

im-POSSIBLE – A Courageous Faith

6/28/20

Hebrews 11:23 | Exodus 2:1-10

Sunday AM

If you've been around church for any time, you've likely heard some version of this story. In 1854, burdened by the faith struggles of a young man in his S.S. class, **Edward Kimball**, a S.S. teacher in a small Detroit church, went to visit this young man at his work to talk to him about his faith. During this visit, D.L. Moody would come to faith in Christ. Moody would go on to become one of the greatest evangelists in history sharing the gospel w/ over 100 million people and later becoming the founder of the Moody Church and the Moody Bible Institute.

But this isn't where this story ends. Thru his ministry, Moody invested in **J. Wilbur Chapman** – whose ministry would become influential in the life of a man named **Billy Sunday**. It was thru Sunday's ministry, evangelist **Mordecai Ham** was invited to preach a revival in Charlotte, NC – where a young farm boy named, **Billy Graham**, would give his life to Christ – and most of us know what happened next.

Yet... **Who was Edward Kimball?** He was a dry goods salesman from the Midwest who reluctantly agreed to teach a S.S. class of teenage boys – but gave it all he had to love those young men to Jesus.

He was a nobody from nowhere who God used for his glory b/c he was willing to be used for God's purposes!

Which brings us to our text and *faith heroes* today. If you'll turn to **Hebrews 11:23/Exodus 2:1-10** – I want you to meet (2) people of faith so obscure the passages surrounding the events of their faith don't even mention their names – we have to discover their names in **Exodus 6:20** in a lineage of the Tribe of Levi. Yet it's b/c of their **courageous faith** that Israel would have a man to deliver them out of Egypt back to the Promise land. Their names are **Amram/Jochebed** – and they were the parents of Moses.

By faith Moses' parents hid him for (3) mo. after he was born, b/c they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. Hebrews 11:23

Now listen to the full account in **Exodus 2:1-10** –

A man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw he was a fine child, she hid him for (3) months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it w/ tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" "Yes, go," she replied. So, the girl went and got the baby's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So, the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water." Exodus 2:1-10

Let me begin by saying it always amazes me how God seemingly prefers to **take a nobody from nowhere to make them a somebody somewhere for his glory**. He did w/ **Elijah!** He did w/ **David!** And He did it here w/ **Amram/Jochebed**. Now, **if we're being honest, this runs counter-intuitive to the way we think**. We wonder why God doesn't use the famous/influential for His purposes. I can't tell you how often I've heard people say they wish some famous athlete, politician, or movie star would come to faith so God could use them to proclaim His truth. Yet over/over, what we see is that God most often uses the obscure/forgotten to accomplish His kingdom work. **Maybe it's b/c they're willing/humbly capable of making it about Him instead of about them**. Who knows?

Here's what I do know – the faith displayed by the parents of Moses is so significant, it's been recorded in **God's Hall of Faith** here in **Hebrews 11** – *and there are a couple things we can glean from their faith to help us in our journey of faith.*

I Faith **TRUSTS** God More than it **FEARS** Man

By faith Moses' parents hid him for (3) mo. after he was born, b/c they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. Hebrews 11:23

Understand the climate/culture when Moses arrived on the scene. The Israelites had been living in Egypt for 400 yrs – and for 400 yrs, they'd been dazzled and immersed in Egyptian culture. For 400 yrs they had drifted from God and become like the world around them. **W/out question, they were a long way away from the days of Joseph.** Sadly, by this time, the Pharaoh's of Egypt had long forgotten Joseph and had relegated the Israelites as slaves to push their kingdom forward. In fact, the Hebrew population was growing so rapidly, to control it, the latest Pharaoh decreed a **genocide** – ordering every Jewish midwife to kill the Hebrew baby boys the moment they were born. When this didn't work, he ordered every boy to be thrown into the Nile to drown. Listen to **Exodus 1:15-22:**

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives..., "When you are helping the Hebrew women in childbirth, if you see the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it's a girl, let her live." The midwives, however, feared God and didn't do what the Pharaoh had told them to do and let the boys live. Then the Pharaoh summoned the midwives, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?" They answered, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive." So, God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And b/c the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every Hebrew boy born must be thrown into the Nile, but let every girl live."

I don't know if you noticed, but Pharaoh's edict included **(2) threats:** The 1st was **explicit** – *kill every Jewish baby boy!* The 2nd is **implicit** – *if you disobey this order then you risk your own life.* Thus, every parent had a difficult choice to make – they could kill their sons and save themselves or they could attempt to save their sons and likely orphan their children.

But Amram/Jochebed came up w/ a **3rd option** – let the boy live by setting him afloat in a basket on the Nile, and by God's grace – let's see what happens!

It's no wonder Moses had the issues he had – after all, ***from birth he was a basket case cast into de-NILE!*** Sorry I couldn't resist – it was just too easy!

What exactly happened? Upon his birth, Amram and Jochebed knew there was something different, something special, about Moses – remember, Moses was their 3rd child – Mariam/Aaron were older. It was b/c of this sense (or calling) they defied the Pharaoh's edict – even while understanding the consequences b/c ***they trusted God more than they feared man.***

Now, it's unclear from Scripture how they knew it, but they knew something was special about Moses. I find it interesting that the Jewish historian **Josephus** wrote that Amram received a prophetic Word/vision from Jehovah sharing w/ him the destiny of Moses.

Don't Miss – for whatever reason, Amram/Jochebed trusted God had a better plan than the will of Pharaoh, so they risked their lives to protect Moses' life b/c ***they trusted God more than they feared Pharaoh.***

II True Faith **ACTS** on Hope Seeking Promise

But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it w/ tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him.

