

A Deeper Journey



A Deeper Journey is designed for those who would like a guide that supports self-study and self-reflection related to a teaching topic.

Message Date: June 2, 2013 Message Title: *Let's Go Floating!*

We are starting a new summer series today: ***Back to the Beach***. We're going to start in Exodus. Read Exodus chapter 1 through chapter 2, verse 10. Record what you observe here:

The River Nile is the longest river in the world, snaking 4160 miles from Burundi, Africa to the Mediterranean Sea. This river is our first stop on our Back to the Beach vacation series. The Nile is a life-giving river, but it is also a life-taking river. It's hardly the place to hide a child, but that's exactly what we see Moses' mother do.

Tenants in an apartment building heard a cry – like the mewing of a cat. Then they saw an incredible thing – a newborn's foot in the opening of a toilet pipe. That's right. A child was in a pipe. Rescuers tried to pull the child free by cutting the pipe. But, that didn't work. The baby remained stuck. So they sawed away the entire pipe with the baby still inside and took the section of pipe to a hospital. Doctors and rescuers worked together using pliers to pull away bits of the pipe, eventually freeing the baby. The placenta was still attached.

Why? Why was this baby put in a pipe? Accident? Wait. Embarrassed to be a single lady who was pregnant? Why was Moses put in a river where he could be hippo or crocodile food? What would drive a mom to do such a thing – especially if she recognized that he was special? In Exodus 1, we read that a paranoid psycho pharaoh put a hit on all the male Hebrew boys. Moses' mother hid her newborn for three months. How would you like to try to hide a crying baby? Babies cry all the time. How do you quiet them down and stay hidden?

Parenthood is scary. If you have children, what were some of your biggest fears before they were born? What are your biggest fears for your children now? If you don't have children, what are your biggest fears about the concept of being a parent or of watching children close to you grow up?

My daughter pooped on the floor the other day. It was a proud moment for us all. And, not just because it was a first – admittedly not entirely perfectly executed – step on the road to potty training. The fact is that it was a big step for Daddy too. Because Daddy didn't throw up. It's weird to look back on it now, but before I became a parent, one of the things I worried about most was not sleepless nights, not dealing with teething, not even my child running off to join a Satanist cult (although I may start to worry about that in 15 years time...). What worried me the most was poop.

You know what scared Jochebed (Moses' mom)? Pharaoh. What scares you? I'm scared I won't know what to do. I'm scared that something will happen to my baby. Pretty much everything. Diapers, diseases, discipline. I'm totally freaked out.

Back when Joe Garagiola was a catcher in the major leagues, he had a young pitcher out on the mound who had just come up from the team's farm club. It was his first time ever to pitch in the majors. The first two batters he faced had both gotten hits, and now were on the second and third base. The next batter up was none other than Cardinal slugger, Stan Musial. Garagiola, the veteran, knew it was a critical situation, but he was ready to go to work. He squatted down behind home plate and flashed the signal for a fastball. The young pitcher shook his head to indicate that was not the pitch he wanted to throw. So Garagiola signaled for a curve ball. Again the youngster shook his head, indicating that wasn't what he wanted to throw either. He tried for a slider and then a change-up, both with the same results. Nothing seemed to suit the young rookie. So Garagiola called time out and ran out to the mound. "I've called for every pitch in the book," he said, "and you've shaken them all off. What is it you want to throw?" The young pitcher turned to Garagiola with a look of fright in his eyes and said,

“Nothin’, Joe. Nothin’ at all. I just want to hold onto the ball as long as I can!” Well, we don’t have to be major league pitchers, to know what it means to be frightened, do we?

A lot of parents look around at the world, the culture we live in, and get scared. We think our culture is scary? Look at the culture of Moses’ day. Look at what his mom faced. So what do we do?

We can choose fear-based or grace-based parenting. The opening of the book of Exodus is a primer for two ways of living – reacting out of fear or acting in and from grace. Parents see three things: 1) My child is vulnerable. 2) The world is evil. 3) Satan is sinister. Initial response is to build the bunker, create the bubble.

Grace Based Parenting by Tim Kimmell:

We are all scared of Hollywood, the Internet, the public school system, Halloween, drugs, alcohol, rock’n’roll, rap, partying neighbors, unbelieving softball teams, liberals, and Santa Claus. Our fears determine our strategy for parenting. I hear it everywhere I go. I see it echo in the back of a parent’s concerns. The moms or dads begin their statement or question to me with the words “I’m afraid of…” When I look at how the standard evangelical family has formatted their strategy for parenting, most often I see fear behind the steering wheel. If you took all the categories of advice that Jesus gave us in the Gospels, you’d find that the longest list is made up of verses where He says, “Don’t be afraid.” If we have put our faith in Him, we should be the last people afraid of just about anything!”

We’re consumed with fear. Fear leads to the bubble/ bunker life. The fear that was hidden deep in the heart of Pharaoh, led him to start a killing campaign among the Hebrews. Fear hidden deep in the hearts of Christians leads many into a hate campaign against our culture.

