

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, September 25, 2011**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 518:1-5, 264:4, 528:1-5, 627, 659.

Lessons: Exodus 1, Hebrews 11:23-34, Luke 16:19-31.

Sermon Text: Exodus 2:1-10

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltrittter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

God had promised Abraham, the grandfather of Jacob that the land of Canaan would be their land. They had lived there for a couple of hundred years – the generations of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – until famine plagued them. Because Joseph had been sold into slavery by 10 of his brothers and ended up in Egypt, all of his clan – the descendants of Abraham – ended up in Egypt. They had originally come to Egypt just to buy food. But because of Joseph the whole clan ended up moving to Egypt, probably planning to stay only as long as the famine lasted. But they stayed longer, as you heard in our Old Testament lesson. Jacob's family of seventy multiplied as God blessed them and they became a nation. It has been estimated that the descendants of Jacob now numbered between two and three million people. This became a deep concern of the Egyptian government. The people of Israel, also called the Hebrews, were good workers and provided an excellent work force for the Egyptians. Nevertheless, there arose a fear that the people of Israel would become more powerful than the Egyptians and dominate them. This resulted in the Egyptians putting in place various work-related practices that were a terrible burden to the people of Israel. In addition, the Egyptians tried to limit the growth of the nation of Israel. All of the male infants were to be killed at birth.

But God's plan was to give the land of Canaan to the people of Israel, and that would not happen if they continued to be slaves in Egypt. So despite their slavery in Egypt, God's plan of deliverance for the people of Israel becomes obvious in the first chapters of Exodus. The word Exodus, the name of this book of the Bible, means "a going out", a departure, referring to their going out of Egypt later under the leadership of Moses.

God's chosen people prospered in Egypt, and became a very large nation. But the Egyptians, who became slave drivers, ended up oppressing them terribly. There came a time when the Egyptian leaders no longer remembered Joseph, or why the Hebrews had come to Egypt. The Egyptians feared the Hebrews would become more powerful than they themselves and as a result they ordered that all the male Hebrew babies should be killed. But today we will be reminded that

**GOD USES ADVERSITY IN MOSES' EARLY LIFE TO SERVE HIS PURPOSES**

- 1. The Hebrews were supposed to kill all their male children.**
- 2. Through Pharaoh's very daughter God preserves the life of Moses.**

Listen to the background God provides us in Exodus 1:6-21: *"Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them. Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, 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 they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.' So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built [two cities]. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter*

*with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly. The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, 'When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, 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 of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, 'Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?' The midwives answered Pharaoh, 'Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.' So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own."*

We read that *"Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: 'Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.'"* Exodus 1:22. What a terrible command from the government! We would be horrified if such a command were given in our nation. And yet we are not really too far away from that kind of thing. China, with its huge and growing population, has decreed that every family should have only one child, and any unborn children beyond that are to be aborted, that is, killed. Abortion is the murder of unborn children and is plainly forbidden and condemned by God.

This horrible edict in China, to abort every child after the first, was unbelievable to Christians when it first became public. And yet it is a short step from making abortion legal, as the United States of America has done since 1972, to a mandatory abortion such as China has. Yet it is not unimaginable, that even in the United States, there are people who are commanding abortion. For many people, abortion is simply a method of birth control, that is, a way of preventing unborn children from seeing the light of day. The United States, just like many nations, has a terrible problem with people breaking the Sixth Commandment by having sex outside marriage. U. S. statistics from 2005 through 2007 show that nearly 40% -- four out of ten children -- are born to unmarried parents and the percentage is increasing. Our government has even approved medication to prevent conception after having sex, which would even kill a newly conceived child, medication called "the morning after pill".

We are still fortunate, rather blessed by God, that our government has not made such a decree as is in force in China. But the decree recorded in Exodus was made centuries ago by a pagan government specifically intending to punish God's chosen people, who knew and believed that God forbids murder, including the murder of the unborn. We should not be surprised at attempts to punish Christians simply because they confess the true God and seek to live according to his will.

In our sermon text you heard that *"a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, 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. 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. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him."* We don't know if his parents gave him a name, but they no doubt had him circumcised, in obedience to the command of God given to Abraham for all his male descendants. They hid the child for three months. Can you imagine the difficulty, the stress, the fear that his mother and father must have felt? Then in a sense, they gave a mocking obedience to the command of Pharaoh, who had commanded that every Hebrew boy be thrown into the Nile River. They threw him in the Nile River, but they put him into a little ark, a papyrus basket that had been waterproofed. This basket was placed on the edge of the Nile River, probably well hidden. His sister was placed there to watch over him.

*"Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. 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. Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?' 'Yes, go,' she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. 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."* The very daughter of the man who had commanded that the Hebrew boy children be killed is the one who rescued this child! She saw the basket, she found the baby was crying and Scripture says she felt sorry for him. She knew

this was one of the Hebrew babies, and said so. But with Moses' sister watching over him, an immediate solution to care for the baby was found. Moses' sister asked *"Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. 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.*" We see here God's providence, saving the life of his servant Moses.

*"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.'"* Pharaoh's daughter gave Moses his name, and then having grown up in the house of the Pharaoh, he would have learned all the knowledge that Egyptian royalty could have taught him.

So we see that God provides for his people even in adversity. God tricked Pharaoh right under his nose! His daughter rescued a Hebrew baby. All parents have hopes and dreams for their children. In the case of Moses, his parents' highest dream was probably simply that he live. But we know from Scripture that God had much greater plans for Moses. This is the man who ultimately was chosen by God himself to lead God's people.

He personally faced adversity too. If you continue reading in Exodus chapter two, you will discover that Moses, when he saw an Egyptian beating up on a fellow Hebrew, killed the Egyptian. Moses thought he did this secretly, but his fellow Hebrews found out about it, and as a result he fled to Midian, a land to the east and north of Egypt. He lived there for a long time, -- for 40 years! -- no doubt thinking that this is where he would spend the rest of his life. But God had other plans for him. In the same way we may have plans or ideas for our own lives, but God sometimes intervenes and leads us in a different direction, so that we may more easily serve him.

In Exodus chapter three, God calls Moses to serve him in a most spectacular way. Moses saw a burning bush that was not consumed. He went over to see what it was all about, and that was the occasion when God told him that he will lead God's people. *"Then [God] said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The LORD said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey--the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.'"* Exodus 3:6-10.

So we see today that God strengthens His people to do His will and wait with confidence and faith for their deliverance. God's people suffered under Pharaoh and the cruel taskmasters of Egypt, but God ultimately delivered them, in his own right time.

Another idea we must remember is that if anyone -- government or anyone else -- ever tells us to plainly disobey God, we must remember Acts 5:29 *"We must obey God rather than men!"*

May God preserve us and all his people and give us all strength to rely upon him, even if it means suffering, disobedience to authorities when they demand something contrary to God's Word, and even torture or death. Amen.