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SERMON TITLE: A Family Commits to Loving God

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 2:1-10, 15-22. Ex: Exodus 4:10-15, 27-30a

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How important is your family to you? Is it not the most foundational structure—some call it an *institution*—of society?

Marriage was first mentioned in Genesis 2. Marriage as the core relationship was first introduced in the Bible; thus marriage was ordained by God. We have many hopes and dreams surrounding the formation of a marriage.

Today we look at the family of Moses—his father and mother, siblings, and father-in-law. Scripture tells us that both Moses's parents were Levites. That's like saying they were both elders in the Presbyterian Church. Well, probably slightly more than that! The tribe of Levi was set apart by God as religious leaders.

The Bible gives us illustrations of people and families who know God and try to follow God's ways, and also those who do not.

This family was a religious family.
The family into which Jesus was born was a religious family.
Ahab and Jezebel were not.

Families make all the difference. What makes for a successful family? Research points to three critical periods during which marriages are vulnerable to failure:

- 1-2 years, as a couple adjusts to marriage and its responsibilities;
- 6-8 years, usually after having children, which changes the marital relationship;
- 20-25 years, when the children move out and couple has to reignite their marriage.¹

There is one divorce almost every 36 seconds.² That indicates that values like devotion, commitment, and loyalty are shaky today, and even being abandoned. Marriage takes work to be in it for the long haul. Yes, there was divorce in Moses's day, but it was rare.

Divorce has been a hardship on our culture and difficult for the people who experience it because it is hard to have that core bond broken apart.

Yet with all the risks, families and extended families can make all the difference. Families tend to have common goals. Families can provide great support for one another. Parents teach and model values that matter. The church is often called a "family" for this reason. We are God's family. We are the "bride of Christ."

This story tells us about the success of marriage and family. Let's take a look at Exodus 2:1-10

Mom and Dad believed children were special and they, like the two midwives, refused to drown their small son. In fact, Mom came up with this crazy idea—*when you care, you will go to any extent to protect!*

And God's hand was all over it.

Her little basket was defined as an ark for her child—the same word was used as that for Noah's ark—a saving cradle. Sister took careful watch care over brother. While father probably built the ark and perhaps retrieved it from floating downstream, surely mom fed Moses as needed. When the Egyptian princess discovered him, sister might have fled but she did exactly the opposite and boldly went to the princess with an offer to help.

This family had care written all over it. A good family cares. A good family offers redemption not defeat. A good family looks at all kinds of options, no matter how crazy it may seem to others.

Minnesota State Senator Julia Coleman, was pregnant with twins. Well into the pregnancy, due to complications, doctors advised her to abort one of the babies so that the other one could survive. It was called "selective reduction." But she and her husband refused to comply because of their commitment to their faith. They cared, and realized "there's no way we could choose." "We had to fight for each day they were allowed to continue to grow, leading up to their birth. We got through and have nerves of steel as a result," they explained.

They surely felt like small naïve people, diminished by the self-reliant medical experts. But Julia Coleman said they wanted to place their faith in God "to set an example for their toddler son, Adam."³

This family was in this together, just like Moses's family.

¹ <https://www.bgsllaw.com/mchenry-county-lawyers/which-times-in-a-marriage-is-divorce-most-likely-to-occur>, accessed September 15, 2021.

² <https://www.marriage.com/advice/divorce>, accessed September 15, 2021.

³ Louise Bevan, "Pro-Life Minnesota State Senator Who Refused to Abort One Twin Says, 'Have Faith, Choose Life'," August 28, 2021 at <https://www.theepochtimes.com/>, accessed September 7, 2021.

When Moses was placed in his boat, God oversaw protection at every turn. Pharaoh had fifty-nine daughters. The one who came out to the Nile that day had maternal instincts. God saved the baby, from those chaotic waters, and blessed the family too.

Water is one of the four life-threatening elements of the earth. Yet **God has power over water**. Think about it:

- ✓ God separated water at creation and set up boundaries to contain it.
- ✓ The water of the flood destroyed everything.
- ✓ The children of Israel walked through the Red Sea.
- ✓ Jesus stilled the life-threatening storm.
- ✓ Jesus walked on water.

Water in God's hands is not only threatening but becomes divine; a channel through which we find life. Think about it. Baptism is a great symbol—a sacrament—for how we go under the water and instead of drowning, we rise up and are safe.

God saved baby Moses through the water. He would go on his way, safe.

A good mom, dad, and family protect one another and care for one another.

Moses grows up and gets in trouble for impulsively avenging the oppression of a fellow Israelite. The deed has become known and Pharaoh has a price on his head. Hear the story. READ Exodus 2:15-22

Did you notice Moses's attitude? He is forty years old now. His family has deeply influenced him. He immediately, upon seeing the shepherds bully the seven sisters, exercises his sense of justice and recovers their place at the well. He is self-giving. He protects and serves. With him there, they have no problems at all. Their work is done and they return home joyful I am sure, for this man made their task easy.

Did you notice the father's response? The name given means "Servant of God." He knew his daughters' schedules and inquired of them. **A good father is attentive**. Something was up. Upon hearing the story he said, "Why did you leave him there? Invite him to come eat with us."

A good father tells his children—even when they are older—"this is what we do;" and "this is what we won't do." This is a nurturing thing to do.

Why did you leave him out there? That's the painful part. Invite him to be a part. That's the nurture. Do you take that role as a father with your adult children? Not that you dictate, but attentive to their ways, and patiently continue to advise them.

What we do is be hospitable.

Reuel had established a loving home and this now was extended to Moses. Moses had not had a home or a place that he truly belonged for most of his life. Being a successful family means providing a home.

This man became Moses's father-in-law. Later, his willingness to share his wisdom—again, not as an order but as offering advice when he saw his son-in-law struggling under the load of leadership.

Let's look at one more scenario in this family. God had met Moses at the burning bush and let's just say Moses used all the excuses he could to get out of his call! This is the final resistance. Let's hear it. READ Exodus 4:10-15, 27-30a

Even God, in God's frustration with this humble, reluctant leader, turned to a family member. Why? Because this family maximized their support of one another. They were "in this together." When Moses did not have all the skills he needed his brother stepped in. His brother served. His brother was, without jealousy—but actually embraced him with a willingness to be a support. And God was happy with it.

How are you measuring up in your marriage, men and women?

How are you doing in the area of **CARE**?

How are you doing in establishing a **HOME**?

How are doing in being "**IN THIS TOGETHER**?"

All of these people were secondary characters who made it possible for Moses to be the greatest leader who ever lived.

Sometimes people feel insignificant and very ordinary. But ordinary commitments in the eyes of God is very significant. If you consider this example and apply it to your home and family, it will bless you greatly.

AMEN