

Note: The Rev. Caleb Kim will deliver the sermon below on Sunday, May 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls and via Zoom.

Title: Honoring God's Gift of Mothers

Today, I want to share one of my favorite stories about motherhood in the Bible. In our Old Testament reading, we meet Jochebed (Numbers 26:59), the mother of Moses, who is well known as a great man of faith and the leader of the people of Israel. Although Jochebed might not be widely recognized, God valued her courage and dedication as a mother. He blessed her, for by faith, she cared for her child under incredibly difficult circumstances. In our Epistle reading from Hebrews chapter 11, God also honored her and her husband in the spiritual hall of fame for the faithful. This morning, I want us to explore Jochebed's character and reflect on how God rewarded her for mothering Moses.

To understand Jochebed's faith, we need to review the birth of Moses. When Joseph became the prime minister of Egypt, his family came to this foreign land to get food due to a severe famine in their home country, and they settled there. The first group of immigrants numbered about seventy. Over the years, their numbers increased, and they became mighty. Sometime later, when a new king, called Pharaoh, who did not know Joseph, came to power in Egypt. He perceived the growing population of Israel as a threat. To address this, he planned to force the Israelites into slavery and eventually decreed that every Hebrew newborn boy was to be thrown into the Nile River.

During this terrible time, a son named Moses was born to a couple from the tribe of Levi who feared the Lord. When Moses' parents looked at their newborn, they saw that he was a fine and healthy boy. Normally, the birth of a child brings joy and celebration, but their happiness was tempered by fear and sorrow—they had to obey the cruel Egyptian law. By faith, however, Moses' parents courageously decided to hide their child for three months. They were not deterred by the possible consequence if Egyptian authorities discovered their actions.

Can we imagine trying to hide an infant for that long? My wife and I remember when our babies were little—they cried often whenever they were uncomfortable or hungry. Crying is one way they communicate their needs, and many times, one of us had to wake in the middle of the night to attend to them. In our homeland, many parents still celebrate their child's 100th day as a special milestone. Families and friends gather to celebrate because, in the past, many infants did not survive those first 100 days due to difficult circumstances. Babies need their mother's full attention and loving care. Moses' parents did their best to care for him, even under such dangerous conditions.

After hiding the baby for three months, Jochebed made a life-changing decision. She placed Moses in a specially made basket and set him afloat on the Nile. I believe that her action symbolizes her trust in God, while the river represents the world her baby would soon navigate on his own. I also see Jochebed's decision as paralleling the experience of mothers releasing their children into this challenging world. There comes a time when parents must allow their children to live independently under God's care. After our sons

graduated from high school, my wife and I felt a mix of emotions... Your continued prayers for our sons and daughters-in-law would be greatly appreciated.

While baby Moses floated along the banks of the river, Pharaoh's daughter went out to bathe and discovered him in the basket. Since she did not have a child of her own, she believed that perhaps her gods had given her a child in a miraculous way. Filled with compassion, she decided to adopt Moses as her own son without hesitation. Moses' sister, Miriam, had been watching nearby and asked Pharaoh's daughter if she needed someone to care for the baby. That caregiver turned out to be Moses' biological mother, Jochebed. Pharaoh's daughter said, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you" (Exodus 2:9). Not only was Jochebed compensated for her work, but she was also given the opportunity to raise her child until he was ready for the full education of the Egyptian palace. God rewarded her faith and courage abundantly—far beyond monetary compensation—and blessed her for her loving guidance and godly instruction of her son. Let us examine in a little more detail God's blessings on Jochebed's motherhood.

When Moses' mother cared for him, she provided more than physical nourishment—she offered spiritual guidance as well. Even though Moses received the finest education in Egypt, he never forgot the divine identity his mother had taught him during childhood. As he grew and faced critical decisions, he drew on her teachings. Everything he learned as a young boy remained in his heart and guided his actions throughout his life. He never forgot that he was one of God's chosen people. Later, Moses became a remarkable leader who delivered the people of Israel from Egypt and led them toward God's promised land, Canaan.

Like Moses, our children and grandchildren will one day face moments when crucial decisions must be made. If we follow the example of Jochebed—raising our children with faith, love, and dedication—we, too, will witness God's rewards upon the lives of our descendants. We will see His abundant provision and guidance in the days ahead.

I want to say that my mother is my Jochebed... And I thank God for giving me this wonderful and amazing mother. I am truly a very blessed person.

When Moses was little, his mother, Jochebed, planted seeds of prayers and God's words in his heart. Even though she trusted God and did her best for Moses, his life was not without challenges. As I mentioned before, when he was born, he was supposed to be cast into the Nile River. Through his mother's courageous faith, he was saved. Three months later, his life was again at risk as he floated in the river. For Moses' mother, there was no way to know the exact moment when her baby should begin his journey alone in the basket. She had no idea when Pharaoh's daughter would come to the river, where exactly she and her servants would be, or whether Pharaoh's daughter would allow Moses' biological mother to care for him. Yet I believe that Jochebed continued praying for her son no matter the circumstances, and God heard her prayers. Even though Moses experienced ups and downs in his journey of faith, the Lord was with him and worked everything out at the right time.

Friends, we serve the same God Jochebed served. This is why we must continue to ask God for guidance for our children and grandchildren. Some of our loved ones may seem distant from the Lord and face their own struggles. As our children grow older, we realize how little control we truly have over them. Even though we want to help our loved ones as much as possible, there are limits to what we can do.

We remember what Jesus did for His mother when He was on the cross. He entrusted her to one of His disciples, saying: "Here is your mother" (John 19:27). Likewise, we can pray and entrust our loved ones to God, saying, "Lord, here is my son, my daughter, my brother, my sister, my mother, my father, my loved one. Please care for them and place them in Your protection and provision" (John 19:27).

I recently read a story by Erma Bombeck about God in the act of creating mothers...

In our Psalm for today, King David prayed, "Record my misery; list my tears in your scroll—are they not in your record?" (Psalm 56:8). Because David believed that God would remember all his sorrow and tears, he was not afraid of any of his enemies and walked courageously before the Lord even during troubling time. The same God is present with us. He hears our prayers, collects our tears in heavenly bottles, and values them—especially a mother's tears!

When we focus only on the current situations in the lives of our loved ones, we may feel disappointment. But if we keep our eyes on God and His power, asking Him to change the hearts of those we love, He will answer our prayers in His perfect time and in His miraculous way. Friends, God sees our tears and listens to our prayers. He treasures the tears of godly mothers and grandmothers above all. Persistent prayer has the power to change lives. God may not act exactly as we expect, but He will faithfully work while we do our part.

Mothers, we thank God for you and are so grateful for all you have done. Mothering is one of the most demanding and stressful callings, yet you perform it selflessly and with love. You give tirelessly without expecting payment, though your work is priceless. Today, our appreciation extends not only to our mothers but also to grandmothers, aunts, grandaunts, and the mothers of our children. Truly, you deserve a big cheque for your devotion!

On this Mother's Day, let us remember once more Moses' mother, Jochebed. Because of her faith, courage, and care, God turned "the river of death" into "the river of life" for Moses. God calls us—all parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and guardians—to continue believing in Him and praying for our loved ones. One day, the Lord God will wipe every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:4). He will bless our steadfast prayers for our descendants, guide their paths, and be with them always. Mothers are God's masterpieces. Happy Mother's Day!

**In this sermon, I have drawn thoughts and materials from various sermons based on Exodus 2:1-10; Psalm 56:5-13; John 19:25-27; and Hebrews 11:23-28.*