

Because I Said So!

Unsung Heroes series

by Chris Famisaran

Hi, everyone, I hope and pray that you are all well today. Well, as you can see, we are worshipping from a different venue that is probably not unfamiliar to many of you back in the day. This is where we recorded, kind of our home studio recording area. But you know what, it serves a great purpose because our church is getting fixed. And we're going to continue on with the mission of the church. Let's take a moment let's begin with the word of prayer. Father, I pray that as we now dive into Exodus one, and learn about the story of Shiphrah and Puah. Lord, the lessons that we can learn from this help us to take it to be inspired, and not just learn about it, but empower us to move forward sharing you with others in Jesus name, amen.

I'd like to begin with a story that unfortunately, took place several years ago, that had devastating consequences. The surprised condo collapse a couple of years ago, I think it was in June, I think 24, 2021 It was a condo complex, and there was a slap on the high rise condo building in Surfside Florida that dropped onto the parking garage below. And then within minutes, the east wing of this complex of the 13 story tower collapsed, killing 98 people in a disaster. That's frankly, it's unprecedented. And this building was designed in the late 1970s. It's 136 unit, the Champlain tower itself. It was completed in 1981. And it was billed as a luxury living unit. And so officials as they were investigating, they kind of tried to early on figure out how did this happen. So engineers pointed out to some key decisions during the construction that, while it was legal at the time, it ultimately compromised the building foundation. Now, the Wall Street Journal also reported that the original builders, they skipped waterproofing areas that saltwater could seep into the concrete, and the building's structural slabs on thin columns without the support of the strong beams in some places. In areas they installed too few and others, they put too many. And so the building toppled. And unfortunately, it caused it to collapse. And here they put more concrete over here over rebar in

some places and others not enough and design plans and the photos just indicated this was a catastrophe waiting to happen.

Now, in spite of all of these construction flaws, some of them for sure could have been repaired. In fact, engineers say that some issues would have been fixable if the property condo board had taken action to take care of these big repairs. Now by 1996, the slab started showing the cracks and pieces of concrete were already starting to fall off. And yet so soon 15 years after. So they tried to patch the cracks, they tried to water waterproof the pool deck. But that too, also failed. And so the condo board, they failed to act at a time to do so they had a fiduciary responsibility and failed. Now the roof work also began before the collapse. But they had yet to start the repairs on the steel reinforced concrete that so new sorely needed to be done from the very beginning. So this building, it was destined to fall. By the time they acted. It was too late questions. I mean, did anybody sound the alarm? Did it fall on deaf ears? How could it they have let it get to this place? And as humans, it's easy to point the finger.

Now now the question for you. Have you ever been given an order by perhaps your boss or maybe your parent, or maybe a sibling or your friend or your neighbor that you felt was out of line or just wrong? In the first chapter of Exodus, we find a group of midwives who face this ethical and moral conundrum. And we're going to look at their courageous and faithful testimony on how they followed God's leading and played a part in altering Israel's history. But to get to the heart of this lesson, we have to go to the very beginning of Exodus and kind of even talk a little bit about Genesis. Exodus is the second book of the Bible and it's a continuation of this fivefold book called The Torah or the Pentateuch, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. They're all technically one book. Now in Exodus one in a notice how it reads it says these are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob. It was no title of Egypt at the top. And literally in Hebrew. The name of the book was these are the names. And it continues on the story, this narrative. And so, his sons Jacob, each with his family verse to Reuben, Simeon, Levi Judah, Issacharr, Zebulun and Benjamin., Dan, Neftali, Gad, and Asher, These are the descendants of Jacob also known as Israel, who numbered 70 In all, and Joseph, his 12th son was also already in Egypt.

Now to kind of give a little bit of background, okay, so Joseph was the brother, if you've heard this story, who got sold into slavery and ended up becoming Prime Minister of Egypt, and years later, his brothers show up and may reconcile and make amends, and he invites them to move to Egypt, where they would live for the rest of their lives. And from this time period of roughly, I think it's Exodus 14, Chapter 14 says they live their 420 years that at some point, they became enslaved. Now, you also have to understand too, that as as they came back, Moses is intentional by writing these these names down because if you were reading this or hearing this for the first time, it was important that your lineage was there. Okay. Now, as we see in the story, years later, many years later, hundreds of years later, Joseph, all of his brothers, and verse six, all of them have died many years ago. But the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful, they multiplied greatly increased the numbers and became so numerous, that the land was filled with them. And remember, this is not their home country, they're technically foreigners, I'll be it 400 Something years later, this is technically in a way, they're still in a way visitors. They're not necessarily Egyptians, that's not their identity. And in verse eight, then a new king or a new pharaoh, to whom Joseph meant nothing came to power in Egypt. And he said, Look, he said, his people, the Israelites have become far too numerous for us, Come, we must deal shrewdly with them, or they will become even more numerous, and if war breaks out, will join our enemies fight against us in leave the country. So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor. And they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread. And so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites, and they work them ruthlessly. They made their lives better with harsh labor, in brick and mortar, and with all kinds of work in the fields, and all of their harsh labor, the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

