

CHOOSE LIFE

Good morning! I want to give a warm welcome to all of our first time visitors. If you are here today because you are visiting to be with your mother or if you are looking for a church. We welcome you and want you to know that we are so happy you joined us today.

Next week we will be continuing with our sermon series titled “Sola” which is an in depth look at the five central truths relating to the word Solas that came out of the Reformation. So you will want to make sure you come back next week for that.

Today I have a special message for mothers but don't worry I also have special message for all the non-mothers. No matter who you are today, I believe God has a word for you.

If you are a mother, I don't have to tell you that there is no greater joy than motherhood and I also don't have to tell you that there is nothing that can bring greater pain than Motherhood. Elizabeth Stone is credited with saying, “Making the decision to have a child - It is to decide forever to have your heart walking around outside your body.” I never fully understood that quote until I became a mom myself. In case you don't know, I

am mother to five beautiful children. The first two by adoption – the last two biologically and then there's the middle child. You all know what I'm talking about when I say middle child....they are just special! Well, our middle child is special – we like to tease him that we kidnapped him but the truth is God knew our family wasn't complete and that we needed him as much as he needed us so about five years ago our middle child joined the family.

Today as we celebrate mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and the many others who have filled the empty spaces in our lives with nurturing and love, we celebrate life even the difficult parts of life that bring pain and sorrow and we choose life because that is what being a mother is all about.

Our key verse today is
Deuteronomy 30:19-20 NLT “Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life.”

Let's pray.

In preparation for this message, I became curious and I started going through the Bible one story after another only this time I didn't focus on the main characters or what was actually happening in the story line but I focused only on who the mother in the story was and what their situation looked like and let me tell you, I was blown away.

So if you will bear with me...I want to take you through the book of Genesis from a mother's perspective.

Eve, whose name means Living or Life, gave birth to 2 sons and then and there with the first pair of siblings, sibling rivalry began. She found herself losing one son at the very hands of her other son.

Next we have Noah's wife, who I somewhat sympathize with. You see I am married to a science teacher and I have had my fair share of him bringing home all kinds of living things that I don't care to have in my house. I mean seriously Noah's wife could not have known what she was getting into when she married Noah and had his children. Whatever she thought her life might look like, I don't think it included a year's long boat ride with an entire zoo. That requires a whole level of patience, I'm not sure I possess.

Then we have Sarah who followed her husband to a foreign land and couldn't have children, so she took matters into her own hands and had her maid sleep with Abraham. What a hot mess that turned out to be!

And out of that union, we see Hagar the first single mom who is left to care for her despised son on her own. Then Sarah becomes a mom to Isaac at the age of 90! The struggle must have been real cause at 40 something years old I'm almost ready to throw in the towel...if you know what I mean!

Rebekah was the wife of Isaac and she favored one son over the other and helped him (Jacob) steal the other son's (Esau's) birthright. Jacob then had to run for his life from his own brother. So the son she favored, she was no longer to be with.

And to finish off Genesis, we have Leah and Rachel. Leah the unloved wife of Jacob endured the rape of her daughter Dinah and Rachel the mother of Joseph died while giving birth to his younger brother Benjamin.

That's a lot of pain, trauma, and just flat out difficult situations that mother's endured in just the first book of the Bible. Then we get to Exodus and we find another story about a mother, a mother named Jochebed. She

is the mother of Moses. We are going to dig in right here this morning.

In Exodus Chapter 1, the Israelites are still in Egypt long after Joseph and all his brothers die but the new Pharaoh doesn't remember anything about that and instead he becomes worried about the number of Israelites that live in Egypt. You see the Israelites were about seventy in number when they first went to Egypt and now they had multiplied into a great number.

Pharaoh tries to control the Israelite population by enslaving and oppressing them with harsh labor. But that doesn't seem to work because God continues to bless the Israelites and they continue to multiply. Then

Pharaoh tells the Israelite midwives to kill the male boys as they are being born. But the midwives don't do what they are told and God actually blesses them and so finally Pharaoh gives an order to all the people both Egyptians and Israelites that every Hebrew baby boy must be thrown into the Nile River.

It is during this time, that, Jochebed, a Levite woman finds herself pregnant with her third child. I think that there is an argument to be had that this is not the best time to be bringing a baby into the world if you are an Israelite. I mean from the moment of conception the baby only has a 50/50 chance. I don't think there was any great celebration going on. There were no gender

reveal parties or baby showers by the Nile River going on. The world in which Jochebed lived was in turmoil.

