

## The Faith Of Mothers

Many responsibilities that we have are pressure-packed. Medical research is showing that stress is certainly a major cause of illness in America. However, I challenge anyone this morning to name a vocation, a position, a responsibility that is more stressful than that of motherhood.

Try writing a job description for a mother! It would be almost impossible, wouldn't it? The things expected of a modern mother are mind-boggling. Some of us might say, "one who gives priority to husband, to the children, to the home." Others would say, "What I expect in a mother is a companion wife, a companion mother, someone skilled at entertaining, well read, willing to participate in social and recreational activities and pursuits, etc." Still others expect a mother to be a career wife – one who will share in paying the expenses of the family, who is involved in all of the financial matters from the buying and selling of a house on down to monitoring the kids allowances.

Moreover, in many cases we expect the modern mother to live up to *all* of those expectations. We say you must be beautiful, you have to be intelligent, you have to be an entertainer, you have to give quality time to God, to your husband and your children and your home; and you have to earn enough to pay your own way through this world. Now, whether we would admit that or not, our actions and attitude project that as our view of motherhood.

What it boils down to is simply this: The modern mother is living a pressure-filled life. Most of you mothers this morning would say that you live day by day by day with a feeling, "Life is just about to overtake me. I feel overwhelmed."

You wonder, "What are the answers to this?" They are not simple, but it is always good to begin with a role model or models, so where do we find a mother anywhere in history who met the challenges of her day and who met all of the stress and pressure of her day?

**There is a woman in the Bible named Jochebed.** She was the wife of Amram, and she was the mother of Moses, Aaron and Miriam. This is declared in Ex 1. Here we see a home that apparently had very little of the world's material things, but a home that is worth imitating. It is a home where the parents creatively and courageously obeyed God and met the incredible pressure that was brought to bear on their family.

### **Exo 1:8-10**

8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:

10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

Joseph, son of Isaac, had been the Prime Minister of Egypt some time back. Ultimately, all seventy of his family migrated from Canaan to Egypt and multiplied themselves many times. They settled in the land of Goshen. There were between 2 and 3 million Hebrews living in Egypt as our story opens. Now there is a new king on the throne: a new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph. This new Pharaoh was frightened over the large number of Hebrews in the land. He was afraid for two reasons: He was afraid that

- (1) they might rebel, join their enemies, and take over Egypt. He was also afraid that
- (2) they might leave Egypt.

Therefore, he didn't want them to stay, because they were numerous and he was afraid of their great number; but neither did he want them to leave, because they were making such a huge economic impact upon Egypt.

So what was the answer? The answer was to *slow down* the population explosion among the Hebrews. The first thing the new Pharaoh did was to say, "We're going to work them so hard, so ruthlessly, that they will stop multiplying."

### **Exo 1:11-14**

11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:

14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

When this did not produce the desired result, the Pharaoh came up with a second idea, which was to order the midwives to kill all the male Hebrew babies.

**Exo 1:15-17**

15 And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah:

16 And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.

17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.

Notice how God intervened in this situation. God dealt with the hearts of the midwives and they did not kill the Hebrew boys.

**Ex 1:18-19**

18 And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive?

19 And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.

Therefore, the second phase of Pharaoh's strategy did not work. Notice how God blessed the midwives for their courage and for their obedience to God.

**Ex 1:19-20**

20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty.

Obedience to God does not exempt you from life's adversities, but it will always put you in the pathway of God's blessings, whereby God will even use your adversities to bring about something good and positive in your life.

Here's what I would encourage you to do. Find an area in your life where you are not being obedient to God, or not being as obedient as you know you should be. Start obeying Him and watch what God will do; because He will always put you in the pathway of His blessing in response to your obedience.

Pharaoh went to a third strategy:

**Ex 1:22**

22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

This decree went out to all the Egyptians. But here's what we read about a baby boy that was born to Jochebed and Amron:

**Ex 2:1-10**

2:1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.

2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it.

6 And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

7 Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

9 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

Faith, courage, and creativity - it seems as though Jochebed & Amron had it all! These parents somehow managed to hide their baby from CSD 3 months, but as he became older and more active, and certainly getting *louder* like they do, Jochebed had a *creative* idea.

God can give us some creative ideas. He has made us in such a way that He blesses us with some creativity! The decree said, "Throw the baby into the Nile," so that's what she did; but as we just read, she got the reeds and the tar and the pitch and made the little basket for her newborn child. Don't you think she must have kissed him a hundred times before she put him in that little basket and pulled the covering over him?