How we view God determines how we parent our kids. If we spend our lives trying to keep the rules to make ourselves acceptable to God, we will communicate to our kids that their lives are about trying to keep the rules to make them acceptable to us. If we need to prove ourselves to God by our performance in order to be accepted by Him, then our kids will feel the need to prove themselves to us by their performance in order to be accepted by us.

Look back at how you were parented. What do you see? How has that shaped how you interact with children?

Compare and contrast how you parent with how your parents parented you. What healthy patterns and ideas can you take away from your parent’s example? What do you want to do differently than they did?

We want to parent our kids like God parents us. This won’t work if you have a screwed up view of God – if you see him as mad or sad all the time. “Phillip in the hands of an angry God” is not what we are going for here. Instead, if you have a healthy view of God and see him as accessible and available, then you are beginning to see how he deals with us. His love is unconditional. When we do something stupid, does God brow beat us? Does he call us idiots? Shame us? No. Give your kids freedom to be different. Every zebra has a unique pattern of stripes, and every kid is different.

Every child has a unique set of strengths – do you know your child’s strengths? What is his favorite indoor activity? Favorite outdoor activity? Favorite book? Favorite music? Favorite friend? Favorite family game? Favorite color?

Favorite Food? Favorite TV show? If you don’t know, find out. Start a physical list of your child’s favorites. Begin to identify what your child likes and what he excels at. Then, join him in those activities to build relationship with him.

Begin by praying over your child and asking God to help you get to know the precious treasure that He has entrusted you to raise.

Open your eyes to see your child as special. In Exodus 2:1-2, we see Moses’ mom recognize that her baby was special. It’s a pretty weird mom who doesn’t see her baby as the most beautiful in the nursery, but hey, we’re all adults here – we’re about honesty here – newborn babies are ugly – especially fresh out of the box. Moses’ mom looked beyond her baby’s exterior appearance and recognized something special about him – something worth risking lives for.

What is special about your child?

When Thomas Edison was a young student, his teacher sent him home with a note which said, "Your child is dumb. We can't do anything for him." Mrs. Edison wrote back, "You do not understand my boy. I will teach him myself" and she did, with results that are well known.

Pablo Picasso, "When I was a child, my mother said to me, 'If you become a soldier, you'll be a general. If you become a monk, you'll end up as the Pope.' Instead I became a painter and wound up as Picasso."

During her sophomore year in high school Latifah (Dana Owens) began rapping with two girlfriends in a group called "Ladies Fresh." After her mom, Rita, told her she could be anything she wanted to be, she got serious about music. Now, she's a serious player. The key was having her confidence built up by her mom. She even named herself "Queen." Queen Latifah: "raised by a mother who told me every black woman is a queen."

See God as strong. Read Hebrews 11:23-28. God is strong, stronger than our culture. If we put more faith in Him, maybe we'll have less fear of what's out there.

What do you need to trust God for in your life as a parent? What do you need to trust Him for in the life of your child?

We're not called to raise safe kids, but strong kids.

Prayer Focus

God, we have recognized today that we tend to parent based out of fear and not faith when we haven't completely purposed to follow you in our parenting. God, continue to show us where we need to trust you more. Give us the courage to parent in and from a grace perspective. Inspire us to look more closely at how you deal with us, how you love us so that we can model our interaction with our children after how you interact with us. Give us eyes to see how very specially you designed each child. Give us a heart to build relationship with our children and to get to know them as the unique and special treasures that you have entrusted us to shepherd. Help us to make their training and a strong relationship with each of them a high priority in our lives. Help us to parent in a way that glorifies you and reflects your love for us into the lives of our children. May we have patience beyond our own, wisdom beyond our own, courage beyond our own, and faith beyond what we can see. We trust you with our children. They are yours. In your name – Amen.

Family Focus

Today, the first through 6th graders got to hear a very special presentation from our friend, Kippee from The Kitchen, Inc. She shared about the ministry that The Kitchen provides to families that have less than we do – families who may not have enough food or shelter. You will want to follow up in discussion with your child so you can further support your child's growing heart for people and help answer any questions your child may have after this discussion.

The coin wars ended today and we will be excited to find out whether the boys or the girls won – next week. The money that the children collected will be used to help support the garden project at The Kitchen that our children and families started earlier this spring. We have excellent reports that the plants that we started in the garden are taking off and that the garden is getting ready to yield some spectacular food for people in the Springfield community. If you haven't taken your child by the garden plot or discussed the project with them, we encourage you to discuss it and go by and visit. Your child's prayers, support and hard work have gone into directly helping feed the people of Springfield, and we are so proud of them!

The Children's Ministry continues to gear up for summer and wants to make sure that all those who volunteer are able to take all the family time and vacation that they need this summer – so that means we can use some extra volunteers! If you or someone you know is willing to give time this summer, please contact Holly Hime at HollyHime@hotmail.com or Cheyenne McLean at CheyenneH1982@sbcglobal.net. Thank you!