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SPEAKER #1 Welcome to the Bethany Hour. We come to you under the auspices of grace from the Bethany Baptist Church Brooklyn New York, Dr. William Augustus Jones, pastor. Bethany is a church totally committed to a gospel of holism. We believe that Jesus Christ speaks to the totality of the human condition. We commend him to everyone as the all-sufficient savior. We urge you to worship him each Lord's day. Come now and unite with us as we celebrate the goodness of the Lord.

(choir sings)

REV. DR. WILLIAM AUGUSTUS JONES, JR: Amen. Amen. Here now the lesson as recorded in the book of Exodus, chapter 2 beginning with verse 1 and ending with verse 10. "And there went a man of the house of Levi and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the women took the child and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water." God bless the reading of his word.

(choir sings)

SPEAKER #2: Let us prepare our hearts and minds to receive the Gospel of Christ Jesus. Join me in singing hymn number 193, "Faith Of Our Mothers."

(choir and congregation sing "Faith Of Our Mothers")

JONES: I lift words out of the 10th verse of the 2nd chapter of the book of Exodus. "And the child grew, and she brought him unto pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son." I've given title to

what I hope to say, “From Mud Hut to Big House,” “From Mud Hut to Big House.” Pharaoh was a racist. That's the truth—pure, clean, and simple. By whatever mode of measurement, you employ, whether it be that of ideological bent or institutional posture, pharaoh, leader of Egypt was a racist. He was an active practitioner of the master race ethos which has been rightly described as the eternal joke played by conscious culture at the expense of unconscious biology. Pharaoh was a racist. This head of the vast Egyptian empire had a plan. It was a plan of racial extermination, a plan of Hebrew genocide. Pharaoh had a plan and in order to execute his plan, he employed a method known as male infanticide. His method was a rather simple one—kill all of the Hebrew boys. Like every racist power, he knew that the easiest route to the elimination of a people was by means of male extermination. If you decide to destroy a people or to weaken a race, simply find a means of destroying their manhood. Pharaoh's plan was open, and it was direct—kill the infant sons of the Hebrew women. Every boy that is born you must throw him into the river but let every girl live. That was pharaoh's plan. Why did he have such a nefarious plan? Well, the Egyptian civilization had risen to amazing heights on the backs of slave laborers and in the course thereof there had been a slave population explosion. Pharaoh tried to curb it by coming up with increased deprivations and added burdens. He forced the laborers to make bricks without straw but the more he afflicted them, the more they grew, and he had concluded long since that Hebrews were less human than Egyptians—and he made this decision not on the basis of color, but on the basis of culture—but in a real sense, both were of essentially the same pigmentation. You see sin is not predicated on color alone. There's no necessary correlation between sin and skin. To be certain, skin color has been determinative of the racist ethic in western culture. You remember that Dr. Du Bois said at the turn of the century, “The chief problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line,” but whether justice is meted out or denied on the basis of skin or culture—racism is the damnable result. It's a mad man's ethic. It's an abomination before God and when the myth of racial supremacy is seriously assaulted, people in power become terribly upset and develop means of repression. Pharaoh feared a revolution, so he increased their affliction, but they kept on growing. Those slaves at a strange land, they knew of a royal past. They were Abraham's seed, children of the covenant, heirs of a blessed promise—they knew that pharaoh, though sovereign in Egypt, was not sovereign Lord of the universe. They heard about pharaoh's plan, but they knew that God had a master plan. So, when pharaoh ordered the slaughter of innocent baby boys, God in a way simple but strong, set in motion his own plan. It was a plain plan, nothing thunderous, nothing cataclysmic. It was profoundly plain, and people need to know that God is potent reality even in silence. So often we are disturbed by God's quietness but never mistake divine silence for divine inaction. William Cowper put it well, “God moves in a mysterious way,” His wonders to perform, he plants his footstep in the sea and rides upon the storm, but sea walks and storm rides are not his only ways. Sometimes he makes things happen with a mere whisper. Sometimes he pushes events with a still small voice. That's what he did in Egypt land. God found a cooperative heart in a mud hut along the bank of the river Nile. A young Levite woman named Jochebed married a young Levite man and became pregnant with child. When the child was born, she determined that he deserved life rather than death. Jochebed had engaged in a dialogue during the time that she carried this baby and talking to herself she had declared, “they won't kill my boy, they may get these others but not mine. God is giving him to me, and he will be born to live”—and when the baby was born, she determined anew, pharaoh won't get this one. She hid him for three months. Each day seemed like an eternity. Will an Egyptian soldier hear his infant cry in the deep dark of some silent night? Will some traitorous soul within my own community report us to the authorities? How difficult it must have been for this young mother. For three months she hid

