

If you've got your Bibles, can you turn with me to Exodus chapter 2. We're going to be looking at a character this morning who doesn't typically get a lot of attention, but for our purposes in this series that we're in, I think she deserves a bit more than what we often give her credit for.

And just by way of reminder, we're in a sermon series called "A Beatitude Legacy," which is a follow-up series to our summer series on the Beatitudes, looking at characters in the Old Testament—before the time of Christ—who, in some pretty significant ways, foreshadowed Christ's teaching in His sermon on the mount.

Characters who foreshadowed Christ himself, really, and the coming of His Kingdom realities. Characters who allowed those Kingdom-of-God realities to break through them and seek to be aligned with God's logic rather than the logic of the world around them.

Sometimes without even realizing it.

Now, just before we read this passage, I need to give a little bit of context otherwise it might not make sense. At the end of the book of Genesis, the family of Israel (of Jacob, who's name had been changed to Israel—if you remember from last week), they are all now in the nation of Egypt.

And at the very beginning of the book of Exodus, in chapter 1, it states that the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful and multiplied greatly, so much so that the land was filled with them.

But as this was happening, there was also a leadership transition—and the new Pharaoh of Egypt did not have the same relationship that the former Pharaoh had had with Jacob's son, Joseph. This new king villainized the Israelites and put masters over them to oppress them with forced labour.

The Israelites had suddenly become slaves. The Egyptians had made their lives incredibly bitter, working them ruthlessly. And yet the Israelites were still multiplying. And so finally Pharaoh is completely fed up and gives the order that every baby boy that is born to the Hebrews is to be thrown into the Nile River. Every girl can live, but every boy must be killed.

Horrific, absolutely horrific. But that is the world of ancient empires. Because as an ancient king, you constantly had to be aware of other groups growing from within who could perhaps be more powerful than you or be collaborators with other enemy nations who tried to take you over.

This is Pharaoh simply being logical and strategic for the sake of his empire. It's empirical thinking. It's what you have to do. You don't think about individuals—they're just collateral damage. Everything is about the appearance and fortitude and stability of the empire. Rome wasn't so different. Certain nations, even today, still aren't so differently.

But, there was one woman in Pharaoh's court who did not see it this way. **Read Exodus 2:1-10.**

A few months ago, while I was still on maternity leave, I read a National Geographic article that highlighted midwives in India who were rebelliously ignoring the commands of the husbands whose wives they served, husbands who gave specific orders to kill the baby if it was a girl.

See, because in most cases of infanticide—not just in the ancient world and in history, but still today—it’s the girls who get killed. They’re seen to have less value, the family needs to be able to afford dowries, they don’t have the same status—there are a number of different reasons.

In this article, the most frequent reason for a husband to wish a baby girl to be killed was because he already had three or four other daughters and simply didn’t want to pay for another one.

Yet there’s this group of midwives who have collaborated together to sneak the babies out immediately after delivery and then bring them to a rescue home, since the husband isn’t in the delivery room anyways.

But these women, of course, are putting their own safety and livelihood at risk to do this.

Now, have you ever stopped for a moment after reading this passage here in Exodus to think, “Wow, that was an incredibly courageous thing to do.”

Or even more so, to think, “Wow, if she hadn’t done this—if Pharaoh’s daughter hadn’t intervened and ignored the orders that her own father had put in place—then the character of Moses in Scripture wouldn’t exist?”

What Pharaoh’s daughter does here in this passage is *insane*. She’s the daughter of Pharaoh—the king of Egypt. At this point in history, he is literally one of the most—if not *the* most—powerful man in the ancient world, in the known and documented world.

Why does the daughter of the most powerful man in the world look at this little Hebrew baby and feel sorry for him? What came over her? Because I’m sure it was a significant risk for her to do this.

Look at how this story is set up. It’s a beautiful little narrative.

