

The Unnamed Woman of Faith

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[0 : 00] In honor of Mother's Day, I'm going to deviate from my plan, my preaching through the book of Luke, and bring you a message that is about a mother.

Of a very famous, famous man in Jewish history. And of course, I'm not talking about Jesus of Nazareth, because to many Jews, then and now, Jesus was perhaps the most infamous of men. Not famous, though to us he certainly is the most famous. And we could honor Jesus' mother, Mary, and I've done that before on Mother's Day.

But I want to refer and focus on someone else this morning. In Jewish history, few are more famous than Moses.

Moses. The great deliverer. The great leader. The great lawgiver. Right? I mean, a great man was Moses.

[1 : 24] Not only to Jews, but also to Christians alike. And so, we have kind of a summary of what really defined the greatest thing about Moses in Hebrews chapter 11, God's Hall of Faith.

That famous chapter in the book of Hebrews. And so, having said that, I want you to take your Bibles this morning and turn to Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 23.

And at least here at the beginning, I'm going to just read that verse. Verse 23. My message this morning, intended, of course, to honor motherhood.

And by honoring a particular mother in history, in biblical history, it will focus on just this one verse. And to supplement that, we'll also be looking at Exodus chapter 2.

You don't need to turn to that yet. But this is a mother. A mother of faith. And in this part of Hebrews chapter 11, starting with verse 23, and really it goes on for several verses, the highlight or the key figure in this block of verses in Hebrews chapter 11 is Moses.

[2 : 41] But the passage does not start with Moses. Even though Moses' name is mentioned there, it doesn't start with Moses' faith. It begins with the faith of some unnamed individuals, which is not uncommon in Scripture.

Not uncommon in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, because when we get toward the end, we're going to get a whole string of unnamed people of faith. But this particular passage that is effectively about Moses and his faith, begins with the faith of his parents.

Moses' parents. And so let me read the passage. Hebrews chapter 11, verse 23. By faith Moses, but again, not Moses' faith at this point, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child.

King James has the word proper child. And they were not afraid of the king's command. So there you have it. Hebrews chapter 11, verse 23. A reference to the faith of Moses' parents.

Now, who were the parents of Moses? What were their names? And, you know, you really have to do a little research in the Bible to come up with their names.

[4 : 02] And in order to do it, you have to search some specific genealogies that are provided for us in Scripture, like Exodus 18 and Exodus 20 and Numbers 26 and 1 Chronicles chapter 6.

Those are some specific genealogies that provide for us the names of these parents that are honored here in Hebrews chapter 11.

And so when you look at these various genealogies, then you discover that Moses' father was Amram.

Amram, who, by the way, was just five generations out from Abraham. It was Abraham and Isaac and then Jacob and then Levi, who was head of the Levites, the tribe of Levites.

And then Kohath his son and then Kohath's son Amram. And so we can say that Abraham was Moses' great, great, great, great grandfather.

[5 : 02] That makes him pretty close to Abraham, of course, when you consider that these guys lived a long time in those days. And there's a pretty big space of time. But you can kind of see how he fits in kind of the genealogy of the various families and great people in the life of the Hebrews.

Now, enough about his father, Moses' father, because this is not Father's Day, this is Mother's Day. And so what was his mother's name? Who was she?

We know what she did. We have that not only here in Hebrews 11, but we also know this from Exodus chapter 2.

And the Bible there devotes 11 verses, or excuse me, 10 verses to describe what the mother of Moses did.

And yet in those 10 verses, not one time, is her name mentioned. Again, which is strange, but not all that unusual. In fact, there are a number of great, great men in the Bible who have had mothers, and their mothers are unnamed.

[6 : 08] But this is kind of strange when you think about it. That's why I entitled this, The Unnamed Hero of Faith, which I think could be said about a lot of mothers who've lived over the course of history.