him successfully, but a day dawned when it was no longer possible to continue the hiding process, so she did the next best thing. She decided to make what was tantamount to a little bitty boat to bear her son's little bitty body. She took some bulrushes, put them together with slime and pits, added some love and some prayer, put the baby in the ark and laid that ark on the bosom of the Nile, trusting that the Lord would make a way somehow—and then she slipped down to the river's edge, her feet moving to a heavenly tempo and stationed her daughter on guard duty leaving everything to the care and keeping of him who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Jochebed went as far as she could go, it was now God's turn to do the rest and God stood with this baby sister watching from afar and then God moved in another way. He sent pharaoh's daughter to take a bath in that river, she sees the little ark and sends the maid to fetch it. The maid opens the ark and sees a crying baby boy. God puts sympathy in the heart of pharaoh's daughter. This is one of the Hebrew babies and the baby's sister steps forward and asks pharaoh's daughter, “shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?” “Yes, do that. Go ahead, that's the thing to do. Go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse this baby for me.” And what did Moses' sister do? Well, she made her way down by river's edge to the mud hut and got the child's mother and the rest is history. The pharaoh's daughter told the baby's mother, “take this baby home and nurse him for me and I'll pay you your wages.” So, the woman took the baby and nursed him for pharaoh's daughter in a mud hut along the Nile. Jochebed nursed her own baby for another woman. She was a victim of her slave status. In her humble mud hut, she nursed her baby knowing full well that a day would surely dawn when she must surrender him to the arms of another woman. A woman born to power, a woman born the daughter of pharaoh—but remember, God had a master plan, and she was participant in that plan, painful though it was. Jochebed's task was that of preparation for liberation. She did not know the details of the process, but she did know enough to know that God was the Lord of history and that he was moving in the land, and she sensed that her child had been selected and spared for special duty. How does a mother prepare her child for leadership in liberation? How does a mother prepare her child for active participation in the freedom process? How does a mother nurse a child of destiny who is destined for another house and the influence of another? Well, it requires something more than physical nurture. It takes more than a certain feeding schedule. This is head work and heart work. This involves the cultivation of both sense and soul. This is total nurture—teaching, training, grooming, equipping, getting the life ready for the rigors of redemptive leadership. I can almost hear Jochebed as she muses and meditates during the nursing process. “One of these days I've got to give him up to pharaoh's daughter. I've got to make that mournful trek from my little humble abode up to the palace and I've got to surrender bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and blood of my blood, and heart of my heart to another woman. She will have his body but not his mind. She will have his body but not his heart. She will have his body but not his soul, for God and I working together have already put something in him that palaces and power cannot possibly corrupt.” And then looking down into the face of her innocent lad she says, “Son, it won't be long now. It will be all too soon when I'll have to take you from here to the big house. I've done my best by you my son, I didn't have a lot to give you. Only a lot of love seasoned with a lot of prayer. I've done my best son, and it hurts my heart when I think about our coming separation. You'll be up there, and I'll be down here but that's the way it is in Egypt land. You see son, God's getting ready to fix things so that the mud hut, big house arrangement won't last forever, and I've been working with God on the master plan. My son, you're bound for the big house, and I want you to understand son, that the big house situation is perpetuated by the mud hut predicament. The big house is the seat and the symbol of ruthless power. So, when you get there son, I want you to keep the murdered humility. When you get to