A man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman. Now, anytime we see this in Scripture our ears should perk up, because that means that this is a *priestly* marriage. Zechariah and Elizabeth, who gave birth to John the Baptist, they were also both from the tribe of Levi.

Levi is the tribe that is called by God to serve as priests in His temple—priests who mediate between God and the people.

In other words, whoever this child is that is born to this priestly couple, this child is special.

Now, Moses' mother hides him for three months, but it gets to a breaking point where she can't do it anymore, and so she lays him in a papyrus basket—or ark, a little boat—and puts it among the reeds in the Nile River.

So interestingly, Moses is throw into the Nile River, but he's been protected. There's some echoes of the story of Noah here. And his sister—we can assume Miriam—is standing at a distance to see what happens. And what happens is that Pharaoh's daughter shows up to take a bath.

Now, let's think about this for a minute. Moses doesn't go sailing down the river, like popular movies and books have often depicted. His mother is *very* intentional about where she places him.

He's in the reeds. His sister is not running alongside of the river to see where the little boat goes. She's standing at a distance and watching. And where Miriam's mother has placed her little brother is exactly where Pharaoh's daughter finds him.

Almost as if the mother knew that this was the only place she could go. As if *this very place* was her last resort. As if she knows that the only person who might be able to withstand the wrath and violence of Pharaoh is his own daughter?

Pharaoh's daughter sends her slave girl to go get the basket. Now, who do we know were slaves in Egypt? The Hebrews. The little girl could very well have been a Hebrew slave.

And we don't often read this and think of this moment as a moment of tension, but right now, 100%, this is the moment when Miriam, standing off at a distance and watching, is shaking with anxiety.

The slave girls passes the basket to Pharaoh's daughter. When she opens it up, will she have compassion on the Hebrew baby, or will she throw him into the Nile like all the others?

To her relief, Pharaoh's daughter hears the cries of the baby, and—v. 6—she feels sorry for him. She knows that he's one of the Hebrew babies, but her heart is only to seek care for the child. Miriam then steps in, offers to get one of the Hebrew women (ie. her own mother) to come and nurse the baby for her.

And so the mother who had to give him up gets to care for him under the protection of Pharaoh's own court—via his own daughter—until the appropriate age when he is taken to become her son.

And only then he is given the name Moses, because the name *Moses* means to 'draw out.' He was drawn out of the water. He was drawn out of danger. He was drawn out of death.

I actually have a nephew named Moses, and the way that his name was chosen has echoes of this story in Exodus.

Within the few weeks leading up his birth, my sister-in-law began having complications. Her body was swelling to a really abnormal amount. And the week that she was overdue, she was measuring massively and discovered in an ultrasound that she had Polyhydramnios, or excess amniotic fluid.

It was quite painful, and it meant that even when her water broke, she didn't go into labour because of all the fluid build-up.

Now, on the day that she got induced, her grandmother called her and prayed over her. And in that prayer, her grandmother had picture of my sister-in-law's baby being like Moses in the basket. And that no matter what they would endure, the baby would be fine and would have a covering over him.

And although the delivery itself was brutal, the little boy—they found out—was perfectly healthy, not needing any kind of resuscitation or having endured any issues because of the water.

He'd been covered. And apparently my brother right away looked at her and said, "I think we should name him Moses." And only the next day did they actually realize that the name Moses meant to be drawn out.

Because like the biblical character, he too was drawn out of the water. He too was drawn out of danger. He too was drawn out of death.

Now, I should pause here and say this: that this is not everyone's story, just as being saved out of water was not the story for many of the Hebrew babies and the families who lost them.

But, from a Kingdom of God framework, we know that the deliveries and deliverances that we *do* see happening here on earth are just signposts of the greater and much more significant deliverance that God has planned through Christ for His people.

Think about Noah's ark. The crossing of the Red Sea after being delivered from slavery. The crossing of the Jordan River into the promised land.

Isaiah 43:2 – "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you."

