

Message: Letting Go

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Exodus 2:1-10

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When life overwhelms us, we must make hard decisions most prefer to avoid. This often includes parenting. On the one hand, our moms will always be our moms. On the other hand, the role comes with times a transition. Certain rites of passage are essential and must occur. Moms must shift into letting go.

While a few moms abandon, many moms become overprotective. The comedian, Sam Levenson, said on his first day of school, his over-protective mom told the teacher not to punish him if he misbehaved. Instead, the teacher should punish the child sitting next to Sam because, *"My little boy learns best by example."*

Moses' mother had little choice. Had she clung to her son; Pharaoh would have him killed. Though incredibly painful, she made the responsible choice to let him go. She entrusted her infant to God's care. Hannah let Samuel go; Elizabeth let John go; Mary did the same with Jesus.

The nurture of a mom is enormously important in shaping her child. While exceptions may exist for special needs, we raise children to let them go to find their own call and place. Letting go doesn't mean we don't care; it means we can't live our kids' lives for them. We cannot control them. Their outcome is not in our hands. They must learn to face their own reality. Letting go is not fear-based but views the future with optimism and opportunities to grow. We support, affirm, trust and believe in our kids; but we must also release them to the Lord. Our kids aren't really ours; they belong to the Lord.

APPLICATION: In addition to releasing our children to the Lord, we may need to release other things. Do you need let go of bitterness, anger, anxiety, worry or fear? Is there someone who comes to mind that you need to release from your heart? We may not prefer our present situation, but we always have options. Remaining a victim is a tragic choice we do not have to make. Trust the Lord. Lean into Christian community. Don't be passive. What do you need to do to actively start letting go?

Intro: Genesis ends with Joseph being #2 in Egypt. Only Pharaoh was greater. He saved Egypt & his family from famine. Exodus 1 tells us of a seismic SHIFT 450 years later. The new Pharaoh didn't know Joe & the Egyptians became paranoid the Hebrews would revolt. The Egyptians enslaved & made life miserable for the Hebrews. It was the first instance of anti-Semitism, yet the "work 'em to death"

strategy backfired. The Hebrew population explosion continued. Pharaoh, like King Herod when another deliverer was born in Bethlehem centuries later, ordered all the Hebrew baby boys be thrown into the Nile at birth.

Please stand out of the reverence we have in God's Word and turn to Exodus 2:1-

10

*Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman.
2 The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. 3 When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes^[a] and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. 4 And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. 5 Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. 6 When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" 8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. 9 And 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. 10 When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."*

Comment on Vs. 1-3

A Hebrew couple, Amram & Jochebed, already had two children: a 15-year-old daughter, Miriam, & a 3-year-old son, Aaron. When their 3rd son was born into this situation, they had a problem. Generally, the birth of a child is cause for celebration, but they knew Pharaoh's decree. Can you imagine their conversation about what to do with their infant? They could try to hide him for as long as possible until the inevitable happened OR they have an innovative response. They could SHIFT from helplessness & victimhood into a new way to solve their gut-wrenching problem. We solve problems when we take responsibility to solve them.

A long shot was better than certain death. It was known where Pharaoh's daughter bathed, so weaved papyrus rushes into a little ark and coated it with tar so it could float. She put her 3-month-old baby into that little boat. Imagine her holding him & kissing his sweet little face & then placing it upon the bulrushes of the Nile not knowing what would happen to him. She asked her teenage daughter, Miriam (the first "Mary" in the Bible) to observe.

Jochebed basically gave him up for **adoption**. It was a heart-wrenching decision. Surrendering parental rights is usually an agonizing & heart-wrenching decision for the birth mom. Let me share this story about adopting a child the Dennison family had been fostering. (**Mindy's ADOPTION story**) The Dennison's story is a wonderful story about **redemption**. We pray that more people will consider following their example in foster care and adoption.

Application: Few of us can adopt. However, many of us can support a ministry called the Care Portal. On our Perceptions TV special last night, my wife described how Asbury partners with foster or adoptive families in the **CARE PORTAL**. You can do support foster or adoptive families with something inexpensive and one time, or you can do more. It is all on-line. Here's the contact information (put on screen)