Now, to find the name of this faithful mother, the mother of Moses, you again have to look at the genealogy. So when you read about what she did, and some descriptions about her in Hebrews, and also in Exodus chapter 2, you don't find her name, so you've got to go elsewhere.

Again, go to the genealogies. And when you go to Exodus chapter 6 and verse 20, and also Numbers chapter 26 and verse 59, you writing all those down? You can check this later.

But you'll find her name. And the Numbers passage, Numbers 26, 59, reads this way. The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed.

That's how you pronounce it, even though in English it's spelled with a J. In Hebrew, it's Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt.

[7 : 15] So she was born in Egypt. And to Amram, she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam. And we know that, don't we? About Moses' brother and also sister.

All right, so now we can add some names in the Hebrews 11, 23 passage. By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents Amram and Jochebed, because they saw he was a beautiful child.

And they were not afraid of the king's command. All right, now, it's interesting to me that the author of Hebrews, Tom, some would say that was Paul.

Right? Some would say that. The author of Hebrews ascribes this faith to both parents. Not just to Amram, not just to Jochebed.

So it's ascribed to both parents. But when you read the details of this in Exodus chapter 2, it only mentions Jochebed. Not by name, of course, but only mentions the mother of Moses.

[8 : 22] It says, When she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank.

We kind of know about that story, don't we? There's not a single mention of Amram, Moses' father here in this entire account, except for verse 1 where it says, A man took as his wife a daughter of Levi.

And that's all we have here about Amram. The rest of it is all about the mother of Moses, Jochebed. So what's the deal? Well, men, let's just admit the facts, okay?

That the ladies are typically more spiritually perceptive than are us guys. It's just a simple fact. Now, not always, of course.

But I would say usually, and maybe it was kind of like this. Jochebed says to her husband, Amram, Amram, honey, this child has something special about this child, right?

[9 : 33] And he says, Huh? Oh, yeah, right. I think you're right now that you mention it. And Jochebed says, or Jochebed says, God has big plans for little Moses.

I mean, you can see that, can't you? You can sense that with your spirit, right? What? My spirit? Oh, yeah, yeah, yes, definitely. And then Jochebed says, We're going to hide this little baby from Pharaoh's men.

And when we can't hide him any longer, we're going to put him in a little, a small little boat and launch it out into the Nile River. And that's when Amram, of course, puts his foot down and he lays down the law and he gets the last word in the discussion.

Just like all men who are good and wise heads of their households, we always get the last word in our household. And so Amram said, Yes, dear. That's what we'll do.

I don't know if it was like that. And seriously, Amram, the father of Moses, certainly was, no doubt, a man of faith. Otherwise, Hebrews 11, 23 would not have mentioned him here.

[10:39] He was a man of faith. But clearly, Jochebed's faith and her subsequent works of faith is the emphasis in Exodus chapter 2, as we'll see here in just a moment.

She is a hero of faith. She was a mother of faith. So let's, this morning, consider Jochebed's faith. Her faith.

And to get the background of this, just in case not all of us are familiar with the story, I do want you to turn to Exodus chapter 2 now. And I want to read the first 10 verses.

So we can kind of get squared away on the whole story and refresh ourselves on the various events that took place. The what and the why-fors and so forth.

Exodus chapter 2, verse 1 begins this way, And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. So the woman conceived and bore a son.

[11:43] And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank.

And his sister stood afar off to know what would be done to him. That is, just to keep eye over him. Now, why does she do this? Well, you know, previously, in the account here in Exodus, that Pharaoh had issued an edict that all male babies born to the Hebrew mothers should be put to death immediately.

As soon as they're identified as males, in fact, he said to the people, throw them out into the river, murder them, kill them, all the male babies.

And so, what did she do? She hid Moses three months. And so, then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, and her maidens walked along the riverside.

And when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent for her maid to get it. And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him and said, this is one of the Hebrews' children.

[13:02] Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, you can imagine her running up at that very moment, shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?