Who else in Scripture draws His children out of water as an image of rescuing them from death? Who else do we know in Scripture who adopts children that were not born to Him and redeems them out of slavery? Who else do we know who is forever offering compassion to the least of these who cannot fend or fight for themselves?

Who has commanded us to pass through water as a symbol of being set free from the bondage of our own sin? As a sign of death being overcome? As a reminder of how we are now protected, covered, wrapped in the righteousness and innocence of Christ?

This brief, little story that we have here at the beginning of Exodus is not just a story of how one little boy was saved, but it's a foreshadowing of how all of God's people will be rescued. It's a story that is bathed in the merciful character of God without actually even mentioning His name.

But as we know, every story in Scripture whispers His name.

And who would have ever thought His name would be whispered through an unnamed foreign princess in Pharaoh's court who would defy the laws of her own empire, of her own father, and instead reflect the heart and character of a God that perhaps she didn't even know?

A woman who you would think would be entirely conformed to the patterns of the empirical world around her, the rigid laws, the strict standards, the 'everything-for-Egypt' mentality.

But for a brief moment, perhaps for the first time in her life, she chose to operate within a different logic, a different framework. To have a different kind of impact. Even though she might get judged for what she did or endure significant anger from her superiors.

She chose the path of mercy, of purity, of peace, of possible persecution. Moses is the first character that we see adopted in Scripture, because of her.

Moses, in his adoption and role as a deliver, foreshadows Christ because of her. Because God used her to set the trajectory for everything that followed. Even though she may not have known the God of Israel, God certainly had His footprint all over her.

Because this little—often overlooked—story in Exodus is actually indicative of God's great adoption plan for all of us. Of His meek and merciful and peacemaking and pure and righteous plan for each and every one of us.

Do you know that you too have passed through the waters, out of death and into a new life? Do you know that you too have been placed in the protective covering of Christ and found by an adoptive Parent who has taken compassion on you?

Do you know that you too have been adopted into the royal court of the King of Heaven who is also inviting you to be a priest for His Kingdom purposes?

And do you take it seriously? That He's done this for you?

See, because knowing our own adoption implies that we know that we were alone and in danger before we were rescued. Knowing our own adoption implies that we know that we did not have a home or an avenue to the Kingdom of heaven.

Knowing our own adoption implies that we know that, although we were poor, bereft, and lacking everything, now we can say with confidence that we lack nothing. That Christ is the door by which we now enter into the family of God and are welcomed into a home where the love and care are endless.

What makes adoption on earth so beautiful—no matter how challenging and tough the situation can be—is not only that a child is given the opportunity to be loved by a family that they otherwise would not have had, but because it mirrors the impact of what God has done for us.

And when we think about having a Beatitude impact, this kind of an openness and hospitality—whether that's to adoption, to fostering, to opening our doors to those caught in addiction, to the poor college student who needs a bed, to the refugee who can't find a home or a job, a neighbour who clearly doesn't have any family or friends.

Our own adoption narrative is what fuels us to do these essential tasks for the Kingdom. To be priests, adopted children and priests, who mediate God's love and fatherly care.

Because we know that what we do for them is just a taste of what God has done for us. And no task, when we seek to mirror His Fatherly care, no task is too difficult for us.

I've said this before, but don't let anyone ever talk you out of or persuade you away from doing something hospitable for 'the least of these' because it's too hard.

Moses passed through the waters. He was protected. He was covered. So are you.

Moses was found. He was cradled. He was shown compassion. So were you.

Moses was adopted and received. Shown love. Freed from the fear of death. *So are you.*

And if God can use a daughter of Egypt to deliver not only a child but also, through that child, a whole nation, and through that nation, deliver a Saviour, and through that Saviour offer the path of deliverance to the whole world, then my goodness, what might he do through you?

You who *know* Him, who *know* His name, and who have been given *His* name as your own.

Who could you pull out of the reeds today?