

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon title: Moses' Mother Was Resourceful, Exodus 2:1-10

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INTRODUCTION: Turn in your Bibles to Exodus Chapter 2, verses 1-10. This morning, I'm going to preach to you about Moses' mother, Jochebed. She was the mother of Moses—almost a virtually unknown woman in the Bible—but what an important role she played with the Hebrew people and the way it affects us today. What a wonderful, godly mother.

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 2:1-10 ¹Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, ² and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

⁵ 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. ⁶ 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.

⁷ Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

⁸ "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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."

There are three things I want you to know about Moses' mother this morning:

1. She was resourceful.
2. She was hopeful.
3. She was ok with plan B.

First, MOSES' MOTHER WAS RESOURCEFUL.

Moses' mother did not want him to become a victim of Pharaoh's cutting out of the population of the male children. Pharaoh became uneasy with the population of all the slaves, so he thought the best thing to do was to kill all the male children. But, in Moses' mother's resourcefulness, she knew how to weave a basket and coat it with tar and pitch to make it waterproof. Because of her resourcefulness, she saved her son's life.

Resourcefulness is probably the most important requirement of motherhood. There are just so many things moms have to do. You know, dads can do some of them, but how many of you remember your dad saying, "Take it to your mother?" How many times do you remember there were just some things only moms can do. Moms are like magicians, pulling things out of nowhere. Moms are also jugglers, keeping multiple things moving at the same time. Moms are budget experts, stretching the dollar and keeping the bills paid. Moms are inventors, inventing custom-made systems for homes and for families. Moms are also industrial engineers, keeping the food supply stocked and keeping things moving—knowing what's needed from the store and when it's needed. Moms are cooks, counselors, disciplinarians, and doctors.

All of these are descriptors of resourcefulness. Resourcefulness is simply the ability to figure out how to get things done, and this may be the most important characteristic of a mom. I know a young mom who told me she didn't realize how many talents she had until she had a child.

Second, MOSES' MOTHER WAS HOPEFUL.

Her idea of putting her baby in a basket and floating him in the river among the reeds and risking the possibility of anything, to her, was better than seeing him die at the hands of Pharaoh's scheme.

APPLICATION: Learning to let go is something all parents have to learn to do, but letting go of a baby at such a young age was no doubt difficult. But, again, it was better than the alternative. Because of her hope in her son and his well-being, someday he would lead a great nation.

ILLUSTRATION: When a mom holds a child for the first time, many things cross her mind. What will my child become? Can I be the best possible mom for this child? Where will my child's journey go? How can I help my child learn all that he or she needs to know before letting go? The hope of a mother for a child may be the strongest hope of all.

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATION: A tender child being held reminds me of the scripture about Mary and Jesus. The scripture says, *Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart* (Luke 2:19).

EXPLANATION: Only a mother knows what it means to ponder things in her heart. When I think about criminals, I think that at one time, they were newborns. One time, they were held in someone's hand—a mother who had hoped for her child. When I think of the homeless, I think at one time, they were newborns being held by a mother who had hope for their child to have a good life. And, it seems even as adults, when the world falls apart around a person, when a person's friends have abandoned him, and when all a person works for has gone away—mothers are the ones we turn to for hope.

ILLUSTRATION: I saw a black-and-white photo from the early days of the large homeless mission in Chicago called the Pacific Garden Mission. The picture said, "Have you written mother lately?" in big, bold letters along with scriptures on the wall. And, the message was clear: If a mom of one of those men was alive, she deserved to know her son was getting help.

ILLUSTRATION: It's the hope of a mom that can get us through tough times. I know of a colonel in the military. He was one of those leaders everyone wanted to avoid. He was tough stuff. He was a workaholic. Well, in an odd twist of circumstances, I realized a friend of mine was a friend of the Colonel's mom in another state. This friend of mine said the tough colonel is like a little boy when he calls home and talks to his mom. Oh, I loved getting that information and sharing it with others who needed to hear the tough colonel actually had a soft, vulnerable side.

And, then it hit me. One day, as I talked to my mom, I was doing the same thing. You see, if your mom is still alive today, and if you're like me, you probably know how to guide the conversation so that she brags on you and so she offers hope in any situation.