1) v 10. ¹⁰ **When the child grew older**, We don't know how long Moses stayed in his parents' home. Was he 4, 7 or 12? Though he grew up in Pharaoh's court, he knew his **IDENTITY** = he was a Hebrew. Jochebed shows tremendous wisdom. She taught Moses enough about his Hebrew faith at such a young age that as a man, he still retained his identity. She also did something. She wasn't hapless and helpless. If the Egyptians "dealt shrewdly"(1:10) with the Hebrews, now she had a plan. It was certainly a longshot, but probably there was only one person in all of Egypt who could have rescued Moses from the Nile = Pharaoh's daughter. Jochebed's plan enlisted the support of others (Miriam and Pharaoh's daughter). Catholics have said, "*Give me a child until they are 7 & we'll keep them for life.*" That appears to be so with Moses. His Hebrew identity outweighed being in Pharaoh's court when he was a man. Proverbs 22:6 *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.* Proverbs aren't ironclad promises – not all kids brought up in a godly home will stay connected to the faith. But parents have the primary responsibility for helping shape their kid's faith. The church can help, but we only have a few hours in comparison with the influence of the home. Parents need to with our kids. Ultimately, parents model the faith & help their children own their own faith. The kids grow up & the parents will be gone & the children will be on their own. They can't be dependent upon their parents forever. Get in the habit of bringing your kids with you to church. Teach them well.

Moses had a lot of shifts in life. His life is broken down into three 40-year increments:

- 1.) 0 – 40 a prince in Pharaoh's court – (he was a SOMEBODY in the Penthouse)

- 2.) 40-80 tending sheep in the wilderness – he shifted (he was a NOBODY in the Outhouse)
- 3.) 80-120 leading the Hebrews out of Egypt and onto the verge of the Promised Land. He spent his last 40 years realizing what GOD could do with a NOBODY.

2) *she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."*

Jochebed didn't have just **one RELEASE** of Moses – she had to **LET GO** a 2nd time. Parenting is a series of releases. 1st day of school, learning to ride the bike or to drive the car, HS graduation. Even after they leave home & make their own decisions, we still must release them. It's like working a clutch with a standard transmission. It's hard to get the feel.

Letting go involves risk – there are no guarantees our kids will make the right choices. They may choose the wrong friends. They may not apply themselves in school. They will have accidents. They may get into addiction. They may marry a person who is not ideal. Parenting takes courage. We don't know will happen on the other side of the shift. **The point of parenting = to teach children responsibility.** Mothering is not smothering. Nor is it abdication and letting go of their kids so they can run wild. There is a balance. Failure to release our kids means trouble.

Letting go is not only a parenting thing, there are other ways we have to let go of certain things:

*Guilt. – so many parents blame themselves. Sometimes it IS our fault. We tend to parent like we were parented. Guilt can be good as it holds us accountable and we can be forgiven, but when guilt turns to shame it's unhealthy.

*Expectations (life seldom works out how we think it should). We need a theology of suffering.

*Bitterness/hatred (i.e. Emmanuel AME Church)

3) Moses was adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter but also by God. All Christians are **ADOPTED**, too. We were once in another family living in the Kingdom of darkness but have been adopted by Jesus Christ into a new family – the Kingdom of light, love and God.

Trust God – that He is working in our lives and in the lives of those we love.

At Coffeyville Jr. College many years ago, an unusual thing happened. It was the day before their annual commencement. A girl came into the President's office. He recognized Nancy as one about to graduate. She was an attractive, bright

honor student. Nancy told him a fascinating story. Her father was killed when she was small. Her mother worked in a factory to support her and her two brothers. Her only other living relative, uncle Ben, had a drinking problem. One night while Nancy, Jim, and Tommy were still children and their mother died unexpectedly. Uncle Ben came to the house: "Uncle Ben what are we going to do now?" Uncle Ben said "I love you kids. I'll go down to court and get you assigned to me. I'll get down on my knees every night and ask God to raise you right." Nancy told the President "and he did. He hasn't had a drink since. He hasn't missed a day of work sense. Jim graduated from medical school. Tom is graduating from MIT this spring. I'm going to a teachers' college. Tomorrow night will be six commencements uncle Ben has attended. But there is one problem. He won't sit in the parent section. He feels it would show disrespect for mom. Could you mention something about uncle Ben at the commencement? The president said of course he would. And he did. An enormous ovation erupted when Uncle Ben came forward. Many in the graduating class knew the story. It was a beautiful moment. Later the president asked uncle Ben, "When you went to court that day, what did you say? You didn't have a very good case as I understand it." "You're right. I was scared to death. When the judge asked me why I thought the children should come and live with me I said: "The Master said, "A man can be born again. He can change. He can change completely. And he can stay changed. I believe the Master meant any man. Even a drunk who have never done well. I believe that when the Master said "Whosoever will" he included me. The judge looked at him a long time and said, "*I believe that deal includes you, too. I'm going to let you take the children for 30 days. We will come check. If all is well then you can keep them permanently.*" "The 3 kids and I got home and we got down on our knees and I promised God that if you hold onto me, I'd hold onto the kids and the 5 of us have been going along together all these years."