Her people were enslaved and living in harsh conditions. I wonder as her baby grew in her belly if she prayed that it would be a girl? I wonder if she let her mind go to the possibility of it being a boy. What would she do?

I look at our world today and although we are not enslaved, we live in a society and culture enslaved to sin. Where everything but God is made out to be god. We idolize anything and everything that makes us feel good. We please self so much to the point that our mothers are not fighting for the life of their babies but fighting for the right to take the life of their unborn baby. This message is not a message about abortion but here at Newsong church we will always choose life!

We will not shy away from hard subjects even on Mother's Day, especially on Mother's Day. We believe in the sanctity of life...from the womb to the tomb. So much so that we have committed to be a house of refuge for anyone facing an unplanned pregnancy. I'm not going to read the entire statement to you today but you should know that if you find yourself in an unplanned pregnancy, the child you carry is not a punishment but a blessing. Here at Newsong we commit to do everything in our power to remove whatever obstacles stand in the way of you having your

child. We believe in the sanctity of life and we choose life each and every time.

It would have been easier for Jochebed to give into fear and to drown in despair like all the other Hebrew women but instead Jochebed chose life. She knew the baby she carried was a blessing from God.

“Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.” Psalm 127:3 NLT

She knew the child she carried was made in the very image of God and was valuable and loved by God. **‘So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.’ Genesis 1:27 NLT**

The title of my message today is Choose Life.

A. Choose Life For Your Children

In a world that is full of turmoil and fear. In a world that condones the killing of innocent life, in a world that makes the wrong seem right and the right seem wrong, we can still choose life and we can look at Jochebed’s example. There were 3 ways that Jochebed chose life for her child.

- 1. Jochebed perceived the potential and purpose of her son’s future.**

“The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three months.” Exodus 2:3 NLT

The word “saw” here loses some of its meaning in translation. It actually means to perceive.

In Hebrews 11:23 it puts this way, **“It was by faith that Moses’ parents hid him for three months when he was born. They saw that God had given them an unusual child, and they were not afraid to disobey the king’s command.”**

Mother’s have a special ability of seeing what their children could be before anyone else. Jochebed knew that Moses was meant for something special but that potential could never be fully realized if death came prematurely. Mother’s have the ability to spend tender moments with their children. It’s in those moments that a mother is able to see her child’s potential and open her child’s eyes to the possibilities that exist.

I remember when our oldest Dalton, told us at a very young age that he wanted to be an astronaut. He loved to dream about outer space. Did we tell him that the chances of him ever becoming an astronaut were slim and that he should pick a different career or dream?

No, of course not! We decorated his room and ceiling with glow in the dark moons and stars and constellations or whatever they are called so that he could dream even more. We read books about outerspace. We planned family vacations to space museums and the Kennedy space center so he could learn what it takes to become an astronaut and we encouraged his love of space. Why? Because we knew God had a purpose and a plan for his life and who were we to say that it didn't involve space even though just the thought of going to outer space scares me to death. Next week he graduates from college with a degree in aerospace engineering and he will be commissioned into the US Space Force. Now don't get me wrong, he did all the work that it took to get to this point, but I believe it all began when he was four and five years old and we perceived that he had a passion and a purpose that only God could fulfill.

Here at Newsong we believe that each person is created not only in the image of God but that each of us are created for a purpose and that includes our children.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Mom's, father's, grandparents, aunts and uncles you can choose life for the children in your life by perceiving the potential and purpose that God has given them. I don't know if God spoke to Jochebed and told her that one day Moses would lead his people out of slavery but I do believe that God told her he had a special plan for her baby boy.

2. Jochebed Modeled Faith not Fear

Jochebed hid Moses for three months but she knew she couldn't hide him forever. Babies don't understand that seriousness of the situation and saying shhh doesn't really help. She knows that at any minute someone could discover the baby and throw him into the Nile. She takes a basket of papyrus and she adds tar and pitch and creates a little ark of sorts. She uses what she has and she responds to this situation that threatens the life of her child with faith not fear. I can't imagine the stress this mother must have been under. My guess is Jochebed stayed as far away as possible from the river during those three months that she hid Moses. The river was a place of pain and death for Hebrew mothers but Jochebed gets the idea that this place of pain & death could be the only safe place for her son. You see the Egyptians saw the Nile River as the God of Life and I wonder if placing Moses in that basket in the Nile was Jochebed's faith in action. Was it

risky? Yes, but what was her alternative? Freeze in fear until someone discovered the baby and threw him in the river themselves?

