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I can't remember where I left my tablet. I've already broken one copy and had it replaced, and I hesitate to ask for another.

Oh, excuse me. I don't mean to interrupt your worship, but I've lost my tablet. Have you seen it? I don't mean the fancy electronic tablets you have today. My tablet was made out of stone. God had written the 10 Commandments on it to help my people get along with one another. You've heard them: honor God and your parents, don't kill or steal or tell lies. Worship God. Honor the Sabbath. Important teachings to help humanity get along.

Oh my. Where are my manners. Not only have I interrupted your worship, I have also forgotten to introduce myself, though I'm sure you won't have a hard time figuring out my identity since you just heard a portion of my story read from your Bible—the part about how my mother hid me from the Pharaoh who was killing all the newborn boys. She placed me in a basket and set me afloat on the river and asked my sister, Miriam, to follow along to make sure I was safe. The Pharaoh's daughter was

bathing in the river and saw my basket, so she decided to rescue me and raise me, though my clever sister suggested that she fetch my mother to nurse me.

And that's how I got my name, Moses, which means "to take out of the water." I had a luxurious life growing up in the Pharaoh's house, but I felt as though part of my life was missing. When I asked about my birth and learned that I had been born from one of the women who were Pharaoh's slaves, I just had to find out more about my people, so when I became old enough, I ran out into the desert to decide what to do, to find my people and learn more about myself.

There I encountered a bush that appeared to be on fire, but when I looked closer, it wasn't burning up. And then I heard a voice, "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground." I realized this was the voice of God, who said, "I have seen the suffering of my people in slavery; I have heard their crying out to me, and I want to bring them to

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safety, and you, Moses, are the one I've chosen to help me rescue them."

Me? Who am I to go to the Pharaoh and ask for the release of my kinsfolk? I had run away from my old life as the Pharaoh's grandson, and I had found my people, so I didn't want to go back to Egypt and face all the suffering and risk of that place. But God said, "I will be with you."

So, I asked, "What if they ask me your name. What shall I tell them?"

God replied, "I am who I am. Tell them I am sent you."

I'm embarrassed to admit that I had a few more objections, but God kept reassuring me that I would not be alone through the ordeal. Have you ever had times when you've been hesitant to do something you felt called to do? Ever worried that you weren't good enough to do what God has invited you to do? When I told God that I could not speak very well, God suggested I take my brother Aaron with me! No matter how many objections I had, God kept reminding me, "I will be with you."

I don't know why God chose me. Maybe it's because I was frustrated with the way my people were treated by the Pharaoh. Maybe it's because I was saved as a baby and now it was my turn to save my people. Sometimes God calls us to great challenges, such as me leading our people out of slavery. But sometimes God calls us to do smaller things, such as Shiphrah and Puah. Have you ever heard of them? Possibly not, for they went about their lives doing seemingly small things, birthing babies, but to those families they were doing great things: birthing their sons and daughters.

While doing what they did best, these midwives heard a new order from the Pharaoh to kill baby boys, for he felt threatened that my people were growing larger in number, and he felt we were becoming stronger than Pharaoh's people. He thought that if he thinned out the males, it would strengthen his own rule.

But Shiphrah and Puah disobeyed his order, and that's what allowed me to be born. If they had followed the Pharaoh's order, I would have died. No

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floating to safety in a basket to the Pharaoh's daughter. No burning bush. No escape from slavery. No Ten Commandments. It's possible you would not be sitting here today worshiping God if Shiphrah and Puah had not saved my life 3500 years ago. Going about their ordinary tasks of being midwives birthed new possibilities for my people and for all of you.

I think 94-year-old Les Heggernes from Minnesota would agree that small acts of kindness can birth new possibilities. I read his story in your local newspaper, and he seems like my kind of guy, for we both have something in common: we were uprooted from our homes.

When Les was a teenager, he escaped from his traumatic homelife and found shelter at a boys' club now called Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities. He recalled, "We could play basketball there. They'd give us soda and a cookie, and there were counselors who would listen to our problems. So, I've always had a soft spot in my heart for the mission."¹

As a way of expressing his gratitude for the help he received, he started a collection drive, gathering towels, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, razors, and hairspray for the homeless people that stay at the shelter. With 400 beds for people to stay each night, the mission goes through a lot of soap and shampoo every day, so Les invited fellow residents at the retirement home where he lived to collect items for the shelter, hoping to set a world record for the most bars of soap collected by a retirement community. He's even dreamed of having "a silent auction in which all the bidding is done in bars of soap."²

Through the struggle he experienced in his own life, Les has found a way to birth new possibilities for the care of others—at 94 years of age! Isn't that amazing?

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You might think you're too old to give birth, but none of you are too old to birth new possibilities.

I imagine many of you have birthed new possibilities right here, in this very place. How many of you have birthed an idea that has brought new life to this place or to your community? I'd like to hear some of those ideas, or if you're too shy to talk about your ideas, what have you see others birth in this place? ...

Those are amazing new births. You may not experience a burning bush like I did, but I encourage you to listen for the new possibilities that God invites you to do. Serve as midwives to help one another birth new ideas, and trust that God will be with you, just as God was with me.

¹ Jeff Strickler, "94-year-old man repays debt to group that helped him as a teenager," *The Elkhart Truth*, Sept. 21, 2019, C5.

² Ibid.