**(Family Circus – The little boy named Jeffy is handing his mother a gift and saying, "I wrapped it myself, Mommy!" She removes the wrappings, but can see nothing in the box. Jeffy explains, "It's not really empty. Before I wrapped it I whispered "I love you" hundreds of times in the box and I blew lots of kisses into it!")**

Jochebed must have watched how the Nile river flowed. She knew just when the Princess was going to go out to bathe. She instructed Miriam, her daughter, to keep an eye on the basket and probably even told her what to say and do at just the right time. CREATIVITY!

Then she watched from a distance and while the Princess was bathing, Moses cried and the Princess said, "Go see what that is!" The slave girl brought the basket over, pulled the covering back, and then Miriam came out right on cue, didn't she? Just like the creative mother had planned! Miriam said, "Hey, that's a cool lookin' kid. Would you like me to go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" And the Princess said, "Yes, that's a great idea! I'm glad you thought of that. Yes, go." So Miriam went and got her mother. Jochebed comes, and the agreement is made that she is to care for that child and the Princess even pays her wages!

What an incredible story. It's almost unbelievable! There is no greater and more opportune time for you moms to train up your children in the way they should go than during the `pre-school' years as we call them. Just think of how creative and how courageous she was, and how a mother of faith believed that God could do something that would otherwise be impossible.

Day-care centers are not the answer for our little ones. Much research has been done in the area of the best child care and the conclusion is that no agency, whether state, church, private party, or family relative can adequately take the place of a child's mother to give the little ones the love and care they require in order to develop sound relationships and emotional stability.

Those who are single moms do well to get an uncle or a brother or other male relative to provide a father figure to their children as often as possible. Above all, TRUST IN THE LORD. Look for creative ways to be courageously obedient to God in raising your children.

Every mother should pray that God would multiply the time that she has with her children. Pray that God will help make up for that man that is not there, if that is the case. Pray that God would give you wisdom to structure your finances so you won't need to work outside the home, if you are a single mom.

### **Titus 2:1-5**

2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

“keeper at home”: (a guard; be "ware"); a stayer at home, i.e. domestically inclined (a "good housekeeper")

When we know what the will of the Lord is, it helps us pray with greater assurance that He will make a way for us to creatively and obediently do what is right. He is able to bring you through a time and a period of your life that is filled with all kinds of stress, all kinds of pressure. God will bring you through it with His grace, with His power, and with His blessing! How important it is that mothers today have a faith that God can do anything – a faith that says God is bigger than any trial of life. How vital it is to have mothers who have courage to look toward the future with confidence and who look for creative ways to be obedient to God; to look for creative ways to be that kind of godly mother that God wants them to be!

Love your children, mothers. Each one is worth of every hour and every dollar you spend to raise them.

### **The Cost of Kids**

I have often seen the breakdown of the cost of raising a child, but this is the first time I have seen the rewards listed the way I am going to mention.

The government recently calculated the cost of raising a child from birth to 18 and came up with \$160,140! That doesn't even touch college tuition. For those with kids, that figure leads to wild fantasies about all the money we could have banked if not for (insert your child's name here). For others, that number might confirm the decision to remain childless. But \$160,140 isn't so bad if you break it down. It translates into \$8,896.66 a year, \$741.38 a month, or \$171.08 a week. That's a mere \$24.44 a day! Just over a dollar an hour.

Still, you might think the best financial advice says not to have children if you want to be "rich". It is just the opposite. **What do you get for your \$160,140?**

- \*Naming rights. First, middle, and last!
- \*Glimpses of God every day.
- \*Giggles under the covers every night.
- \*More love than your heart can hold.
- \*Butterfly kisses and Velcro hugs.
- \*Endless wonder over rocks, ants, clouds, and warm cookies.
- \*A hand to hold - usually covered with jam.
- \*A partner for blowing bubbles, flying kites, building sandcastles, and skipping down the sidewalk in the pouring rain.
- \*Someone to laugh yourself silly with no matter what the boss said or how your stocks performed that day.

**For \$160,140, you never have to grow up.**

\*You get to finger-paint, carve pumpkins, play hide-and-seek, catch lightning bugs, and never stop believing in Santa Claus.

\*You have an excuse to keep reading the Adventures of Piglet and Pooh, watching Saturday morning cartoons, going to Disney movies, and wishing on stars.

\*You get to frame rainbows, hearts, and flowers under refrigerator magnets and collect spray painted noodle wreaths for Christmas, hand prints set in clay for Mother's Day, and cards with backward letters for Father's Day.

