

## The First Small Step

1. Warm up: There are some foods which, once you've taken the first bite, you can't stop until you eat all there is. What food is like that for you?
2. Just as one bite can set in motion a chain reaction that leads to something much bigger ("I can't believe I ate the whole thing"), so too just one small step of faith has the potential to create a chain reaction that cannot be stopped. That's where the story of Moses begins. The initial – seemingly small – steps of faith taken by Moses' mother and sister created a chain reaction that would eventually lead to the liberation of their people, the formation of Israel, the writing of the Old Testament, and Jesus himself. Read Exodus 1:8 – 2:10, as printed on p. 3.
  - a. Moses' parents were Hebrew slaves in Egypt. Fearful that the Hebrews were becoming too numerous, Pharaoh decreed that every newborn Hebrew boy must be drowned in the Nile. Imagine yourself as Moses' mother. When her baby boy was born, what thoughts and emotions do you imagine were swirling within her?
  - b. Saving her son seemed impossible. She was a powerless slave up against the might of Pharaoh and the Egyptian government. Resistance seemed futile. Yet she decided to do something defiant and dangerous. She took a step of faith and hid her son, rather than surrendering him. If she was found out, not only would her child be drowned, but she too would be severely punished. Why do you think she did it? What caused her to do something so risky?
  - c. Now fast forward three months to when Moses' mother is realizing she can't hide her son any longer. So she takes her second step of faith. She puts Moses in a specially-prepared basket and floats him in the river where Pharaoh's daughter often bathed. Her plot worked! Pharaoh's daughter decided to keep the child as her own, and Moses' mother got to be his nanny. At this point, what do you think Moses' mother was thinking and feeling?
3. Jeff summed up the story this way. "When she had no idea what to do or how to solve an impossible problem, Moses' mother simply did what she could. She took a first small step of faith. She hid her son, then one thing led to another – and eventually the boy that had been destined to die lived to become a prince of Egypt and the great liberator of the Hebrew people. And in all this there is a profoundly important lesson for us: **Every great thing that happens in life begins with a simple step of faith that sets in motion a series of events that leads to something incredible.** That's how faith works."
  - a. When you're facing a great challenge in life, why is faith so important? Without faith, what happens?
  - b. Mark Batterson says, "Faith isn't linear. Faith is geometric. Every decision we make, every step of faith we take, has a chain reaction. And those chain reactions set off a thousand chain reactions that we aren't even aware of [and may not even]

be revealed to us until we reach the other side of the space-time continuum.” Jeff gave some examples of how great historical change began with simple steps of faith that snowballed – e.g., St. Francis and Rosa Parks. What are some other historical accomplishments that began with a small step of faith that snowballed?

- c. In your own personal life, when have you seen a small step of faith snowball into something great?
  - d. In Matthew 17:20, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” What do you think that means?
  - e. Zechariah 4:10 says, “Do not despise the day of small things.” What do you think that means?
  - f. What’s a great challenge you’re facing right now? What might the first step of faith (or the next step of faith) look like for you? Are you willing to take it?
4. The story of Moses’ birth also reminds us of a second profound lesson. **No successful person is self-made.** Without the courage of his mother to buck the system and hide her son, and her creative plan to put Moses in a floating basket in a location where Pharaoh’s daughter would find the child and fall in love with him, there would have been no Moses. If his sister hadn’t been quick on her feet to suggest she find a Hebrew nanny for Moses, Moses would have lost touch with his people and his heritage and never could have lived into his destiny. But because of Miriam’s brilliant suggestion, Moses’ mother was able to raise her son in the guise of a nanny. She was able to be the key formative force in his childhood, implanting her faith and her love of God deep within Moses. Moses never could have become a Prince of Egypt and liberator of his people without such amazing mother and sister. And what’s true for Moses, is true for all of us.
- a. I Corinthians 4:7 says, “What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift.” What do you think that means?
  - b. Who’s someone who has been a major positive influence in your life?
  - c. Tell us about a strength of yours. Where do you think that strength came from?
  - d. In Matthew 10:41, Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward.” What do you think that means?
  - e. Read the quote from Jeff’s sermon found on p. 3. Our greatest accomplishments in life may not be things we do directly, but things others accomplish, at least in part, because of our positive influence. Tell us about someone you’ve had (or now have) a chance to influence. What form did/does your influence take? What are some beautiful things that person has (or may yet) accomplish?

## **Exodus 1:8 – 2:10, selected verses**

The king of Egypt said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are becoming more numerous and powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them and enslave them." But the more they were oppressed the more they multiplied. So the Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live."

Now a Hebrew man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river and saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said. Then the baby's sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter said, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, because she said, "I drew him out of the water."

## **How to Measure Our Lives – A Quote from Jeff's Sermon**

"Never make the mistake of measuring your life solely by what you do directly, but also by the accomplishments of the people you influence – and the accomplishments of the people they, in turn, influence – and so on and so forth down through time. So that you're greatest accomplishments in life may end up being things that you didn't even do directly, but that people you influenced accomplish long after you're gone."