



*“Flourishing  
in God’s Soil”  
Exodus 1:8-22  
Sep. 21, 2008  
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**(The story of two brave mid-wives  
who saved new-born babies from the wrath of an  
Egyptian King)**

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%201:20-22&version=65>

Shiprah and Puah are people of courage, weren’t they? And you all know about courage because in our day-to-day lives, sometimes it takes a lot of courage – God-given courage that comes out of a strong relationship with God..

So I thought today, that in the busy schedules you have, you might appreciate some time just to rest and be with God. Today, instead of a sermon, I’m going to lead you through a guided meditation. Some of you have done this before, some of you, this is new – don’t panic – it’s real easy.

Let’s begin with a bit of an introduction:

My maternal Grandma grew poppies – lots of them. She was Hungarian and she used the poppy seeds for baking. My Mom remembers when she was growing up that the RCMP came to visit one day to find out why she was growing so many poppies.



I don’t bake with poppy seed but I love growing poppies just because it was something my Grandma loved. One place I lived, there were these huge burgundy poppy flowers that would grow every year. So when I moved, I brought them with me. And it was only last year that we planted the seeds.

I was a bit disappointed because – while the poppies were beautiful, they were these tiny little red poppies – nothing at all like I remembered. Big, large burgundy blossoms.

Last Fall, as we were cleaning up the yard, I taught Joy how the tops of the poppies become shakers and you can shake out the seeds. So we would break off the top of the dead flower head and shake the seeds out. Joy loved it because it was like a delightful toy, this shaking out the seeds and I suppose, I enjoyed it because I knew those seeds were going to produce more flowers the next year

Amazingly enough, this second round of poppies this year produced big, tall, burgundy poppies. It's like the seeds need a year to be seasoned in the soil, to be nurtured by the soil and strengthened. First they could produce a little flower and the next year, an even bigger and taller one.

And so it is with us as Christians. The more we root ourselves in God's soil, in God's love, so do we grow and blossom stronger and greater.

Let's prepare ourselves for a time of meditation.

"Begin by relaxing. Let your spirit rest...gently let go of busy things in your mind...allow your body to slow down...Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Do this three times. Gradually sink into a quiet place of ease and comfort.<sup>1</sup>

"Move into your inner self...when you are inside, visualize a peaceful and inviting wooded area...There is a trail that meanders through the trees. Look for it. When you find it, begin to walk this narrow path. As you walk along, notice that it is autumn. The air feels cooler....Smell the odor of tree bark and dry leaves. ..See the sunlight coming through the trees.

(You now come to an open field. At the side)...is an old wooden bench. Go to the bench and sit down. Abide there and let the mellow beauty of the woods penetrate your whole being..."

Now, as you're sitting on the bench, you notice that there is a shed off to the side of the field. It's a garden shed but a very bright coloured one – painted in your favourite colours. It's an inviting building that draws you to get up to the bench to go over.

As you get closer you realize that someone is beside the door inviting you to come in. This may be a man or a woman. It may be Jesus. But know this person is there for you on behalf of God.

You're told that God wants you to go into the shed and choose anything you need. And it's free. Anything you need. So you go in and you find that the shed has many shelves upon which are boxes and boxes of different types of soil and organic fertilizer.

Each box of soil and fertilizer is labeled. Here's what the types of soil there are:

Forgiveness, love, wonder, laughter, perseverance, grace, acceptance, courage, strength, joy, harmony.

The Gardener says to you – help yourself to anything you need. And so you go up and down the shelves.

Forgiveness, love, wonder, laughter, perseverance, grace, acceptance, courage, strength, joy, harmony

What is it that you particularly need from God on your journey today?

When you know – reach up to that shelf and pull down your box – your gift from God. It's light and it makes you even lighter. Ponder the gift that you have chosen. What satisfaction does it give to you to hold it? How will you use this gift?



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<sup>1</sup> Material in quotations comes from Joyce Rupp and Macrina Wiederkehr's *The Circle of Life*, "Entering the Heart of Autumn," p. 206, Sorin Books, 2005

Thank the gardener for the gift.

Then head out the door back to the path through the woods. As you walk through the woods ponder what this gift from God means to you.

You are a wonderful seed that always grows into a beautiful, or handsome flower. How will this soil or fertilizer help you grow in God's love?

Know that in God so much is possible – all God desires is that we believe in God and believe in our own worth. As you walk along the beautiful forest path, you are reminded that you are a significant part of God's universe. As handsome as anything that you see around you. Each of God's creatures has its purpose, it's great design and you also are one of God's wonderful creatures.

Now gently come back to this room and place. Hold on to what you'd particularly like to remember from this time in God's Garden Shed. You might want to write it down later to reflect on during the week.