The Pharaoh's daughter said to her, go. So the maiden went and called the child's mother. Then 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. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, because I drew him out of the water.

So that's the story. And we're pretty familiar with that, especially if we've seen Cecil B. DeMille's Ten Commandments. You know some of the story, though they get a little bit of that wrong.

And so that's the story. That's the historical background. And so with that in mind, looking at not only this passage in Hebrews 11, 23, but putting that together with Exodus chapter 2, verses 1 through 10, which I just read, what can we observe about this mother's faith?

[14:14] Well, several things. And the first thing, I think, would be this. Her faithful sight. That's number one.

Her faithful sight. That's the first thing we learn about it. About her faith. Both passages clearly tell us, not only Hebrews 11, 23, but also the Exodus account.

Both of these passages clearly tell us that Jochebed did what she did because she saw what she saw. The Bible says that this is what she saw. She saw that he, that is Moses, her newborn infant, was a beautiful child.

That's what she saw. Now, what does that mean? Does it mean that Moses was a beautiful baby? An exceptionally, uniquely beautiful baby?

Well, maybe so. I don't know. Maybe he was a very beautiful baby. But I don't think that's what this is talking about. I mean, really, what mother does not think her child, her newborn infant, is beautiful?

[15:18] That doesn't have anything to say about faith. Though maybe with some babies it does take faith. I don't know. But to a mother, every child, every one of her children are beautiful.

Beautiful. So, that really can't be what's going on here. That's not a tribute to her faith. No, it's more than that. And I think we can go to another passage in Acts chapter 7 and verse 20 and find the answer.

In Acts chapter 7 verse 20 we have Stephen's sermon, Deacon Stephen's sermon just before he was to be put to death by his lynch mob. And this is what he said.

He said, When Moses was born he was well-pleasing to God. There's the idea. He was well-pleasing to God and he was brought up in his father's house for three months.

So, really it's a reference to the same kind of thing that Hebrews is talking about that is referring us all the way back to Exodus chapter 2. He was well-pleasing to God and somehow Jacob saw that.

[16:26] Not just that he was a beautiful child but that he was pleasing to God. Somehow, Jacob, the mother, this mother of Moses, this faithful mother, somehow she was allowed to see God's special concern, purpose, even perhaps something of his plan, I think surely so, for Moses.

She was able to see that and that is why she opposed Pharaoh's orders, his edict, and she hid Moses for as long as she could. That's why.

She did what she did because she saw what she saw. And God called it faith. He called it faith by faith. She hid Moses three months and was not afraid of the king's command.

We need to understand something though at this point. Her faith was not blind faith. It wasn't a blind faith. Her faith was not a mother's positive thinking about her child and her child's future.

Her faith was not based upon some kind of wishful thinking. And all mothers have this desire for their children to be good and to be accomplished and so forth.

[17:42] It wasn't that. Her faith was a response to the revealed Word of God. That's what it was. Remember, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, Romans 10, 17.

Jacobed and her husband Amram were students of God's Word. That was the basis for their faith and the basis for their actions as a result of their faith.

You see, God had made a promise many, many years before. In Genesis chapter 15 verse 13, He promised that the Hebrews would be in bondage in Egypt for 400 years.

It's recorded in Scripture long before it took place. And at the end of the 400 years, God promised a deliverer. They would be delivered. Now, Jacobed knew God's Word on that.

Jacobed, by faith, believed God's Word on that. And Jacobed knew, as did Abraham, that the 400 years was about up. It was getting really close.

[18:52] And so somehow, not only because of what God had said, had revealed His Word, coupled with the Holy Spirit, applying that to the heart, giving her faith, somehow, when she then looked into the face of her newborn son, she knew that this was the one.

This is the one that God would use to deliver the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt. Somehow, she knew that with the eyes of faith. God had revealed it to her, not only in Word, but also in her spirit, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

And, you know, aren't you glad? Aren't you glad that Jacobed saw that in Moses? Aren't you glad that she had a faithful sight that served God's purposes and served in God's providence to spare Moses to do what he did?

