

LENT 2024

# JOURNEY to FREEDOM

THURSDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

**READ: Exodus 1:15-22**

***'But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live.'*** Exodus 1:17

Most of us find the suffering of children incredibly hard to accept, whether we see that close at home, or on our screens in countries far away. Here, as so often, it is those who are the very youngest who suffer the most from a harsh and brutal regime.

What a terrible task to be given to midwives, whose mission was to protect life at its most fragile and vulnerable. And yet from somewhere, these ordinary women find extraordinary courage to dare to do something different. How is that? It is because buried in this passage, there is a key phrase: 'The midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them....' (v.17).

What does it mean to fear God? Throughout the Bible we are constantly and wonderfully reminded 'do not be afraid'. And yet here, it seems that fear is a positive factor. This kind of fear is about revering God above everything... it's having a greater loyalty, knowing that most important of all is putting God first... saying 'yes' to Him, which may mean saying 'no' to others.

The midwives were given a very clear command by a brutal dictator, and yet they had a greater loyalty. They recognised that whatever others wanted them to do, and however powerful those people might be, they were first of all going to serve their God no matter what. As they did so, their courage and integrity were rewarded.

This may seem a million miles away from your situation or mine. However, as we begin the season of Lent, it is worth considering, what it might mean to you to give your greatest loyalty to God. What would that mean for your ambition, your money, your time, and the choices you make in your life? Would saying 'yes' to God mean saying 'no' to someone or something else?

For us, living in the fear of the Lord may mean we make sacrifices and face tricky choices. For other Christians throughout the world, living in the fear of the Lord may involve the threat of persecution or death. Let's commit to pray for them.

**Let us pray:** *Lord God, show us what it means to be faithful to you in all we do and say. Help us to remember in prayer all those whose faith in you puts them in danger. Amen.*

**The Revd Helen Scamman, Start of Ministry Officer**