

Basket Case

Moses' Messed-Up Mom

May 12, 2024

Today we're looking at the faithfulness of Moses' totally messed up mom!

But first: **Ever had to prepare a friend to meet your mom?** Not that she was especially *bad* or *weird* – but ... just enough to warrant a *ramping up* to meet her (or your dad; but this isn't Father's Day). Better yet: **Anyone ever have to ramp up someone to meet you?** How would you know?



Well, Moses had to *prepare* his people to meet his parents. So, he begins Exodus 1:1 by writing, "These are the names". But *then*, after recording 16 names, including two midwives "whose names were *Shiphrah* and *Puah*", he introduces his own parents *without* any names whatsoever; writing:



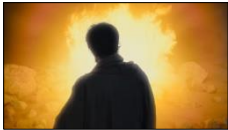
A man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. [And] When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. – Exodus 2:1-2 NIV



He goes on to refer to his nameless mom as *she*, *her*, *a woman*, and the *baby's mother*. It's not until chapter six that **he records her name and spills the beans on the skeleton in his mom's messed up closet**. Moses is the *law-giver of Israel!* Scripture even refers to *God's laws* as the *law of Moses!* (Josh 23:6) And those laws include *this unsettling* and seemingly *common sense* command:



You shall *not* have *intercourse* with your father's sister – Leviticus 18:12 NAB



She's your *aunt* for heaven's sake! But *sometimes* your *aunt* is *also* your *mom*.

[Like when] Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; [Whoopsie!] and she bore him Aaron and Moses. [At which point, Moses' readers would be like, "No way! That can't be the same Aaron and Moses of the Exodus."] ... These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt" ... ["But that Aaron and Moses must not be the same ones who spoke to Pharaoh!"] These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. ["What?! It can't be the same Moses and Aaron."] These are the same Moses and Aaron. [Get the picture?] – Exodus 6:20-27 NKJ

God chose a startlingly disgraceful law-breaker for the mother of His chosen law-giver. But *then*, isn't that just like our gracious Father? Granted, Amram had "intercourse with [his] father's sister" before the law was codified – but *not* before it was obviously, embarrassingly, wrong. Moses fled for murdering long before that was in writing. And the reason Moses has to ramp up his readers, and then reassure 'em three times that it's true, is because **the mercy and grace of the One true God is truly startling**. So, Moses establishes God's character, reveals his family's secret, and anticipates the whispers: "Not that Moses and Aaron!" "Yes, that Moses and Aaron!"

“Well, *that’s* certainly *not* the picture of faith.” True. **It’s just the context, the backdrop.** Their past, put on display for all to see for all time might’ve been a *bit awkward at the time*, but forever serves to stress what the Lord will accomplish through anyone, at any time, with any background – **if and when they put their faith in Him above their fear of others** – and how **He’ll then redeem that very sin to encourage and inspire and empower the faith of those around them.** You see:

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his [unlawfully wed] parents, [having hatched a plan to present him to Pharaoh’s daughter] because they saw he was a beautiful child; [likely relieved to see he was free of any genetic defects] and they were not afraid of the king’s command. [Meaning they were willing to sacrifice their lives for their faith; and because of that] By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, [a most prestigious title] choosing rather [to be called the son of the messed up mom chosen by God, and] to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ [having met Him in that burning bush; to be] greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. [And] By faith [thanks to the fearless faith of his mother/aunt] he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king – Hebrews 11:23-27 NKJ

And, you know where all this fearless faith began? Back in chapter one, with those two midwives, who are *not only* the first women memorialized by name in Exodus, but **the first two Israelites whose faith in God was stronger than their fear of Pharaoh: Shiphrah and Puah!** When:

[A new king] came to power in Egypt. “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. Come, we must deal *shrewdly* with them or ... if war breaks out, [they] will join our enemies,” ... so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and ... The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, “When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth ... if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” The midwives, however, feared God and did *not* do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. Then the king ... asked them, “Why have you done this?” ... The midwives answered Pharaoh, [deceitfully] “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.” So God was kind to the midwives – Exodus 1:8-20 NIV

