

May 14, 2006 – Mother's Day  
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

## **Sacrificial Love**

### **Ex. 2:1-10**

Today is a day in the US and Canada that we take time to honor Moms. I personally think most holidays were concocted by the card companies so we keep buying more and more cards. Think about Grandparents day – where did that one come from? There are others, but let's stay on track. I want you moms to know that you shouldn't get too upset at the rebellion of your children. You are not alone, and you are in good company.

**READ – “But there's reassurance in the story!” and “Things to think about.”**

**READ – marked jokes/stories on separate sheet.**

I thought of Exodus and the story of the birth and development of Moses when I was thinking about a message for Mother's Day. I called this message – Sacrificial Love – from Exodus 2:1-10. The text can be found in our pew Bibles on either page **55** or **59** depending on which pew Bible you grab. “Exodus” is the Greek name for this book in the Bible, but in Hebrew it is called, “Shemot,” which means, “Names.” The title of the book was derived by the first few words of the book, which also revealed the central theme. In the Greek translation, the name was given more by the overall interpretation of the book. Hence, Exodus, “the coming out” – told of their escape from Egypt, but the Hebrew name, “Shemot” – spoke of the names given to people and places and most importantly the Name of God that was revealed in chapter 3. Names are very important in this book.

Moses is the main character (after God who is always THE main character) so both his birth and name are important. MOSES ~ moshei = a name that sounds like the Hebrew word - “draw out.” The Egyptian name is given, but it is a type of word play against it's meaning in another culture and language.

The book starts with a list of names of the Hebrew tribes. Its opening words are: “These are the names...” Joseph and all that generation are dead at this point. A new King is reigning in Egypt who knows nothing of Joseph, his people, or the promises, or favor given to them. All he knows is that these foreigners are multiplying like rabbits. They could become a threat and must be thinned out and regulated. Hebrew midwives are ordered to let the male babies die at birth. However, they feared God more than Pharaoh and don't kill them. Pharaoh ordered his own people to throw male Hebrew babies into the Nile to drown. This is the scene at the birth of Moses and our text today.

**READ – Ex. 2:1-10 NIV – p. 55 or 59 in pew Bibles**

Our story begins with a Levite man and woman who get married and have a child. This child is the focus of the story and therefore the only child mentioned. It's as if they got married and conceived Moses. However, we know that Moses had two older siblings, Miriam and Aaron. We also know that the Levites were the priests of the Hebrew people and very devout. We can assume by this that Moses parents were true followers of Yahweh, God of Israel and knew His Law. They must have prayed and participated in all the traditions, rituals, and customs that God commanded and expected. They didn't think like we do. God didn't owe them anything because they did what was expected of them. He doesn't own us anything because we are believers either, except the right to be His children forever. They lived in the same hostile environment as all the other Hebrews. There would be no special treatment because they are Levites and priests. All were under Pharaoh's oppression.

As married couples were meant to do, they did what comes naturally, and naturally, they conceived a child. Hebrew women married very young. She must have had her other two children before this new Pharaoh came to power, or at least before he gave his horrible order regarding the male babies. In any event she must have grown up real fast in this environment. I'm sure all moms here can relate that when you became a mother, your life changed forever. Something happens as that new life forms within you and a special bond develops that is so strong you would give your very life to protect your child. The world wants to numb us to this fact and try to convince us that a baby is just a blob of cells that is multiplying. Isn't that little life so much more? It is a miracle of God; a gift of creation that He has allowed us to take part in. How can such strong bonds form in that nine months period that they will last a life time? Those who are moms here know that the blob of cells that was multiplying inside you is now your son or daughter – no matter what! Whether they are fat, skinny, pretty, or homely, weak, strong, brilliant or mentally challenged, perfectly formed or handicapped in some way, a mother's love is unconditional. I believe it is the closest thing to perfect love there is. Moses' mother gave birth to this son and her life would never be the same again. He was "fine" or "beautiful" the text says. Not only was he born to a Levite family, but he was good looking too.

As we continue in the text, she tried to keep her precious son a secret for three months, but then couldn't. It takes a whole lot to bring a mother to a point where will give up a child she loves. It is hard enough when they get married and leave for a joyous reason. Imagine the pressure of these circumstances. A mother's ingenuity is a powerful thing when protecting her children. Moses' mother took it to the next level. She didn't abandon him, and she didn't turn herself in either. She made a basket to hold him and waterproofed it. Then she put her precious son, her beautiful son, into the basket and left him along the bank of the Nile River. Amazing! Pharaoh ordered his people to throw any male Hebrew babies into the Nile (Ex. 1:22). She actually carried out this command with her own son, but provided for his safety as best she could. She experienced the pain of sacrificial love as she gave her child into the protective hands of Almighty God. Moses' big sister, Miriam, hung back to see what would become of the baby (v. 4).

As "luck" would have it – or was it the providence of God – the princess, one of Pharaoh's daughters, decides she needs a bath at just the right time (v. 5). Actually, she would not be bathing to cleanse herself in the Nile. Rather it was believed the Nile contained magical power, any the royal household would come to the banks to wade into the water. She comes to the bank of the Nile and see the basket containing little Mo. Her servants take the basket to her and the baby wins her heart with his crying. Sometimes a baby can cry and you want to throw him back in the river, and sometimes they win your compassion. Well if you didn't see the hand of God in that event, check this out as we continue the story.