First, Amram/Jochebed, by faith, saved Moses from death; then second, they acted in faith to protect his life by setting him afloat on the Nile.

Notice carefully that Amram/Jochebed exercised faith and acted on their beliefs b/c *true faith always acts – faith w/out works (effort) is dead* – it is no faith at all.

True faith doesn't just sit around twiddling its thumbs waiting for something to happen; it moves in the direction of God anticipating that God to show up and act like God. In fact, any kind of "faith" that sits around doing nothing in anticipation of God moving is no faith at all but a form of fatalism. Why? B/c Faith works! Faith acts! It moves! It seeks! And when it does – according to Jesus – faith FINDS!

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and everyone who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Mt. 7:7-8

Meaning faith is mobile, agile, and seeking. It's on a quest to discover/experience. It acts/moves w/in the prescriptive will/promises of God – always pursuing, always looking, always longing for His will to be done in/thru our lives. In fact, for the believer there is no greater ambition than to *actively press on in faith toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*.

Lest we forget – faith is living in the hope of God's promise, presence, and provision knowing it is certain even though it's not always visible/tangible.

This doesn't mean faith is unwitting, dumb, and ignorant – actually it's quite to the contrary – **faith is calculating, hearing, seeing, and expecting**.

And this is the kind of faith Amram/Jochebed put on full display when they set Moses afloat on the Nile. **They were not ransacked by paralysis by analysis** – they put feet to their faith and moved into action in what they perceived was the direction of God.

Do you think they were unaware Pharaoh's daughter regularly came to the Nile to bathe? Do you think they were unaware that Moses' only hope was to somehow have the protection of Egypt over him? **I believe, in faith, they made a calculated decision trusting that somehow, in some way, God was going to make things work out for Moses' good and for God's glory.**

Did they have full assurance that Pharaoh's daughter would not reject/drown Moses? Of course not! Did they think she'd take a liking to Moses and desire to become his surrogate mom? Not likely... But they trusted God had a plan, and in faith, acted upon what seemed the most reasonable/possible – trusting God for the results – and often times, **that's what God is looking from us as we follow Him.**

Not that we to operate w/ the wisdom of the world, but that we apply common sense w/ truth from His Word – and a hint of faith – leaving the results to Him.

BTW – do you remember when we discussed the faith of Noah talking about the how God instructed Noah to cover the boat in pitch – and how that was a shadow of things to come in the ark of the cross?

If you remember – the term used for **pitch** (*koper*) is a salvation term referring to paying a ransom in full. A ransom is a price required to redeem a person to life.

When Jochebed prepared this basket – *whether she knew it or not* – the Bible uses the same term for the basket covered in pitch as it did for Noah’s ark – assigning the idea that Moses’ basket was an ark of sorts providing salvation for his life.

Notice the results – not only did Pharaoh’s daughter find favor for Moses – but she was open to having a Hebrew mother nurse Moses for a period of time.

Then Moses’ sister asked Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?” “Yes, go,” she replied. So, the girl went and got the baby’s mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.” So, the woman took the baby and nursed him. Later, when the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, “I drew him out of the water.” Exodus 2:7-10

Isn’t just so fortuitous. Mariam just happened to be right there – *Mary on the spot* – to suggest a Hebrew woman (her mother) nurse Moses until further notice.

Call it God-ronic! Call it the chosen will of God. *Call it salvation by grace thru faith* – one thing is certain – this blessing would’ve never occurred unless Amram/Jochebed put their faith into motion and trusted God for the results by setting Moses afloat. And the same will likely be true for us. ***The fruit of faith is found not in the planting but in the harvest of actively putting our faith in motion.***

And I’m certain God’s response to their faith was far beyond what they could’ve ever dreamed/imagined. They set their son, marked w/ a death sentence over his head, afloat on the Nile only to have him come back to them w/ the provision/protection of the very person who wanted their son dead. **If that’s not a God thing – then I don’t know what is!**

When you think about it – God really does have a sense of humor. The Pharaoh, as an instrument of Satan, was trying to wipe out the Jews; but instead, he ended up paying the food bill, diaper bill, and clothing bill for the very child who would deliver the Jews from Egyptian slavery to lead them back to God’s Promise.

God certainly has a funny way about His will – In my last 6-weeks of college, each week I received a note from the Registrar’s office in my postbox reminding me that I still owed about \$6,000 that had to be paid prior to finals or else I wouldn’t be able to graduate. Needless to say, I didn’t have \$6,000 – and neither did my parents. Yet I knew God had called me to ministry and to CNC. And while I didn’t know when or how, I trusted God to provide. Of course, I did what I could do, but ultimately, it was up to God. Well... after 6 weeks of weekly visiting the Registrar to explain my situation and my plans to find the money to pay my bill, I was once again summoned to his office. When I sat down to plead my case yet again, the Registrar stopped me and said, “Congrats Mr. Rodgers, your bill has been paid and you will be able to graduate w/ your class.” Stunned, I said, “What?” He looked and said, “Your bill has been paid in full!” So, I asked, “How?” He smiled and said, “Well, we have some scholarship funds w/in our budget and I decided to take care of your remaining balance so you could graduate!”

Don’t you just love it when God uses the people after you to take care of you – only God can do that! And that’s exactly what He did for Amram, Jochebed, and Moses. He used the very man seeking to **HARM** them to now **HELP** them. The very man who sought to **KILL** them to now **KEEP** them. Talk about an affirmation of faith!

But this is what God does when we exhibit a faith that trusts Him more than we fear man – and when we act in faith instead of waffle in fatalism. God shows up, shows out, and provides as only He can.

We’d all do well to walk courageously by faith!