**For \$160,140, there is no greater bang for your buck.**

\*You get to be a hero just for retrieving a Frisbee off the garage roof, taking the training wheels off the bike, removing a splinter, filling the wading pool, coaxing a wad of gum out of bangs, and coaching a baseball team that

never wins but always gets treated to ice cream regardless.

\*You get a front row seat to witness the history of first step, first word, first bra, first date, and first time behind the wheel.

\*You get to be immortal. You get another branch added to your family tree, and if you're lucky, a long list of limbs in your obituary called grandchildren.

\*You get an education in psychology, nursing, criminal justice, communications, and human sexuality that no college can match.

### **In the eyes of a child, you rank right up there with God.**

You have all the power to heal a boo-boo, scare away the monsters under the bed, patch a broken heart, police a slumber party, ground them forever, and love them without limits, so one day they will, like you, love without counting the cost.

### **ENJOY YOUR KIDS (and grandkids)!**

You say, "Well, Jochebed had Moses only for about five years. What could she do with him for just five years?" Well, Hebrews 11 tells us some of the accomplishments of faith in Moses' life – faith that had been instilled in him during those formative years from birth to age 5.

#### **Heb. 11:23-29.**

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.



**What could Jochebed do with just five years?** I'll tell you what she did: she made an indelible mark on the life of Moses, so that when he was 40 years old, evidently he was ready to assume the ruler ship of the most powerful nation of his day, but instead he said, "I am going to identify with the people of God. I am going to identify myself with the Lord, Himself. I am going to do what God wants me to do."

Now let me ask you a simple question: where did that come from? Where did that kind of conviction come from? How did that happen? Yes, it happened because of God's grace. It happened because of God's work in his life. But God always uses people in that process, and I think it happened largely because his mother and father built those godly principles into his life, built a respect for God into his life, built (even as a preschooler) a simple love, a willingness to be open to God, in his life. Research shows that those first five years are some of the most pivotal, most important years in a child's life.

**It is POSSIBLE, of course to *overestimate* the influence of an environment.**

Here's what I mean by that. You would think out of the pockets of poverty that are all over this country that the only thing that would come out of those things are individuals who are inept, people who never make any contribution, any difference to society whatever. You would think that out of those pockets of poverty the only thing that would come out is an embarrassment to society. And sometimes that is certainly true. And yet, time and time again we see exceptions to that. We see men and women who come out of nowhere, who reach and who strive for greatness, and who make an incredible impact and contribution to our world.

Now, here's the question: How does that happen? Out of those kinds of environments, how does that happen? Almost without exception, sociologists will trace that back to a home where there is a godly parent - a godly father, many times a godly mother, who overcomes the environment because of spiritual convictions that they build into the lives of their children. I would say to mothers this morning, it is possible to overestimate the importance and the influence of the environment, but, it is virtually impossible to *overestimate* the importance and the influence of a godly mother and father.

I would say to mothers here this morning, if you are in the phase with your children where you spend night after night up with your children and you

sometimes only get three or four hours of sleep at night, *hang in there, it's gonna be worth it*. When it's tough to discipline your child with sincere love, because you're stressed out, but you do it any way, I would say to you, *hang in there, it's gonna be worth it!* I would say to you mothers who stay intimately involved in all the activities of your children, even though you have to be in three places at one time, I would say to you, *hang in there, it's gonna be worth it!*

To you mothers who seek to get that family up and ready for church on Sunday morning and evening, and again on Wednesday and sometimes 2 or 3 other nights a week when it's such an overwhelming temptation just to sleep in or go to the beach or relax at home, and you say, "No, we are going to get cleaned up and dressed for church, we are going to worship," I want to say to you, "*hang in there, it's gonna be worth it*. The day will come when your sons and your daughters will rise up and call you blessed. Your husband will praise you. God will honor you.

How this world *needs* mothers who have faith are creatively obedient! How this world needs mothers who are courageous, and who demonstrate some conviction about the things of God - mothers who love God, who love the Word of God, and who love His Church and love the Lord supremely. That's what the world needs!

To be a godly mother means a lot of pressure and a lot of responsibility, but listen carefully: it is the highest calling in all the world to be a godly mother. Mothers, it is worth it because who knows, you might just have a Moses in your home, or an Aaron, or a Miriam! If you are a mom, we honor you; if you are a faithful, obedient and creative mom, you are worthy of high honor. I urge you to never take the responsibilities of motherhood lightly.

Husbands, love your wives. Praise them and cherish them.

Children, obey your father and your mother. Try to make today the best "Mother's Day" she has ever had!