You know, it got me to thinking, in our lifetime, countless little babies have never had a chance to live. Can I say that? Never had a chance.

And we read this account here, and I mention it about Pharaoh and his edict, and we're horrified when we read about Pharaoh, Egypt's Pharaoh, putting all those male babies to death.

[20:15] We don't know how many. But what about all the millions of little unborn babies who have been put to death through abortion just in our country alone?

What about that? Are we as appalled? Maybe at one time we were. I wonder if we are anymore as appalled as we should be. Who, unlike Moses, never, ever got a chance to be what they could be. I read an article this past week about a certain professor at UCLA Medical School, and he posed a case study to his students there, his medical students, and he said, I want to give you a case of a certain family, and I want you to decide what ought to be done.

And so here's the family history, this case. The father has syphilis, the mother has tuberculosis, they already have four children, one, the first one is blind, born blind, the second one died, the third is deaf, the fourth has tuberculosis, and the mother is pregnant with her fifth child.

And so, suppose the parents are willing to have an abortion, but only if you decide, if you decide they should. What do you think? What a case posed to these students.

[21 : 40] You probably have guessed the majority of the students in that medical class at UCLA voted that the parents should have an abortion, should abort the child. And so then the professors say, congratulations, you have just murdered Beethoven.

Because that was the situation in home life of Beethoven before he was born. But this mother, see, Jechebed, the mother of Moses, was a woman of faith, and she knew that God had a plan for her baby, and so she risked all to give him the chance to live, and to grow up to be God's man, her faithful sight, you see.

Second, her faithful fight, her faithful fight. You see, seeing faith is not enough. It can't stand alone. She couldn't just say, God has a great plan for this little baby, I can see that with the eyes of faith, and so God, you take over from here. You protect this child, you take care of this child.

If Moses is going to make it, it's because you do it. And so, just got to let go and let go. No, the Bible says that by faith, it may seem like a simple thing to us, but by faith, Moses, when he was born, was hid.

[23 : 08] He was hid. That is, she put her faith into action. Her faithful fight. Listen, Moses, I think, would have died if Jacob had not put works with her faith.

Jacob didn't just sit around and say, my husband and I are just simply trusting God. And so, we'll just see what happens. She put works with her faith.

James chapter 2 verse 17 very clearly states, faith by itself, if it's all alone, if it does not have works, is what?

It's dead. Worthless. You see, her faithful sight was immediately followed by her faithful fight.

I mean, raising children in a hostile and godless culture is a fight of faith, even for mothers today, especially for mothers today. And so, Jacob's faithful fight, she hid him three days.

[24 : 16] And you can imagine how hard that would be. How do you hide a baby? For three months? Much less for three days. Her faithful fight.

I want you to notice that she did not practice fatalism here. Not fatalism, you know, saying God's will, let go and let God, what will be, will be. It wasn't a fatalism.

That was not her approach to motherhood. And also, she, on the other side of that, other end of that, she did not practice fanaticism. She didn't take Moses and throw him out to the crocodile and say, let's just see if he can swim.

You know. Wasn't any kind of fanaticism in that sense. It was somewhere in between. She worked out her faith and she hid him for three months.

And when she couldn't hide him in the home anymore, she put him in a basket that was waterproof and put it out in the Nile to hide among the reeds and so forth.

[25 : 18] God took over from there. We're considering the faith of Jacob, the mother of Moses. She is included in God's hall of faith.

That's what many call Hebrews 11. And she's included there again, not because she was the mother of famous Moses, okay? She's included there because she believed God.

Her faith was in God. All right, so her faithful sight, it was a believing faith. Her faithful fight, it was a working faith.

And third, her faithful might. her faithful might, it was a strong faith. Hebrews 11.23 says she did the unthinkable.