This princess would have been one of many in the royal household. Remember that Pharaoh would have had many wives, and they would have had children running about the palace quarters. Female children were less desirable than the males. She wouldn't have much political pull, but she would pretty much get whatever she wanted. The princess was one of the many insignificant female children of Pharaoh. I just want you to get the real picture rather than the way we tend to read this.

What about the time not mentioned in the text? Hiring a "wet nurse" was not uncommon in these times and cultures. Miriam, Moses' older sister, hung back to see what would happen to her little brother, as we saw in v. 4. As soon as the princess beholds the crying, hungry infant, Miriam boldly approaches her to see if she would like to hire a Hebrew wet nurse. There would have been many nursing Hebrew mothers to choose from. They were getting their babies taken away from them as infants – remember? Amazingly, Moses' actual mother is hired to nurse and care for Moses in his early developmental years. How interesting.

Remember that Moses' parents are Levites – priests of Israel. You can believe they understood the Hebrew ways and the Law of God. One command was to teach the ways and laws to the children constantly. This was primarily the mom's job. Men worked the field or the flocks and the women cared for the home, children, and the education of the children. So, I'm sure Moses knew about the God of Israel and the Law before they handed him off to Pharaoh's daughter to become her son. He knew to whom he belonged – He was a Hebrew! We have this gap of time between verse 9 and verse 10 – the time between when the princess hired Moses' mother to nurse him and raise him, until “when the child grew up” as it says in verse 10. How many years may have passed in this interval? We don't really know, but he is grown up when once again Moses' mother had to give up her child – her son. She again experienced that sacrificial love of giving up her desire, giving up what she loved most to protect him. She lost her son twice now – what a sacrifice she had to make. So Mo was handed over to the princess to become her son, and *she* named him Moses. He would lose his identity, by being given a new name, and Egyptian name.

As a part of the royal household Moses would be given the best education in Egypt – all of the young men, children of Pharaoh, would be so treated. Even though his name was change; even though he was treated like the other royal children of the palace, Moses never forgot who he was. God had a bigger plan for him. If we could look just a little past our main text to verses 11-12, we see that Moses “went out to his people” and watched how they were being treated. This was a deliberate act on his part. “He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.” He didn't forget who he was. He killed the Egyptian to defend one of his own people, a Hebrew. He was trained in the ways of the royal family of Egypt, but he defended a Hebrew. There must have been something powerful in what his birth mother taught him that he would risk his position and even his life for a Hebrew - knowing he was one himself.

The teachings of life that a mother instills in her children last a lifetime in their hearts and minds. Think about that! You can probably remember the things your mother taught you better than things from school or any other person. Some of the things I learned from my mother were things she specifically taught me, while other things I learned from her were things she showed me be her life, attitude, humility, and Godliness. Moms, you are making a monumental, life effecting impact on your children, whether good (right) or bad (wrong). This is a powerful testimony and a difficult reality to deal with.

Verse 10 – “when the child grew older...” I would like to look at this again for a minute. It is unthinkable to lose a child twice, but that is exactly what Moses' mother faced. The time came when she must hand her child over to Pharaoh's daughter for him to be her son forever. I can't imagine the pain of this event. She did all she could. She nursed him, trained him in the ways of the Hebrew people and their God, she took care of him if he was sick, and she imparted a part of herself into him. She was not just a hired nurse; she was his actual mother. What are you teaching your children by your words and maybe, more importantly, by your very life? A mother's love is the closest thing there is to God's perfect sacrificial love for us that is so vividly shown by Jesus coming and dying for you and me personally on that cross. In fact, God's love is even referred to in Scripture in relation to a mother's love. **Is. 66:13 – “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you...”** A mother's love is a sacrificial love. A mother will do anything for her child no matter how old they are ...

*Share my testimony of my cancer diagnosis and Mom's prayer to take the cancer in my place.*

*Her faith believing her prayer was answered and she was ready at any time to pay up.*

*Her diagnosis – her acceptance – her resolve.*

*She died (in her mind that day) - on my birthday, May 21, 1999 - although it took her body four more months to succumb to the disease..*

*She sacrificed her life for mine in a prayer of faith – willing to experience sacrificial love so I could live.*

My mom gave of herself for her children. She lived the sacrificial love of a mother for her child.

If my mom, who was human, could demonstrate that kind of sacrificial love to that extent, how much more does God show perfect sacrificial love in Jesus Christ, who willingly gave his life as a ransom for many including all of us? A mother's love for her child is a deep bond that is formed before the baby is born. In a similar way God loves us so much that even before we were born, in fact, before the foundations of the world, the Bible tells us, he already planned for Jesus to give His life to pay the penalty for our sin so we can have eternal life in Him – if we trust in Him alone.

The Bible tells us: **Rom 5:6-8 - NIV**

*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

A parent, especially a mom, would give her life for the baby she loves and who loves her. Actually, in some cases she would be willing to give her life for the child who claims not to love her. But Jesus died for you and me while we were far away from God in our thinking and our doing. He died for the very ones who nailed him to the cross. He does want something from us though. He wants us to live for him – to love God and others the way He showed us – to die to ourselves so we can live according to his will.

**2 Cor 5:15 NIV**

*And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

He wants us to live for Him – period. I believe my mom was able to face her destiny without flinching only because she was secure in Jesus Christ. She believed this was his will for her, and she knew that was best no matter what suffering she would have to face. She was devoted to the Lord and is with Him forevermore. I want to live my life the way she did – a living example of true Christianity, being transformed into the image of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I want to be able to love sacrificially, not looking for what I can get, but for how to give of myself.

I want to close with this little paragraph from a devotional by Chuck Swindol called,  
**Five Cheers for Mom**