the big house, just remember who you are. Remember your roots. Remember that you're an instrument of liberation. It hurts to give you up but it's God's plan and we belong to him." That was the diet on which young Moses was nursed—and that's a proper diet for all people caught in the shackles of any kind of servitude. It's a diet that not only has existential relevancy, it's a diet that is futuristic in scope and purpose. For it looks beyond what is, to what ought be and what will be. It's a diet of preparation for liberation and the great question back then and up now is this, when you get where you're going, what will your attitude then be? When you get that big promotion, how will you handle it? When you move into your new home, how will you relate to former friends? Would you get a little honor? And when \_\_\_\_\_?? of praise are heaped upon you, will you retain your humility? When God blesses you in a great big way, would you be as sensible as you were when you had a lot less? If you get to the big house, would you maintain your integrity? You're a mud hut dweller now but how would you handle yourself up yonder in the big house? Now, you can't answer the question properly unless God's got a claim on your life. You can't even begin to deal with this kind of question because you know your thinking is already perverted. If he has not a claim on your life, your sensibility cannot possibly be what it ought to be. Without his spirit in you, you play the fool wherever you are, whether you're in the mud hut or the big house. You'll become contaminated and corrupted, and I know whereof I speak. I've seen it happen so often. I've seen people raise from from obscurity to prominence and then behave in a manner that says that they never learned the ABCs of righteous living along the way. I've seen them get the big head and then forget everybody and anything that had anything to do with their rearrangement. If you're not careful, you'll even forget who brought along you the way. Thank God Moses remembered. He never forgot. Jochebed's prayers were answered, liberation's dreams were fulfilled, God kept his word—he honored his promise. Does not the record tell us that when Moses came of age he refused to be called the son of pharaoh's daughter? He went out to lead his people and God was with him from the backside of Horeb to the heights of Pisgah, where his soul was rocked asleep by the almighty himself and placed in the bosom of Abraham. Oh, if you trust in the Lord, he will make a way. Some will call it coincidence but the faithful know that it's providence. If you trust him, he will protect and he will provide. He'll make your enemies your footstool. Oh, if you fear God and follow Jesus, he'll keep you as the apple of his eye. I know it's a cold and callous world in which we live. This is a mean-spirited city where you and I dwell, and the difficulties are mounting up with the passing of each day. It's a city where the sanctity of childhood and of motherhood are about to go by the board. There are people who have no respect at all and therefore no concern for the little ones and this road is already rough and the going is going to get even tougher. For there are a lot of big house dwellers who have no feeling at all for mud hut occupants but remember, God's got a master plan. I believe in my heart that the valleys will be exalted, and the mountains and hills will be brought low. Gods got a leveling process. So, go forward to meet your every tomorrow. Sing it to yourself as you go, "I know the Lord will make a way somehow." I hear the elders singing, "Be not dismayed whatever tide, God will take care of you. Beneath his wings of love abide, God will take care of you." He will, I know he will. Do I have a witness that he will? God will, yes! Lord will take care of you. Jochebed knew it, Moses believed it. Mama knew it, I believe it! Do you know it? Do you believe it? The Lord God will take care of all of them that keep their vision on liberation's dream and who say no to the big lie and yield themselves to the embrace of the eternal. Moses went from the mud hut to the big house, but he never lost his religion—and in every moment of temptation to say no to heritage and yes to the big land, he said, "I will not bow to error, I will not eat the king's meat. I've got a mama down at the mud hut and mama put something in me that the big house can never take away." Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! And by the way, that's how most of us have made it, is that right? We had mothers and fathers who told us that we were somebody when the world said we were nobody. Keep a mud hut humility while you're rising and that way you can reach back and bring somebody else along. Praise the Lord. The doors of the church are open. Is there anybody here who wants now, to say "I believe on the son of God, I accept Jesus Christ, the total emancipator, as Lord of my life, and I want to follow him and serve him so long as life shall last and then reign with him forevermore?" If that's your decision, we bid you come while we sing this blessed hymn of invitation, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." He is faithful yes; he is I said, the Lord is faithful (congregation responds "yes!") There hath not failed one word of his promises. The Lord is faithful. If you trust and never doubt, he will surely bring you out. Anybody here ever been brought out? (congregation responds "yes!") Praise God. It may be that there are persons present who know the Christ and who live in this city but are without a church home. If that's the case with you, we urge you to unite with God's people. Won't you come while we stand and sing this blessed hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," selection 153 in the hymnal? God help you to come whoever you are, whatever your condition. God bless. God bless you, my dear. Who else will come? God bless you, son. Is there another? Jesus is calling. Come on, come on. God bless you, little girl. Somebody else wants to come to Jesus?

(choir and congregation sing "Great Is Thy Faithfulness")

SPEAKER #3: Thank you for joining us today. We pray that your vision has been heightened, your faith increased, and your soul blessed. Inquiries concerning copies of Dr. Jones' sermon may be made by calling the office of media ministry, 718-919-5026. Don't forget to join us next week at the same time and please invite others to share in this experience. His peace abide in you today and in all your tomorrows.

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