So there's a new chief, there's a new king, a new Pharaoh came in to town, who becomes king, who did not know Joseph did not know of the promises, and the good tidings that the original Pharaoh had said, with Joseph, notice, too, that his name is not even mentioned. That's a key point. Okay. And so you have the Egyptians who are fearing this growing Israelite population, they're getting bigger and numerous. And notice, too, that the Pharaoh didn't even try to reach out at least it doesn't say, to try to reach out to the leaders to this growing mass of people. But what's also interesting too, is this growing population harkens back to

a promise that God gave to the patriarchs in Genesis 12:2-3 chapter 15:5, and also 22:17-18. In fact, Genesis 12:2-3 says, I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you, I'll curse, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. So this promise is becoming fulfilled. And it's interesting to as I was reading and studying, somebody made a point of this, you know, the Israelites had no problem bearing children. Unlike Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel, it took them a while to get pregnant right?

Now, the more the Egyptians oppress them, the faster the Israelites grew, you can't squash something that is good, especially if comes from the Lord and we'll find a way. Now question that I have had for some time, too is how did they become enslaved? Were they free to roam about before? Or did they just all of a sudden you're now going to be our slaves. And in verse 15, with the threat of this growing population, the Pharaoh is worried so what does he do? The king of the Egypt king of Egypt said to Hebrew, the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah. When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth With under delivery, so if you see that the baby is a boy killer, but if it's a girl, let her live. The midwives However, and this is key, Fear God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do, they let the boys live. And then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, Why don't you have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?

And the midwives answered Pharaoh and said, the Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women, they're vigorous and give birth before the whip midwives arrive. And so God was kind to the midwives, and then people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, He gave them families of their own. So Pharaoh gives his first order to the midwives to kill the male babies as soon as they're born. And Israel's experienced Egypt just went down an even darker path. It's one thing to be in Egypt and eventually become a slave. But it's another when the ruling party now is committed to murder and genocide on behalf of your male sons. And here we see Shiphrah and Puah, who are Shiphrah and Puah. They're the Hebrew midwives Shiphrah, meaning beautiful and Puah meaning splendid, they probably most likely oversaw all of the midwives because for to advise midwives for 1000s of people. We don't know much about them, other than suffice to say they could potentially have lost everything. Had

they follow through, if a pharaoh gotten a hold of what they were actually doing? Now, there's some debate if they were Hebrew, or Egyptian, and even some rabbinic traditions argue that they were a mother daughter, duo, we don't know for sure. But regardless, what we know is they feared God more than they feared, man. And it's here that they showed their true character by stepping out in faith following God, versus the order of a human being that goes against the principles of God, to openly defy Pharaoh's order, which was what they did was a death sentence. They knew exactly what they were doing to murder an innocent child was inconceivable to them. Now imagine if they didn't have that same faith, what if they decided it was just one child? A slippery path is what lay ahead if that was the case. And yet, when they're questioned, how is the Israelite children? How are they growing? They simply respond at the Hebrew women, they're just more vigorous, it just seemed like, Oh, we got there just too late.

And maybe a question. You're probably wondering right now as well. Is it okay to lie? And no, it's not okay to lie. We'll address this specific issue next week. In our story, we're very happy. But because of this, God blessed Shiphrah and Puah. Because of their faithfulness, he gave them families of their own. They stood in conviction of what they believe. They lay their lives on the line and possibly, even their families. And if they're, you know, Egyptians, it's interesting how they decided, you know, what, there's a moral code and, and regardless of whatever cultural beliefs and everything that they had around them, they knew that this was the right thing to do, if there Hebrews that probably could have brought on in even worse, oppression to the people. Now, when you look at Pharaoh, especially Pharaoh failed many times in this story, because instead of trying to build relationships at the very beginning, he didn't even It doesn't sound like he even tried to talk to them. He just made decisions that had horrible consequences, based on what he perceived, in his head, the ego around talking to the people, did he have his people talk to the Israelites? No, he didn't build bridges. He didn't build relationships. And I wonder, did anyone question his orders? Probably to do so though, put you in a bad position again, but just to try and eradicate a whole people unacceptable. And so Pharaoh failed tremendously by opening the decree to all Egyptians now, not just the midwives participate in the mass slaughter of the Hebrew male babies, and you lose tremendously when you have to force somebody to do something that they don't want to do. So Pharaoh, he issues a

