

Everything Matters

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Exodus 1:18 – 2:10; Romans 12:1-8

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20: So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. ²¹And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

Max Lucado, American author and pastor, wrote about a metaphor that fits life perfectly today. I recently came across this article he wrote about power.

He said “One New Year's Day, in the Tournament of Roses parade, a beautiful float suddenly sputtered and quit. It was out of gas.

The whole parade was held up until someone could get a can of gas. The amusing thing was this float represented the Standard Oil Company.

With its vast oil resources, its truck was out of gas. He went on to say, “Often, Christians neglect their spiritual maintenance, and though they are ‘clothed with power’ (Luke 24:49) find themselves out of gas.” I was thinking about that out of gas experience. Pre-Covid19 days churches were already in low attendance during the summer.

Many churches were running out of gas. During this pandemic, churches on the margins sputtered and quit.

Sadly, many will be closing as they lose momentum. Even our children are affected as it becomes harder to fuel them when distanced and virtual. We feel some kind of power gone from us. We feel powerless. I've spoken with clergy from different denominations and the feeling of powerlessness is similar across the board. Churches are ghost towns. However, we are reminded through scripture that wherever two or more are gathered, Christ is here with us, right?

My thoughts return to this feeling of powerlessness and the words Lucado said about Christians spiritual maintenance and how we find ourselves out of gas, yet our Maker is the Great Standard Oil company. But, why do we feel so powerless at times? We have such a war within us sometimes. James 4:1-2 says *"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?"*² *You desire but do not have, so you kill.*

You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God."

Maybe we feel powerless because we don't tap into the gas we have inside of us, the energy we need to make a difference. When we feel powerless it's because somewhere someone taught us that we as individuals do not have

an effect on our environment. If I can't change the world, I will not change my behavior. **Who am I?**

Yes, who are you? You are a child of God with a unique gift. As the passage in Romans clearly stated today, (vs 6) "We have different gifts according to the grace given to us." It goes on to say gift of prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving leading, showing mercy. That has to count for something.

Don't listen to me, listen to the Old Testament lesson in Genesis today. If you get into the story you will see some powerful ideas of about the courageous work of women who were normally thought of as powerless. Moses would not have survived without 5 strong women: two midwives, his mother, his sister and Pharaoh's daughter. The story begins with a new king. A new boss, a new political leader is in power. He saw that the Israelites were having too many children.

What does a person with power do? He makes others powerless. He decides to tell the midwives to kill all the boys. You heard the long story today. In today's reading in Exodus, let me show you how the midwives reacted to the king. Two midwives, Shiphrah and Puah were nobodies who refused to go along with the powerful king who

threatened them if they did not do what he wanted. Two women made a decision and they took a chance to change the world. We've seen people step in to help in Nazi Germany. As we experience more polarization today, we see more people take a stance on their beliefs to help the least of these.

As beloved children of God, we deny others their own power. But, these women, who are powerless under their new ruler, refuse to follow his orders, to kill all the boys. So they lie to Pharaoh and say these women deliver babies too fast for them to even get there. Because they made a powerful act of courage, Moses is spared and becomes the one who leads the slaves out of Egypt. Moses' Mother also worked hard to save her son from Pharaoh's death decree.

First, she hid him for 3 months and when he was getting too big to conceal, she sent him off in a basket down the river. Letting go but letting God. His sister, Miriam, simply babysat for her little brother then acted bravely and cleverly. She watched where he went and saw that Pharaoh's daughter picked up Moses out of the water. Pharaoh's daughter knew she couldn't save all the Hebrew babies, but she could save one.

And she did. Moreover, Myriam acted quickly and got Moses' own mother to nurse and care for him. Wow! We might be powerless, but God, in Jesus Christ, is powerful in us.

This all started with two women who said "no". And I am sure they did not know they were changing the world. I wonder how many of you reading this can change the world. Thomas Jefferson, America's third president changed the world with the Declaration of Independence.

Mother Teresa showed us humbleness by becoming a nun who served the poor. Rosa Parks, sat at the front of bus in silent protest over injustice.

Did she know the civil rights movement would ensue and laws would be changed? I highly doubt it.

But, the point is that we do not do things to get the glory for tomorrow, we do things because we are called as Christians to follow God. We just need to be faithful, follow our hearts and heed the call of conscience (morality). These two women in Exodus knew it was not right to kill babies. They were faithful to God, they followed their hearts to let them live, and they acted on that call to do the moral thing. They saved many

many boys; Moses being one of them, thereby changing the world we live in today.

Your life can be like the butterfly effect. Do you know what that is? It sounds strange and it is rather scientific (theory) that a small change in one area can have a huge effect in another area. Sort of like the flapping of butterfly wings in one small rain forest can have an effect on the power of a hurricane elsewhere. It sounds silly, but let me put the butterfly effect in a human perspective.

Everything Matters! It mattered that I followed my mom to church all the time because I didn't want her to be alone. It mattered that I wanted to go to school regardless of the 2.5 feet of snow that was falling in mid-winter. It mattered because I am who I am today because everything matters to God. I love this quote by an unknown author that says, "God pours life into death and death into life without a drop being spilled." You matter and everything you have done to this point matters. Don't believe the lie that you are not good enough.

A well-known actor recently took his life because he thought he didn't matter. Oh, you matter to God. I leave you with the thoughts in Romans. "*Offer yourself fully to God.*" The things we do this week; our actions, our decisions, our choices, oh they will have a ripple effect for good or for unfriendly, for well-being or for damage in this world. You have the power to build up or tear down. What will you do this week, in the Name of Jesus, to make a difference in this world? Some of your actions may be big and some may be hardly noticeable. But, learn about your potential from this story of two women who quietly stood up to a tyrant leader. And God blessed them with families for generations to come. They were not wiped out.

God gave us gifts and God uses us to change the world. And he gave us Jesus to do it with. Will you accept the challenge? With Christ as our role model, go out and change the world because what you do matters.