

Exodus 2: 1-10 – Baby Moses – abandoned yet adopted

Charlie Boyle 2/2/20

The Times 28th Jan 2020 headline said ...**Appeal to mother of abandoned baby.**

I don't know if you saw or heard about this true story of an abandoned baby. In summary this baby was found abandoned on a doorstep last weekend and was just 12 hours old police said. The baby was discovered at 11:40AM on Saturday in Hackney in east London wearing a grey baby suit and hat and had been wrapped in a white knitted blanket. The detective sergeant made an appeal to the mother saying - you are my primary concern, as a father myself, I understand how daunting becoming a parent can be I can offer you help, please be assured that you are not in trouble.... A woman writing on Facebook claimed that her grandfather, a postman had found the baby on his round and found the baby abandoned in a bush... His colleague thought he could hear kittens but when he went to check it was this baby!

Now of course the circumstances surrounding the abandonment of Moses and the placing of him in a basket, in the river Nile are quite different, yet there are similarities.

Remember that in the book of Exodus, God demonstrates his faithfulness to deliver his people and as we will later hear and read, they respond with a spurt of confidence in the Lord but their faith quickly leaks out and is replaced with faithless fear.

So what's the point of the main thrust of Exodus this second book of the Bible? It is to illustrate the fear and faithfulness of Israelites? I think there is a greater lesson here for us to.

We learn from their example that life is a constant test of one's faith in the Lord.

We see in the story that we've just heard that the mother trusts God, enough to put her son in a basket.

Context and introduction to Exodus

Effectively the placing of three-month-old baby Moses in a basket was the equivalent of leaving him outside an orphanage. Talking of orphanages do give some thought as some folk from our Church go to visit the Beautiful Gate project, one of our mission charities, in a couple of weeks....in Lesotho. <http://www.beautifulgatelesotho.org/>

The question we might ask ourselves is what drives any mother to abandon their baby?

The circumstances in the time of Moses are of course different, yet I'm sure fear had a part to play in both the abandoned baby of today and of Moses being left in the Nile some 1,500 years before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Just to remind ourselves the Israelites were of course there because of Jacob and his sons, Joseph ...of the Amazing Technicolour dreamcoat, of course being the most famous, which drew the tribes of Israel to Egypt, in the story of the latter half of the book of Genesis. It was

his wisdom of storing up during the years of plenty for the years of famine that lead the Israelites to be in Egypt.

The country of Egypt was becoming overrun with foreigners, from the Egyptian's point of view, with Israelites. As it says in Genesis 1 *"the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous"*. So Pharaoh, the king at the time, clearly insecure and worried about the Israelites joining with their enemies in war, sought to radically reduce their number, as well as working them ruthlessly into the ground. This situation of paranoia and insecurity led to the brutality and murderous policy by Pharaoh that meant that every boy that was born must be thrown into the Nile. Effectively a genocide, which of course, sadly we have seen in our times in Bosnia years ago and earlier in the past week we recalled the horrors of Auschwitz some 75 years ago on Holocaust Memorial day.

It is into this context that we join the story and the radical but necessary decision of Jochebed to leave the baby Moses in a basket in the Nile.

Abandoned.

I don't know if you have ever felt abandoned, or what your greatest fear is but imagine having to give away your child. Now we later know that this was the third child of Jochebed and Amram, Aaron being the brother and Miriam being his sister. She obeyed the letter of the law when she put Moses in the waters of the Nile but certainly she was defying Pharaoh's orders in the way she did it. Revering authorities should be a way of revering God but when the authorities require murder and the breaking of God's commandments we need to think again, even if sometimes it might cost us everything, in some cases our lives. Yet she was trusting the providence of God and God didn't fail her.

In the same way that God looks out for us even though it might not feel like it, big sister Miriam was there looking on.

How do we feel when we are abandoned? Do we feel let down by God? Do we have the faith of Jochebed? Do we trust him with our situations?

God asks each one of us a similar question - will you trust me? He asks will you trust me to deliver you from your perilous financial situation, will you trust God to deliver you from the sadness of the death of a loved one, will you trust me to deliver you from the fear of tragedy, from anxiety about the future, or deliver from a job we hate or of a crippling illness for ourselves or our loved ones? The lesson of Exodus is to look at our fears, within the context of God who loves us, of a God who will deliver us if we would just put our faith in him.

We need to remember that we are not abandoned. We all have a big sister, like Miriam looking out for us but sometimes we just can't see it.