Remember Hebrews 11:23, the faith chapter puts it this way, **“It was by faith that Moses’ parents hid him for three months when he was born.”**

Mothers and Fathers, let me just say right here, that we must start acting in faith when it comes to our children’s lives. I’m not just talking about their physical life but their spiritual life. For some reason we believe we no longer have a say in their lives - and that is a lie from the enemy. He wants you to stay quiet because that is in direct contradiction to the word of God.

Proverbs 22:6 “Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 NLT “And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.”

So Jochebed puts Moses in the basket & he floats down the river with his sister watching. Pharaoh's daughter happens to be down river and spots Moses in the basket. She sees Moses and has compassion on him. That's when Miriam, Moses' sister pops up and asks if she wants her to get a Hebrew mother to nurse him for her. Who do you suppose she gets? None other than her and Moses' mother, Jochebed. And then in a way that only God can do it, he puts the cherry on top. Pharaoh's daughter tells Jochebed she will pay her to nurse Moses.

I have a feeling that Jochebed poured herself into Moses as much as she could during those five years. She knew time was limited! She knew God had a purpose but in order to fulfill that purpose Moses needed to know the God that loved and created him for himself. You see Pharaoh's daughter provided the things that money could buy but Jochebed provided that which money couldn't buy. Pharaoh's daughter provided education and affluence but Jochebed provided something much deeper that created a yearning in his soul.

Look at Hebrews 11:24 It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin.

I've seen parents more busy with working to provide nice things for their kids to the point that they have no relationship with their children. I've seen things like tv, video games, and cell phones take the place of relationship and parenting. I've seen parents talk about everything under the sun with their children but they never talk about their faith. In order to choose life for your son or your daughter you should be talking about their future and their faith and they should be able to see faith not fear modeled in your life as well.

I want to point out 2 things here.

First:

Let's go back and look at Hebrews 11:23

It was by faith that Moses' parents hid him for three months when he was born. They saw that God had given them an unusual child, and they were not afraid to disobey the king's command."

Now look at verse 27.

It was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt, not fearing the king's anger. He kept right on going because he kept his eyes on the one who is invisible.

Moses was following the example that had been set before him! It was faith not fear that allowed him to be the leader that God had called him to be. We all know

Moses had his issues, he couldn't talk, he doubted himself, but 3 times in the Faith Hall of Fame Moses' faith is mentioned.

2nd: Guess who else was watching Jochebed model faith? Her two other children. Jochebed was also the mother to Miriam and Aaron. Talk about a trio of amazing children. Not only was Moses the leader of the Israelites but his brother, Aaron was his spokesperson before Pharaoh and the first priest to the Israelites. Miriam was the first woman prophetess mentioned in the Bible. These children grew up watching their mother model faith not fear.

The 3rd way Jochebed chose life for her child was this:

3. Jochebed had to let go

In order for Moses to live, his mother had to let go.
In order for Moses to grow, his mother had to let go.
In order for Moses to become the leader he was called to be, his mother had to let go.

Not once - but twice and probably even more times than that!

Can you just imagine placing your 3 month old baby in that basket and letting go? I'm sure she must have questioned it. It must have felt too soon. He was so young. And yet in order to choose life - she let go.

And the basket floats down the river. You see Jochebed was up the river and she couldn't see what was down river, but regardless she still had to let go. Can I take a minute and speak to some of you mother's who are in the middle of a very difficult situation? You might be up river and you might not be able to see down river but God is asking you to let go.

We are not told exactly when but probably around the age of four or five when Moses was weened, Jochebed sends Moses from her home to the home of Pharaoh.

Once again I'm sure she questioned it. I'm sure her mother's heart ached. She must have imagined all the things that he would be taught as the son of the Pharaoh's daughter. And yet in order to choose life - so he could fulfill his purpose - she let go.

I know this feeling all too well. Over and over again as a mother we must let go. It's one of the hardest things to learn as a mother. That moment when your child that you have nurtured and cared for is no longer in your safety and care. I have learned over the years that when I let go - they grow. You see your toddler will never take their first steps if you never let go. Your child will never learn to speak if you always speak for them. The great thing about choosing life for your child is you can let go and release them into the hands of a God that loves them more than you or I could ever imagine.

I've seen it time and time again, when I let go - I allow God to work in their lives in a way that I never could.

Jochebed was able to choose life for Moses because she chose life for herself.

B. Choose life for Yourself.

For all those that have tuned me out because you are not a mom, wake up! Wipe the drool from your mouth and pay attention because this is for you. This is for everyone.

