

**“Reaching Out to Serve”
a.k.a., “Rowing the Boat”**

**Province VIII Workshop
Evening Sermon
(Written as delivered/spoken)
5/23/2023
The Rev. Heather Dee Rose**

Based on Scriptures: Matthew 5:14-16, Micah 6:4

Since you are here tonight, you are here because you felt led to be here or you were invited to be here. But you heard about this event or helped to organize this event because you are a daughter of the King of Heaven and a sister in the faith to the women sitting around you. You may not even have originally felt inclined to come, but perhaps a pesky sister in the faith encouraged or convinced you to come to recommit to Daughters. Given this is what happened to me. A pesky sister decided to remind me of the importance of being a Daughter and so she *quote-unquote*, “encouraged me,” to recommit: By deciding I would be the new Chaplain here in Arizona before even telling me I would be. And I don’t want to “out her” since I just labeled her as “pesky,” but her first name rhymes with “Choosin’.” And so, I leave it to you to figure out who that might be. But in all honesty, I am grateful to her for being pesky. For reaching out and inviting me to become more involved again with Daughters. Given we need for Daughter’s to be reignited in Province VIII for “rowing the boat.” And just exactly what that boat *is* ... we will reflect upon over the next few days along with who is rowing the boat and why we are rowing the boat and where we are heading in the boat. But simply stated, we row the boat in order to be lamps to our communities while leading others to do likewise. And so, you have been invited here to help to row this boat. The boat of our witness and service to others in our communities as Daughter’s of the Most High King. And in order to lead others, we need to row together in the same direction so that we get to where we are going with the goal being serving Jesus in others. And we need to be courageous to do this. And you will hear about Biblical women of courage over the next couple of days in that Sharon Lundgren will be leading us through events in the lives of Esther, Ruth, the woman at the well, and Mary mother of Jesus because they are our examples from scripture of courageous women of God. And tonight, I would like to put forth for you one other woman from scripture. From our reading in Micah tonight in which God mentions Miriam.

I was struck when reading Micah 6:4, that God names Miriam right alongside of Moses and Aaron. For some reason I had never noticed this wording before in Micah until recently. Because God is referring to the deliverance of his people out of Egypt and then through a barren wilderness. Which took courage. Miriam played a part in leading her people out of Egypt and through a wilderness of scarcity with snakes. And people bickering. And I don’t know which is worse. Snakes or people bickering. But Miriam took a lead in teaching people how to

get along with one another in order to be in community during trying times by placing their trust in God. Given God says very clearly to his people, “I sent Moses before you as well as Aaron and Miriam.” God equates Miriam’s leadership with that of Moses. Which is why so many women that we read about in scripture are named Mary to include Jesus’ mother and Mary Magdelene. Mary is a derivative of the Old Testament Hebrew name, Miriam. Parents, I imagine, named their daughter’s Miriam because they wanted them to be courageous leaders for God.

That Miriam was courageous is evident in the account from Exodus. It is Miriam as a young girl who stands in the reeds to see that her younger brother, Moses, is fetched out of the Nile by Pharaoh’s daughter. Miriam helped her mother place Moses in a papyrus basket after coating it with tar and pitch... and the floating contraption that the two of them put together can also be translated as “ark,” or boat. And boats save people. Just like Noah’s ark. And just like Jesus taking Peter by the hand pulling him up out of the water onto the boat. In like manner, Miriam played a part in saving Moses in a little boat after Pharaoh decreed that all the Israelite baby boys be thrown into the river to drowned. And young Miriam risks disobeying this edict, which probably could have resulted in death, by approaching Pharaoh’s daughter to ask if she would like for her to locate a woman to nurse the child. And as we know, Miriam goes and gets Moses’ own mother. But think on the vulnerability that Miriam had to open herself up to. And the courage. To wait and see that her younger brother be saved.

Vulnerability, courage, and a concern to see others saved are in large part what our symbolic boat is all about. This is what this workshop, this gathering, will be addressing. Discerning how we are being called like the women of courage in scripture, to lead. And we do this in community. In this community as Daughters. Opening ourselves up to one another and building one another up. In so doing, we save others. God can use us to save others who have immediate physical needs given one of our vows is service. And God can use us to save others from drowning in a spiritual sense given one of our vows is evangelism. If we don’t teach the women in our local communities how to become daughters of the Most High King by believing in Jesus—which is what they are even apart from belonging to our Order if they believe in Jesus—then they may go through life believing themselves to be paupers, missing out on the eternal and abundant life that our Father, our King promises us. This is the reason to row the boat. We row the boat to save others. And I say to you, we are not to merely row the boat, but I think we should rock it. Miriam did not save her brother by playing it safe or remaining inside her comfort zone. And so, I believe, we have been called together to get a little bit rowdy by rocking the boat. To be pesky and persistent and courageous leaders for Christ Jesus our Lord. And so, I pray, that these next days together will serve to reignite our hearts with God’s all powerful Holy Spirit so that we “rock and row” this boat for Jesus. *Amen.*