APPLICATION: And, if you are a mom or a mom-like person to somebody, be that solid rock of hope.

Now, let's go back to Moses' mother. We also see that Moses' mother—

Third, MOSES' MOTHER WAS OK WITH PLAN B.

EXPLANATION: You know, God's grace is all through the Bible. From Genesis Chapter 1, verse 1 to the last verse in Revelation, God's grace is there. Pharaoh's daughter was bathing in the river when she saw that basket in the reeds. Moses' sister just happened to be standing nearby, and she had a clever idea to go find a nursing Hebrew mom for the boy. And, she found Moses' mother. His mom would have preferred to have her son in her home with her. She would have preferred to raise him as all Hebrew moms. And, probably when she was pregnant, she had hopes and dreams for her child. But, after he was born, the evil Pharaoh complicated her plans. She had to figure out what to do. She didn't want him to die. Anything was better than death. Every idea of saving his life paid off.

She was now summoned by the Pharaoh's daughter to nurse her own son. That was Plan B. Plan A didn't work out, but Plan B wasn't so bad. She gave him up for adoption, and it was far better than the alternative. Plan B meant she could nurture him for a while. Eventually, she realized plan B meant her son could grow up in a world of plenty and he could get an education she could not have provided. Plan B meant he would grow up learning the language necessary to communicate with the Egyptians. Plan B would lead him to free his own people from their bondage. Plan B would lead him as a leader to lead his people through 40 years of trials, work miracles, and keep a large population fed and nourished. And, during the nation-building led by this man, they would become the healthiest nation on earth. So, plan B wasn't so bad. We see many good things about Moses' mother in these brief 10 verses. Look at her faith in God to take care of her son.

ILLUSTRATION: Now, I'm going to indulge you a bit and give you a personal testimony about my mom. She loves the Lord. She taught me about the Lord. My mom is still with us. Today's a special day for me. My family will be going to see my mom in McMinnville this afternoon. It's the first time in a long time, I've been able to be with my mom on Mother's Day. My mom's church in McMinnville has canceled their evening services tonight, so nobody's going to be in a hurry. You know, sometimes I think we've damaged families by churching people to death because once time passes, you never get it back. Let me encourage you right now—I know we've got a lot of parents here and grandparents.

APPLICATION: If you have a choice between your kids and your grandkids or even the care of your parents over Sunday night church, make the choice for your family. Spending time together as a family is important, and it's so important that in Bible times, everything revolved around the importance of family.

Now, since it's Mother's Day, I naturally think of my mom. I think of the challenges she faced. I think of the challenges she still faces today as she mothers us from a distance. At the time my mom had kids, it was not cool to have five kids. It was a time when women decided to have fewer kids or maybe none at all. It was a time when women were under the pressure of society to get careers and compete with men on the career ladder. But, my mom was a rebel of sorts. She didn't care about the trends in society. She did none of the above.

As I've told you, my dad was a pastor of country churches. He was on an upward career path working with Nabisco when God called him into the ministry. He left Nabisco. He enrolled in college and began pasturing a church. My dad earlier had failed the 10th grade twice and joined the Navy, and then he had gotten a job with RC Cola and then with Nabisco. And, he was doing quite well for a man with a GED education, so he enrolled in college. He began pasturing a church. It was an incredible change for my family. More than anything else, we went from having a private life as a family to being a family in a glass house with little privacy. Sometimes I pictured my family as a goldfish in a bowl—with people standing around and tapping on the glass and giving their opinions. And, being a large family in a small country town in a country church, seemed to make our family larger than it really was.

Many people wanted to know our business, but my mom knew how to keep a healthy distance to protect our privacy. There was one person who made the ministry work for my family. It was not my dad, although he was the preacher. It was my mom. When he was called to the ministry, mom was right there with him. She went from being the suburban housewife of a successful salesman to what I call a “frontier woman.” She took to the ministry like a woman of yesteryear took to the western frontier. She did whatever it took to make the ministry work. She knew how to stretch a dollar more than anybody I’ve ever known, and she still does it today. She learned how to sew our clothes. She bought denim and made our jeans, our shirts, our suits, my sisters’ dresses. She washed out the air-conditioning filters and used them as padding for suits.