second order for all the Egyptians to kill all the babies or I should say all the male babies by throwing them into the river. Verse 22, then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people, every Hebrew boy that is born must be thrown into the Nile, let every girl live. Again, when you look at all of pharaohs decisions, it's all based on fear and assumption. Fear of what potentially could happen, not rooted in fact, unfortunately, evil will try and overrule in spite of your best efforts. And Pharaohs orders of While the Egyptian people to murder the boys by throwing them in the river just it's it's unsettling. In fact, I was even reading. Some commentators who mentioned Jewish commentators I should say mentioned that Egyptian parents would take their young children out Hmong views were like population and have their own children cry. And when they heard a Hebrew baby boy cry, they would grab, check and grab that child and throw them in the river. Imagine the mindset that they're in. And as you read the next chapter, whose story is told Moses, this is the backdrop of when he is born. Yet, in the midst of this, we see two courageous woman Shiphrah and Puah. We don't know much again about us about them, but they stood firm in their conviction, they decided it was better to live by faith and possibly die than the demands of an insecure human being.

To close with, I want to share one one story. There's an Instacart delivery driver by the name of Jessica Higgs, who made a delivery drop, and she paid attention not just to her surroundings, but also her instincts. Now Higgs had taken an order from a woman who was buying groceries for her dad, and the order instructions were to drop the order on the porch. But in her own words, she said something was just telling me now you gotta help this man out, you can see the emotion on her face. And in a tik tok video that she recorded about this experience. And once the man came to the door hit, Higgs ignored the regular Instacart delivery protocol. And she actually brought the groceries into the house. And when she was inside, she made a mental note of this propane tank that was in the room. And she saw that the man seemed to be sickly and also noticed that there was particular smell. And she was saying I was there maybe five feet and I just got dizzy. And I said there's got to be a leak. But that's when I realized that the smell had to be coming from this propane tank. And so after her visit, Higgs used the Instacart messaging feature to alert the daughter to the potential danger, she suspected that the father was becoming sick from the propane tank, and the daughter sent her younger son to check on her dad and confirm that the danger

was real, and a tank was immediately removed. Now for compassionate action. He has received not only \$100 tip from her customer, but kudos from millions of people who watch this video on tik tok. And so Instacart released also their own statement, stating that we're constantly inspired by the incredible people who chose to be Instacart shoppers, and make intentionally make a positive impact in the lives of others. This story touched our hearts and we're grateful for shoppers like Jessica, were called to go above and beyond not just to do the minimum. And yet, when we make our life, a life of service, wonderful things can happen. And we can honor God by the decisions that we make.

What are some of the things that we can take from this is number one, just listen to your gut. You're telling somebody if your gut is telling you not to do something, it's a high likelihood, you shouldn't do it. And if anything, ask, and above all, pray about it. As you make decisions, take time to think about it, especially if they're big decisions. You know, making your order at Del Taco doesn't necessarily need to take a lot of time. But should you try to figure out what you want to do as a career. Find somebody that you want to spend the rest of your life, that's a big decision. And in life, there are going to be times where you're going to be faced with dilemmas, predicaments, or people are going to maybe ask you to do something that you know in your heart, you should not do. And it's going to take courage to move forward. All it takes is one step. All it takes is one step forward, to gain momentum to do the right thing. As we close, I want you to reflect Have you ever been asked or ordered to do something that you know is not right. Could be something recently, could be something from your very childhood that has somehow stuck with you. And lastly, moving forward this week when you're challenged, stand firm. Pray, stand firm, pray and do the right thing.

May God bless you all. I hope and pray you are well. Thank you for joining us here today online. God bless you all let's take a moment now to close with prayer. God in life, it's filled with many challenges. And I pray above all, Lord, if anybody right now is facing a hardship or a struggle, the character issue, a life issue of where to move forward. I pray that Lord give them discernment. Give them clarity. But above all, Lord Give them courage to do the right thing, even if it may set them back. We know though that you are a God who is faithful, and you will help them to overcome. So leading guidance. Thank you for your providence in the past,

what you're doing right now and what you will do in the future. In Jesus name, amen.

Grace and peace, everyone. God bless you all. Take care. We'll see you soon.