The saving of Moses was a foreshadowing of the salvation of Israel as a whole.

But before the adoption of Moses into the household of Pharaoh, God puts compassion into the heart of Pharaoh's daughter.

It is her maternal instincts that kick in, her compassion.

Born from the baby Moses' tears, the heart of the powerful princess is turned towards the abandoned baby.

It is amazing isn't it to reflect on the turnaround of fortunes, from the same household of Pharaoh that produced the edict that led Moses to being abandoned, leads to him being adopted. But that is how God operates sometimes.

Talking of adoption and indeed fostering did you know that in our area each child taken out of care and put into a foster home saves the authorities a lot of money. There is a local family to here who have taken a child into their home and this is what they said about fostering "... fostering is real exercise in spiritual growth because the parameters of your love and patience are stretched – and this changes you. It also allows you to appreciate so many small blessings within family life – that previously you completely took for granted. Fostering is a challenge but each person in the family will fulfil a different role in welcoming and caring for the child that has joined you. It's such an important thing to discern in prayer because if you feel prompted to respond, you will positively affect a young, vulnerable life by giving them your love and sharing your home".

God's ways are different from ours. As it says in Isaiah [my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways](#) (Isa 55v.8)

I don't know about you but I find that often that is the case that God has his own way of doing things, his own timescale, and his own wisdom and what we need to do is remind ourselves that things will be all right and that all will be well in the end.

So the early life of Moses moves from abandonment to adoption into the most powerful family in Egypt. Into a position of great wealth, education and privilege. Instead of being abandoned God has a plan of a dual upbringing and puts Moses both with his own parents, as well as into a family that can give him unparalleled advantages and training for what he is to do later in life. Who could have predicted years later that he would be asking Pharaoh to let God's people go? The transformation of an abandoned baby boy in the Nile to leader of the Exodus from Egypt. But it's often the way isn't it that God uses the weak, to both transform our hearts, as well as society. To make a difference to our plans. We only have to look of the [example of Greta Thunberg, as a teenager, avoiding school, a child with autism who has had a huge effect she has had in bringing climate change, higher up the agenda for world leaders.](#)

A child that is brave can go a long way

God can use the weakest thing to defeat the mightiest enemies, like the small stone that David used to defeat Goliath the Philistine Giant.

In a similar way God adopts each ones of us into his family. We are all children of God, He has no grandchildren, instead we, like Moses, have a glorious kingly inheritance.

As we know he sent the baby Jesus to transform our hearts....

So what... For us gathered here today in Branksome Park, in Poole.

What is it mean for us?

Our faith needs to mature if it is to survive days of darkness that will inevitably come upon each one of us. The first two chapters of Exodus teach us three qualities of such faith.

Firstly, it is that we should have a **trustable faith** that rests in the knowledge that underpinning everything happens to us there is a secret, undeclared providence always at work, always providing, always purposeful and always on the side of the people of God.

Secondly it is an **expectant faith**. In the Bible Angels often come in very ordinary guises – God's agents, in God's place at God's time. Look around to those, who you were doing life with. Do you ever think of them as angels? Often those people that are offering help are angels in disguise. Don't turn down an angels help. Like the midwives to whom Pharaoh turned to support his programme of ethnic cleansing, only to find that they recommitted to a very different policy, which they were prepared to "**stand up and be counted**".

Whether it is the Greta Thunberg's of this world or others around us to inspire us let us not forget those who stand up to do things differently in our society to challenge us, to strengthen our faith.

Finally **and thirdly** of faith should be a **patient faith**. Very often our impatience leads us to forget about God's timetable. We too busy wanting things our own way, in our own schedule, in our own timetable in our own agenda. We often think that we know best, rather than waiting as the old Guinness advert says good things come to those who wait. Like the pouring of a pint of Guinness it takes time, good meals well-cooked take time, the greatest gift you can give anyone, apart from introducing them to Christ, is your time. I distinctly recall going on a parenting course and being told the greatest gift you can give your child is your time, so let's use our time wisely for His Glory. Amen.

Questions for Homegroups

1. What is your greatest fear?
2. What drove the mother of Moses to abandon her baby in the Nile in a basket?
3. Why should a daughter of Pharaoh have felt sorry for a Hebrew boy?
4. In what ways did the time in Pharaoh's palace prepare Moses for his later work?
5. What are your views on adoption and fostering? Would you consider it?

REMEMBER THE SERMON HEARD IS DIFFERENT FROM THE SERMON WRITTEN OR INDEED REMEMBERED!