One group accused my dad of being independently wealthy because they saw no way my family could look as good as we did with the income he got. My mom could make potatoes in so many ways that we didn’t notice we were eating the same food at every meal—baked, twice baked with cheese, mashed, scalloped, French fries, steak fries, potato skins, hash browns, potato cakes, and so on. It taught me potatoes alone are proof God loves us. My dad went on to college and to seminary, while being a pastor. He was gone several days a week while he live on campus, and my mom figured out how to make it work. She helped his dream come true, and during those lean years, she learned how to work on the washing machine, how to fix appliances, how to kill snakes, how to fix bicycles, and how to make up games to keep kids occupied. She knew how to find free events to take us to and how to pack for everyone on trips. On Sundays, she got up early to make meals. She got herself up and ready for church. She got five kids ready, and we always had riders in our station wagon—some of them lived long distances from our home and were very poor. We took gravel roads. We hit every single pothole along the way. How we afforded the gas to get all those people, I don’t know. Just this week, she called and said if I could come to her house on Sunday, it would help because she had plans of picking up a 17-year-old boy who had just moved to the neighborhood and needed a ride to church.

My mom was a tireless ball of energy. She was not paid in the workforce for many years, although she was in the volunteer work force. And, when I was 19, she went back to work—working several jobs and eventually she retired from housekeeping department at MTSU. And, during her work years, she bought and paid off several

cars in her home. My mom decided a few years ago to become a certified nursing assistant and went to school with a lot of young women. And, then as my dad faded away, she had the skill to help him.

So, I'll tell you, my dad's success as a pastor was directly related to my mom making the impossible possible. And, great is her reward. Well, here's a poem written by a woman who originally only signed her first name—Stephanie. The title is "A Heart Just like Mom."

I may not pray often and I may not pray enough, but when I do this is all I ask of you. God, give me a heart just like hers. She loves unconditionally no matter what, no matter who. God, give me courage to be like her. She's very brave. She makes me unafraid. Give me wisdom just like hers. She knows everything big and small. She's there to help through it all. Give me strength just like her. She's been knocked down, yet she stands strong for another round. God give me beauty just like hers. When she smiles, it gives me that feeling that everything will be okay and all my problems disappear for a while. God, give me generosity just like hers. She helps the helpless. She never thinks of herself, and she's so unselfish. God, someday if I'm half the mom she was to me, I'll know that you were listening on the day I prayed.

CONCLUSION: Earlier I mentioned Plan B. I want everyone to consider Plan B for a moment. There are people here today who have made plans for their lives without God, calling it your Plan A. But, your Plan A may not be working out today, but let me tell you, Plan B is pretty good, and it's God's Plan A for you. The Bible says, "*For I know the plans I have for you,*" as Jeremiah declares, "*the Lord plans to prosper you and to not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future*" (Jeremiah 29:11).

I wonder how your plans have gone without God today. Have they gone well? If they have, they'll go a lot better with God. Or, maybe they haven't gone so well. You probably had a mother who prayed for you, who hoped the best for you. Your mom may not be with us today, or maybe she is, but your mom was a mom who cared. There are a lot of moms are not here today but are in heaven. And, let me share with you the way for you to see your mom again someday if she knew Jesus as Lord and Savior. The way to see her again is for you to know Jesus as Lord and

Savior and give your plans to God. And, God will make your plans better than if you attempted to him without him. He may take your plans from you and give you something else all together. Together let's pray as we go to our invitation time.

Heavenly Father we thank you for the testimony today of Moses' mother who eventually realized you had great plans for her son. Lord, you've got great plans for all of us if we'll only submit to you. Help us to surrender our will to your will. Help us to repent of our sins. Help us to seek forgiveness in Jesus, and thank you Jesus for forgiving us. Thank you for coming into our lives if we ask. Thank you for being our Savior. Be with us now as we go to our invitation time. I pray for the person today who hasn't accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior that today would be day. Dear Lord, don't let anybody put it off another day. In Jesus' name Amen.

I would like for you to Christians to pray for the people around you. Anytime we've got a crowd gathered this size, we always have people who have needs, and Jesus is the one who meets our spiritual needs. Let's stand together as we sing.

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