Here is what you need to know, God looks at you and says "you are beautiful in my sight. I've got a plan and a purpose for you. I created you and designed you uniquely as my workmanship to do good things, to make a difference, to make your life count for the kingdom of God and to count for others. Believe it!"

And how do we make that happen? **How do we see to it that our life fulfills the plan and purpose of God? Obedience!** It happens through a lifetime of godly choices. Simple, daily choices to obey God.

What did Moses do? He was raised in the palace of the Pharaoh, raised as a prince of Egypt. He could have been content to do nothing, just be Egyptian royalty, enjoy the good life. But all the while he knew his people, the Hebrews, were being mistreated and enslaved. All the while he knew there was a purpose, a plan for his life. He knew there was something more and obedience to God was the path he had to follow regardless of the cost involved. Moses chose to obey God. He saw the rewards of obedience outweigh the sacrifice. The writer of Hebrews says it like this, **“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.” Hebrews 11:24-27**

Moses made a choice, a godly choice and it made all the difference. He decided obeying God was more important than gaining the throne of Egypt! Listen to me, Moses wasn’t the only one that was created with a destiny and a purpose to fulfill. I said it a minute ago, but the bible says of all of us, **“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10.** God didn’t create you just to sit in your room and play video games. He didn’t create you to hide from life. He created you to make a difference! You are his workmanship. You have a divine destiny and purpose. Moses isn’t the only one that God thinks is beautiful. He has a plan for you. Listen, I’m not talking about you becoming a missionary to Africa or discovering a cure for cancer. Maybe that’s your destiny, but I’m talking about simple choices. God created you to honor him with your choices. Just fulfill your purpose by daily choosing to serve God and serve others. Like Shiphrah and Puah did. Like Jochabed did. God sees the potential in you. Find it! Live it!

One last thing. From the beginning, Exodus is the story of God calling his people out of slavery and bondage and into the freedom of his promised land. God wanted them to be free. Believe me when I tell you, **God wants us all to be free from slavery and bondage!** The Hebrews were physically enslaved, forced to work against their will, beaten and mistreated. We

are enslaved by sin, by our own bad choices, by our addictions and weaknesses but God wants us to live in freedom. **It's time for your personal Exodus!**

It's time for you to step out of bondage and into the purpose and plan of God. It's time to stop living in compromise and to start living like the child of God He created you to be. Moses refused to live like an Egyptian. He refused to live according to the sinful customs and culture of Egypt. We need to stop living like the world and start living like the people of God. We need to live like people who have been called out of sin. We need to live like people who have been redeemed and called to live a holy life. We need to live like people who have a God ordained destiny and purpose. We've been created as his workmanship, for good works. It's time for our own Exodus. It's time to move away from sin and bondage and move into God's freedom.

Would you like to be set free from sin and bondage today? Is there an addiction or something in your life that keeps you chained up, bound up and you can't seem to get free? Today is the day for liberation! Today is the day for your personal Exodus. Leave the slavery behind and walk into God's redeeming grace. Remember we started by noticing the power of a godly choice. Make a godly choice. Decide today you are going to surrender your life to God. It's time for your personal Exodus, out of bondage and into a new life.