Because **they had to deceive the king to remain true to the Lord.** Ever notice where Paul says:

In all things we commend ourselves as ministers ... in tribulations ... in distresses ... by sincere love, by the Word of truth ... as deceivers, and yet true [to the King of Kings and the law above laws!] – 2 Corinthians 6:4-8 NKJ



Shiphrah and Puah took a life and death stand to save those babies from Pharaoh’s genocide. And **their righteous, courageous, deception was worthy of commendation!** Because **God honors godly people who defy ungodly authorities.** Because, when the Lord commands us to “submit to [our] governing authorities”, (Rom 13:1) **obviously we’re not to obey when they command what He forbids, or forbid what He commands.** Because everyone will ultimately stand before the highest Authority, and give an account for all their actions. And in that moment it’ll be crystal clear that **a moral obligation far outweighs a legal violation.**

Like *breaking the speed limit to rush* someone to the *hospital*. Or Jesus *healing* on the *Sabbath*. And there's *no better example* of a *higher moral authority* than our *moms*. We've all *enjoyed a movie moment* where an *irate mom storms* into a *high school class*, *interrupts the teacher*, and *pulls her son out by his ear*. Well, we need to *see the Lord* more like *that*. Which means **we must establish a hierarchy of values according to His will, by His Word**. Because *lesser authorities* are *far from perfect*. So we can't just *blindly bow and obey* for *fear of punishment*; **we need a healthy conscience to bow to God's authority first and foremost**.



One of my *earliest* (manipulative) *memories* is when my *frustrated Pops* told me to get in *bed* in *five seconds* if I didn't want a *blisterin'*. Now, I *knew* it was *hyperbole*; but *sneaky little demon* that I was, I *jumped in bed* with all my *clothes on* and *waited* for mom to *kiss me goodnight*. And when she *did*, I let the covers *slip just enough* to show my *shirt*. And when she *asked me why* I had my *shirt on*, I said, "I have to *sleep in my clothes*." At which *point* she *pulled back the covers* and saw I was even *wearing my shoes*. "Why?" "Daddy said I'd get a *blisterin'* if I wasn't in *bed* in *five seconds*." And *here's the reason we celebrate our moms*: I can *still feel* the *glorious rush* that *swept over me* as she *charged out of my room* shouting, "LARRY?!" The *point of Moses' parents*, is that **God will use the most messed up past, the moment He becomes the highest moral authority**; which simply means, that **we love others above all things**, which fulfills "the *royal Law*", which *nobody* understands *better than you moms!* For instance, *Peter and John defied* pretty much *every authority* for the *sake of that royal law of love*.

[Back when] ^{4:5} [The] *rulers, elders, and scribes* ... ^{4:18} called [Peter and John] and *commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus*. ^{4:19} But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to *you more* than to *God, you judge*. ^{4:20} For *we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*." ^{4:21} So when they had *further threatened* them, they let them go ... [But] ²⁴ they raised their voice [praying] ... ^{4:29} "Lord, look on *their threats*, and grant to *Your servants* that with all *boldness* they may speak *Your Word*" ... ^{4:31} [And the place] was *shaken*; and they were all *filled* with the *Holy Spirit*, and [the apostles] *spoke* the Word of God with *boldness*. ... ^{5:17} Then the high priest rose up, and ... ^{5:18} put them in the common prison. ^{5:19} But at night an Angel of the Lord [maybe the *One from the burning bush*] *opened* the prison doors and brought them *out*, and said, ^{5:20} "Go, stand in the temple and *speak* to the people *all the words of this life*." ... ^{5:26} Then the *captain* went with the *officers* and ... ^{5:27} set them before the *council*. And the high priest asked them, ^{5:28} saying, "Did we not *strictly command* you *not* to teach in this name?" ... ^{5:29} But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "***We ought to obey God rather than men***." ... ^{5:40} and when they had ... *beaten* them, [because Jesus doesn't always *rescue us from the consequences that come from making Him our highest authority; because sometimes love literally hurts*] they *commanded* that they should *not* speak in the name of *Jesus* ... ^{5:42} [But] *daily* in the *temple*, and in *every house*, they did *not cease* teaching and preaching *Jesus as the Christ*. – Acts 4:5-5:42 NIV

But **we better be careful if and when we go above the law**, because the *only time* we can *righteously justify deferring* to God's *higher authority* and *defying our authorities*, is **when we know in our heart that it's an act of greater love for others**, according to His will by His Word.

