

Community Church of Issaquah
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Three Amazing Mothers in the Bible

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Mother's Day certainly brings about a multitude of different thoughts, memories, and a variety of ways to celebrate. Being from the old school, I still think a greeting card, some flowers, and a special meal are all essential ways to honor mothers. Even though my own mother has been gone for a quarter of a century now, I still try to keep those habits going. I do send cards to my three sisters and my daughter-in-law. There are flowers here today to honor our mothers. And when I get home, I have planned a special meal that my own mother would have prepared for me. It is truly a special day, and we want to keep it special. In a moment we will do some remembering and honoring, but first I'd like to share the stories of three amazing mothers from the Bible that speak to me.

If we were to spend time in the Scriptures just researching all the mothers that are included, it would be difficult to limit our message today to only a few. We could certainly tell the beautiful stories of mothers such as Mary the mother of Jesus, or Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist. Those would inspire anyone. What about the stories of Eve the first mother noted in Genesis, or Sarah the mother of Isaac? Touching stories that are worth telling. And there is Rebekah the mother of Jacob and Esau, and even the unusual story of Hagar, the mother of

Ishmael the rejected son of Abraham. But I've chosen three others that inspired me, and I hope will inspire you.

A new pharaoh in Egypt came to power who was under no obligation to honor Joseph's deeds in Egypt and keep the special arrangement with the Israelites. He was worried about the Hebrews outnumbering and overtaking the Egyptians, so he made them slaves. He also commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill Hebrew baby boys when they were born, but they did not listen. Then Pharaoh gave another decree in [Exodus 1](#), *“Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”*

A Levite woman, Jochebed, gave birth to a son and hid him for 3 months. She had two children already, Aaron who was three years old and Miriam, the oldest child. [Exodus 2](#) tells us that when she could hide her baby no longer, she coated a papyrus basket with tar and pitch, placed the baby in it, then she set it in the reeds along the bank of the Nile. Jochebed's daughter, Miriam, watched to see what would happen as Pharaoh's daughter went down to bath. When Pharaoh's daughter saw the basket, her servant's retrieved it for her and inside she found the baby crying and knowing he was a Hebrew child she felt sorry for him.

Miriam then spoke up and asked her if she would like her to fetch a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby; she agreed and Jochebed returned with her daughter to nurse her own baby. Pharaoh's daughter paid Jochebed to nurse and raise the baby until he was old enough to come live with her. She then adopted him as her son and named him Moses. Jochebed was determined to find a way to save her son, and God blessed her plan. Not only was her son saved from death, but she was also able to nurse and raise him until

he was old enough to go live with Pharaoh's daughter. Her son, Moses, went on to free the Hebrew people from Egypt, leading them in the desert toward the Promised Land according to God's plan.

Though it was a very difficult decision to try to save her baby with a wild idea of the basket, Jochebed did it. And her bold move, and her later acts of mothering her son was crucial in God's plan for the nation of Israel. Can you picture her standing on the side of the river and watching the basket with her baby floating down to an unknown future? This is a story of a bold and trusting mother. It has always impressed me.

There's a different kind of story found in the book of Ruth. It is a story about a mother named Naomi who experienced death in heartbreaking ways, but then became a mother to someone else.

Naomi and her family fled to the country of Moab because of a famine in their homeland. Her husband died, and her two sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. After 10 years both of Naomi's sons passed away, and Naomi heard that the LORD had blessed the land of her people with food again. She told her daughters-in-law that they could return home to find new husbands. Although they both wept at her leaving, one refused to leave Naomi's side.

Orpah returned to her people and her gods, but Ruth said,
*“Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you.
Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.
Your people will be my people and your God my God.
Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May*

the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.”

Ruth was already learning from Naomi’s faith even during a time of bitterness. Naomi continued to watch out for Ruth and to instruct her wisely in her dealings with Boaz, who became her kinsman redeemer and whose land where they were workers. The Lord blessed Naomi and Ruth, and Ruth married Boaz. When Boaz married Ruth they had a child, a son. And the women of the land that was home to them said to Naomi the mother-in-law and substitute mother of Ruth,

“Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”

The child was named Obed, and later became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David who would later become king.

Now a story that warms my heart and touched me every time I read it. It’s a story of a mother who gave up her son for the Lord. It’s the story of Hannah. Hannah was married to a man who loved her very much, but he also had another wife. This wife was able to bear children, but in 1 Samuel 1:5-6 we learn that the Lord had closed Hannah’s womb. The rival wife provoked Hannah continually, but Hannah would go to the house of the Lord to pray. Her husband tried to console her saying in 1 Sam. 1:8, *“Don’t I mean more to you than 10 sons?”* Hannah prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. She made a vow saying:

“LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

In fact, she was praying so hard that her lips were moving but no sound came out so that the priest, Eli, thought she was drunk. The Lord blessed Hannah, and she gave birth to a son and named him Samuel, saying, *“Because I asked the Lord for him.”* She did just as she had promised, and when the boy was old enough she took him to the house of the Lord and presented him to Eli. Hannah then prayed, *“My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance.”* And her beautiful prayer was in the Bible passage that was read today from 1 Samuel 2:1-10.

Samuel lived a life dedicated to the LORD, and he would go on to lead the people of Israel, anointing Israel’s first and second kings—Saul and David. A mother asks for a child and when the Lord answers, she gives the child back to God to be used for his purposes.

Those are but three stories of Biblical mothers whose lives speak to us even today. There are certainly many more in our Scriptures that would inspire us and motivate us to honor them, but there are also inspiring and incredible stories of mothers right here from your lives. We want to spend some time today remembering mothers. Before we do that, let us pray.