She did not fear the king's command. That's more than just saying she stood against it, didn't agree with it. She didn't fear it, which is the same as saying she did not fear the king, the king of Egypt.

[26 : 23] According, again, according to Exodus chapter 1, verse 22, Pharaoh commanded all his people saying every son who is born you shall you cast into the river. Can you imagine that?

Can you imagine that? And many did apparently. Many were killed. This was the king's edict, the king's command. We're talking about the Pharaoh who was considered to be a god himself.

This was his command. But Jacobed was not afraid. that's pretty incredible really when you think about it. She was just a woman. Poor woman.

Just a poor mother. And on top of that she was a helpless slave. She wasn't a citizen of Egypt.

There was no due process for her.

There was no court she could appeal to. No lawyer that would take up her case. She was a slave in Egypt. And a tyrant sat upon the throne of Egypt.

[27 : 30] And he had issued an irrevocable law. And so it was dark times for one of God's mothers. Clearly. And she was just a helpless slave.

A helpless mother. You know God's people today can't help but feel a little bit helpless. I'm talking about God's people. Right here in this God-blessed country.

I can't help but feel a little helpless and even more helpless as the years go by. I mean we are more and more like slaves. Excuse me for saying slaves to our government.

A government that refuses to hear our voice just because we are Christians. I mean that's all it takes. You're a Christian? Okay well we're not going to listen to you. You got something to say you keep it in the church hall.

And so that's just the way things are. What's happened to our republic? I can't help but think in this way. I mean a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. It seems to me that every branch of government today and every agency of government has power over us.

[28 : 45] I mean even the legal use of force. Every agency to take our money, to take our job, to take our property, to take our children even.

I mean our freedoms bit by bit are taken away by the edicts of kings and high court judges. That's where we live today. But we're not afraid.

Amen? We are not afraid. Her faithful sight, her faithful fight, her faithful might, and one more. Her faithful delight.

Her faithful delight. Do you know what is the delight of every faithful mother? A famous son? No, I don't think so.

A faithful daughter? I mean a famous daughter? No. very few children turn out to be a Moses no matter how faithful the parent is.

[29 : 55] So, what then? What is the delight of every faithful mother? Well, look back at Hebrews 11 and 23 and I think we'll find out.

Verse 23, and I read this a moment ago, by faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, that's Jacobet and Amram, because they saw he was a beautiful child, he was pleasing to God.

And they were not afraid of the king's command. Now watch what comes next. By faith, Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, that would be the Hebrews, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, which was his culture.

Now, believe me, Moses was given all that Egypt had to offer. I mean, he was brought up in Pharaoh's home, he had the best education, he was the most wealthy, had everything possible and all the pleasures that go with it in a godless culture, and he refused all of that.

verse 26 says, esteeming or considering the reproach of Christ, the Messiah, the disgrace for the sake of Christ.

[31 : 16] He esteemed, considered that greater riches, he said, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, all the treasures in Egypt, for he looked to the reward, eternal reward.

Now, that's real faith, isn't it? I mean, this is an incredible statement of his faith. But look further. By faith he forsook Egypt, and what?

Not fearing the wrath of the king. That sounds familiar, doesn't it? Right? I mean, didn't the Bible just say that about Moses' parents?

It did. How did Moses get this faith? From whom did he get it? Well, it came from God, of course, but it came through Amram and Jacobed.

God gave Moses this faith through his parents, his faithful parents. Now, young people, do you know what would be the greatest delight of your mother?

[32 : 28] and what it would be, and your father too, that the faith God gave them to put in you would be the faith you have right now and are living according to.

You don't have to be a genius at school, valedictorian in high school, summa cum laud in college. college. You don't have to be a corporate executive.

You don't have to be some famous surgeon, some cutting edge scientist. You don't have to be at the top of your field, whatever that field is. Her delight would be that you are a man of faith and a woman of faith.

That's faith's delight. Thank you.