For whoever loves others **[above the law]** has fulfilled the law. **[And remember how Jesus said He came to fulfill the law? (Mt 5:17); Well]** The commandments ... are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” **[Because]** Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the **[royal] law.** – Romans 13:8-10 NIV

[So] Be very *careful* to keep ... the *law* that Moses the servant of the *Lord* gave you: to *love* the *Lord* your God, **[who compares himself to a mother bear (Hos 13:8)]** to *walk in all His ways*, to obey *His* commands ... and to serve *Him* with *all your heart* – Joshua 22:5 NIV

And, like Moses' mom, **just do what you can, and trust the Lord with what you can't.**



Good advice for *anyone* fearing *our* culture, that's *threatening* to drown *our* children in *confusion, chaos, lust, violence, self-importance, and materialism.* **Just love like a mother bear.** That is a 3,500 year-old, baby-size, Egyptian basket, from *exactly* the *time* of Moses! And, since we *now know* Moses' mom, let's read her story with her name.

When [Jochebed] could no longer hide him, *she* took an *ark of bulrushes* for him, **[Other than Noah's Ark, this is the only other place where this word is used]** daubed it with *asphalt* and *pitch*, put the *child* in it, and *laid* it in the reeds *by* the river's bank. And his sister stood afar off ... Then the *daughter* of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And ... when she saw the *ark* among the *reeds*, she sent her maid to get it. And when she *opened* it, she saw the *child*, and behold, the baby *wept*. **[Right on cue!]** So she had *compassion* on him, and said, “This is one of the *Hebrews'* children.” Then his *sister* said to Pharaoh's daughter, “Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the *Hebrew women*, that she may nurse the child for you?” And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, “Go.” So the maiden went and called the child's mother. Then Pharaoh's daughter said to [Jochebed], “Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.” So [Jochebed] took the child and nursed him. And the child grew, and [Jochebed] brought him to Pharaoh's *daughter* – Exodus 2:3-10 NKJ

And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians – Acts 7:22 ESV

So get *this*: Moses' mother *found* a way to not only *save* her son, but to continue *caring* for him without *fear* of *consequences*, and to get *paid* in the *process*! Not to mention *securing* the most *prestigious education* in the *world*. And *all* while technically *obeying* the king's *command*. So *what* if his *mother* was his father's *aunt*, making his *siblings* also his *cousins*; it all just goes to show that **you can be a royal basket case and still fulfill the royal law.** Cuz our *Creator's* love truly conquers *all*!

[For] If you really *keep* the *royal law* found in **[Moses' law in]** Scripture, **[Lev. 19:18]** “Love your neighbor as yourself,” **[well]** you are doing **[something]** right. – James 2:8-9 NIV

The *message* of Moses' *scandalous family* brings *hope* to us all. **What was done in the past doesn't limit what the Lord does in the future.** God is a *God* of *new beginnings*! No *matter* whatever has *happened*, **God will not only deliver you, but transform you, and use you to deliver others.** And all you gotta do is *love* like a *mother*! Because, your *story* wasn't written *yesterday*. That's just the *context*, the *backdrop*. **Your story is being written today and tomorrow,** and in spite of it. You might've *come* from a *messed up dysfunctional family background*. But **that doesn't preclude or prevent you from putting everything right, right now, and fulfilling the royal law and your created purpose.** If you have any *doubt*, just ask *Moses* about the *skeletons* in *his closet*!