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"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:30).

A Mother's Faith

Lesson Subject: To fulfill His purposes, God uses mothers who fear Him.

L43. Date: June 1982. **Text:** Exodus 2:1-10. **Topic:** Home; Motherhood.

When a Sunday School teacher told her class that it was God who made people good, a little lad replied, "Maybe so. But mothers help a lot." Indeed, mothers do help a lot!

God has used many Christian mothers to mold the lives of their children in the way of righteousness. There is no way to estimate the influence of a mother who speaks to her infant child of the love of God, who sings the precious songs of Jesus to the child, who reads or tells Bible stories to him, and who teaches him to pray. Thank God for such mothers. May their numbers increase!

Typical of mothers who instruct their children in the ways of God is the mother of Moses. God made that man what he became through the influence of a spiritual mother when he was a child. Her faith in God was one of her outstanding qualities. She challenges every mother to trust God concerning her children.

L HAVE FAITH IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF GOD

The first thing God reveals about the mother of Moses was the fact that she was married (Exodus 2:1). She and her husband had faith that God knew what was best when He set the institution of marriage in human society. They followed that God-ordained plan of leaving father and mother and cleaving to one's partner in marriage.

There can be no improvement over God's plan. The modern custom of some in living together without marriage is soundly condemned in Holy Scripture. It is gross immorality and will be judged of God.

God is concerned about the generations to come, as well as the generation which is. Children cannot be taught and trained properly apart from the stability of normal home life. Therefore, God instituted marriage and made it so permanent that it lasts a lifetime. Both the married partners and the children they bear profit from that arrangement.

The reason people are fearful of the marriage commitment is that they do not have faith in God. It is safe to trust the institutions which God has set in human society.

II. HAVE FAITH IN THE FUTURE UNDER GOD

Moses' parents married under dire circumstances. They were slaves of the Egyptians, as was all their nation. They were forbidden to bear children (particularly a male child) because their masters wanted to decrease their numbers. If a male child was born, they were under the command of Pharaoh to kill the infant at the hour of his birth (Exodus 1). And yet, they married, trusting God concerning the future.

A. A mother of faith is willing to receive a child from God. That was one purpose of God in the creation (Genesis 1:28; 9:1). Children must be looked upon as *"an heritage of the LORD . . . his reward"* (Psalm 127:3), not the result of a biological law. Blessed is the child whose parents receive him as from the Lord.

B. A mother of faith is willing to trust God with the life and future of her child (Exodus 2:2). Moses' mother hid him for three months after his birth. She feared God more than she feared Pharaoh (Hebrews 11:23). The thought of abortion never occurred to her, no more than the thought of killing her baby after it had been born. Either way would be high rebellion against God and an indication of lack of trust in Him.

C. A mother of faith is willing to risk her life for her child (Exodus 2:2). The parents of Moses were placing their lives at stake for the sake of their infant son. Pharaoh had commanded the death of all Hebrew males at the time of birth (Exodus 1:15-22), and to disobey him would be certain and merciless death for a slave. Imagine the problem of hiding a healthy and growing child for three months. But the mother thought nothing was as important as protecting the child God had given her, even at the cost of her own life.

D. A mother of faith is willing to trust her child to the care of God (Exodus 2:3, 4). There came a time when baby Moses could be hidden no longer. The mother formed a basket made of the reeds which grew in the wet areas of Egypt. She covered it with an oil-based substance (called "pitch") to make it waterproof. She placed the child in the basket and put the basket in the flags which grew at the edge of the Nile River (to keep it from floating away in the current?). Thus the child was committed to the superintending care of God.

Blessed is the mother who follows this example: receiving her child from God, trusting the child to God, risking her life for the child, and committing the child to God. A man of God like Moses might well come from such a house.

III. HAVE FAITH IN THE PROVIDENTIAL CARE OF GOD

It was no small thing for Moses' mother to leave her child, for she could not stay nearby. An older child of the family, a daughter named Miriam, stood at a great distance to see what would happen. She had to trust that young girl to be faithful to watch, as she trusted God to do what He would do with the life of her little son. What an act of faith!

God superintended it all (Exodus 2:5-8). The daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash in the river. (That was probably a religious ritual, since the Egyptians thought of the waters of the Nile as "sacred" waters, and there would have been bath facilities in the palace of Pharaoh.) God brought her eyes to rest upon the little basket in the reeds by the water's edge. A servant girl was sent to fetch the basket. When it was opened, Pharaoh's daughter recognized immediately that it was a Hebrew child in the basket (one that her father had condemned to death by his decree), but her heart was moved by his weeping. She had compassion on him.

God caused the baby's young sister to come forward at that very time. She asked if the princess would like to have her find a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for her. The princess instructed her to do so. Miriam went in haste and brought her mother — the mother of the baby. Pharaoh's daughter said, *"Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages"* (verse 9). So God gave the child back to his mother, no longer under the death penalty of Pharaoh, but protected by the power of Pharaoh.

Blessed is the mother who commits her child to the providential care of God. God will give the child back to her with blessings!

IV. HAVE FAITH IN THE BLESINGS OF GOD

Each parent wants to see the full development of each child. Moses' parents saw him develop physically and spiritually.

A. Faith is rewarded with the physical well-being of the child. The Bible says simply of Moses, *"The child grew"* (verse 10). But what a word of grace is that! The child did not die under the decree of Pharaoh; the child grew under the care of his mother. How tenderly she must have cared for him. God had given him to her twice, once at his birth and once again from the hands of Pharaoh's daughter.

Not every child will be healthy and fully developed. Some sickness and infirmity is for the glory of God (John 9:3). Blessed is the parent who trusts God's decisions concerning the physical, as well as the spiritual, condition of the child.

B. Faith is rewarded in the spiritual commitment of the child. When baby Moses grew to certain years, he was given over to Pharaoh's daughter to be reared after the custom of the Egyptians. There he would be exposed to all the idolatry and superstition of that pagan culture. What would happen to him? Moses' parents left that in the hands of God.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter . . . Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" (Hebrews 11:24, 26).

All the idolatry in the world cannot overthrow the faith set in the heart of a little child who is taught from infancy to love and serve God. Blessed are the mothers who commit their lives to the training of their child in the ways of God, knowing that when he is old he will not depart from them (Proverbs 22:6).

QUESTIONS

1. Why is a mother important in rearing a child?
2. Why did God institute marriage in human society?
3. Under what conditions was Moses born?
4. How did his parents show their faith in God?
5. How was God's providence manifest in the care of Moses?
6. What shows that it is safe to commit your child to God?
7. How can you assure the physical well being of your child?
8. How can you assure the spiritual welfare of your child?

9. Why are the first years of a child's life so important in his training?
10. How have you profited personally from this study?