You may be sitting here today and nothing I am describing pertains to your mother. Maybe you had a difficult relationship, maybe your mother wasn't present, maybe your mother never shared spiritual truths with you. I don't know anything about your personal relationship with your mother but I know this. Your mother birthed you and gave you life and for that you can be thankful. Apart from that today, you can make your own choice to choose life.

If I walked up to you and said tomorrow I'm gonna give you a million dollars but you knew I didn't even have a enough money in the bank to buy a lottery ticket. I'm guessing you wouldn't be staying up late at night trying to figure out how you were going to spend that million dollars. You see... You can't share what you don't have.

Let me put it this way. When flying they tell you that if there is an emergency and the oxygen masks lower, you should put yours on first before you help anyone else including your child. There is a reason for this. Some of you are trying to tell your children they need Jesus, they need to choose something better for their life but you have yet to make that choice for yourself.

Jochebed was only able to share her faith with Moses because she had chosen life for herself and eventually Moses had to make the choice for himself. You see Moses had two very different mothers and He had to choose for himself how he was going to live his life. He had seen up close how the Egyptians and the Israelites lived. And when Moses was grown he did things his way for a while. I'm pretty sure murder and running away from Egypt to save his life were not what Jochebed had envisioned. Who of us here can say we never took a path that wasn't meant for us? Or we tried finding satisfaction in life our own way. But there came a time when he met God in the wilderness, he had his burning bush moment, and ultimately Moses chose life for himself and based on that choice he was able to fulfill his true purpose in life. That which his mother saw when he was just a baby. We all have a choice to make as well and maybe today is your burning bush moment. It is the best decision your could ever make and it is

the best gift you can ever give your child to choose life for yourself.

Remember the verse we started off with today? It was written by Moses in a sermon to the Israelites forty years after he led the children of Israel out of Egypt and out of slavery.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 NLT “Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life.”

Today I believe God is asking each and every one of us to choose life. How do we do that? Well first we choose life for ourselves.

John 3:16 “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

John 8:12 Jesus says “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

If you have not made this choice for yourself. You can make it today. There is no better time. We have all sinned and lived in sin and death but today you can choose life. When you choose God and his plan for you, you choose life!

Finally one last point.

3. Choose Life for Others

There are three other women in this story of Moses that I want to mention before I finish today.

The first two are Shiphrah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives. We really don’t know much about them except this - when Pharaoh told them to kill the baby boys as they were being born, they did not. And when Pharaoh questioned them they said the Hebrew women were strong and were giving birth so quickly that they couldn’t even get there in time. We don’t

know if this is true or not but what we do know is found
in Exodus 1:20 & 21 NLT

“So God was good to the midwives, and the Israelites continued to multiply, growing more and more powerful. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.”

They feared God and they chose life! Not for their own children but for others. And because of this God blessed them with families of their own.

The last woman, I want to mention is Pharaoh's daughter. She chose life through adoption. We don't know much about her and scripture never indicates that she believed in God. We don't even really know why on that date she chose to keep Moses. Maybe she was annoyed at her father and wanted to do something opposite of what he had ordered or maybe she had a mother's heart and the sight of Moses floating in the river brought out compassion for him]. What we do know is that on that day she could have easily told her servants to toss Moses into the river where he would have died but instead she chose life for him at the risk of disobeying her father. She chose life for a child that was considered the enemy of her people. Isn't it funny how God works? Pharaoh ended up living with and providing for the very child that he had ordered to die.

And the very child that would grow up and lead the Israelites to freedom.

Adoption is near and dear to my heart and I couldn't possibly give this message without mentioning that when you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior you are adopted into His family. It's a love like no other. We are permanently grafted into His family so much so that He died for us!

You see we all have a part to play in this so called "village" Whether you are a mother, a grandmother, an aunt or none of the above. You can speak life into those around you. You can choose life for Others!

Proverbs 18:21 "The tongue can bring death or life;"

Proverbs 15:4 "Gentle words are a tree of life;"

You can be the gap filler in someone's life. You can choose life for others! You might be called to foster a child or to adoption and maybe not but there are so many ways you can speak life into others. You can give an overwhelmed mother a break by babysitting for her, you can love on her children like your own, you can make anyone feel special with your words. It doesn't have to cost a thing.

I can't think of a better way to celebrate Mother's Day
than to Choose Life...Amen!
Choose Life for Yourself, Choose Life for your Children,
and Choose Life for Others.