

Jesus, Our Great High Priest Forever
(Week 22)
Hebrews 11:20-29
“The Faith of Moses”

Introduction

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith, but does not have works? Can such faith save him? If a brother or sister lacks daily food and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, stay warm and be well fed’, but you don’t give them what the body needs, what good is it? In the same way faith, if it doesn’t have works, is dead by itself.” **James 2:14-17**

As we work our way through the “Faith Chapter” of *Hebrews*, it is important that we take note of a phrase that is repeated again and again throughout the passage. The two words “by faith” appear nineteen times in the chapter. Each time the words are used, they are followed by an example of what each person **did** as a result of their faith. You see, if we have genuine faith, it will be demonstrated by what we do, not just what we say we believe. From Abel to the patriarchs, from Moses to every other person of faith in all of history, genuine faith will cause people to act. In fact, action is a requirement of true faith. God expects us to believe His Word, and then live accordingly. As a result of such “faith living”, the world will be able to actually see Christ **in us!**

Today, we will examine the faith of Moses, the great deliverer sent to lead the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt. God had promised Abraham that at the appointed time his descendants would indeed inherit the promised land. God also explained to Abraham that Israel’s path to the promised land would not be without hardship:

“Then The LORD said to Abraham, ‘Know this for certain: Your offspring will be resident aliens for four hundred years in a land that does not belong to them and will be enslaved and oppressed. However, I will judge the nation they serve, and afterward, they will go out with many possessions’” **Genesis 15:13-14**

Abraham, no doubt, passed these words on to Isaac, who in turn passed them down to Jacob who prophesied to his children and grandchildren, while leaning upon his staff before he died. Joseph told the children of Israel that God would one day lead them out of Egypt, and he gave them specific instructions to take his remains and bury them in the promised land. None of these men lived to see this promise of God fulfilled, and yet, they trusted in God completely and passed on this legacy of faith to their children (**vs. 20-22**). These men believed with all their hearts that God would deliver upon His promise. He would at the appointed time send a “deliverer” to His chosen people.

By the time that deliverer finally arrived, things in Egypt were exactly as God told Abraham they would be. Israel was in bitter bondage to a Pharaoh who obviously cared very little for the history of his nation. The greatness of Joseph had long been forgotten, and his people were viewed by the king as a threat, rather than a blessing. In fact, God had so multiplied His chosen people that Pharaoh feared they would one day rebel against him and overthrow his government. So, he devised a ruthless strategy for population control: drown every newborn Hebrew male child in the Nile River (**Exodus 1:22**). It was under this extreme evil and oppressive regime that Moses was born.

Moses’ parents, Amram and Jochebed, knew from the instant they saw their youngest child, that he was special. They also knew that it was illegal to allow him to live. So what did they do? They relied on faith. You see, sometimes the law of man is contrary to the law of God. This my friends is the time when every believer is faced with a crisis of faith: whether to obey man or whether to obey God. For Amram and Jochebed, this was no choice at all. They reacted in faith. They hid the young child for as long as they could (three months), and then, they put his fate in the hands of their God. I have no doubt that they prayed about what to do. I also have no doubt that they used the Word of God to make their decision. Why do I believe this? Because they built and **Ark** to save their son, just like their ancestor

Noah had done to save his family from drowning. They believed that if God had done it once, He could surely do it a second time. Rather than being thrown into the Nile as the Pharaoh had commanded, Moses was floated down the Nile instead, in a “baby sized” ark! What an incredible act of faith! Amram and Jochebed trusted God to provide for their precious baby boy. And provide He did! The story of Moses is a story of incredible faith, which began with his own parents. It was a journey of faith that would take God’s chosen “deliverer” from the Palace, to the Passover, and ultimately, to The Promised Land.

The Palace

I have a five year old granddaughter. This means that for the past five years I have been subjected to a plethora of Disney cartoons. Most of them are exactly the same (or at least they are to me). The plot usually revolves around a little girl that through a fantastical set of circumstances winds up being a princess in a grand palace. Often, as I watch quietly alongside my little buddy, although I truly do “try” and pretend to be as into the stories as she is, inside my head there is a voice that is screaming, “**REALLY?!** As if that could **ever** happen in real life!” But, nevertheless, I keep watching. Why? Because I love my granddaughter.

The story of Moses’ transformation from a Hebrew slave child to a prince of Egypt is more incredible than anyone at Disney could ever even dream of. It is a story of an awesome God, and how He sees to it that:

“...all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose.” **Romans 8:28**

Jochebed placed that little ark in the reeds on the banks of the Nile that morning in faith. She left her daughter Miriam to stand by... watching and waiting for what God would do. God sent Pharaoh’s daughter at that very moment to bathe in the Nile, and we all know the rest. She found the child and had compassion on him. Even though she knew it was against the Pharaoh’s edict, she decided to raise the child as her very own. After all, how could Pharaoh refuse the wishes of his own daughter? And, as if this weren’t amazing enough, God saw to it that Jochebed was able to continue nursing the child as a handmaid of the princess! Again, **“all things work together for good...”**.

The princess named the child “Moshe”, which means “drawn up from the water”. And thus, Moses’ life as a prince of Egypt began. God had turned a ruthless command from an evil king upon its head and used it for His purposes. I think that we forget that sometimes. We scheme and plot, so we can elect the “right president” and the “right congressmen”, so they can pass the “right laws” and nominate the “right supreme court justices”, all the while forgetting that God will not be stopped from doing what is just and fair. People don’t get away with evil. Simple as that. And God doesn’t need **my** help to do **His** job. He is really good at it! After all, He was doing it just fine long before you and I ever came along. The Pharaoh had wanted little Moshe dead. He wanted him thrown into the Nile and drowned, but God fished him out and made him a prince! Have faith my friends and act accordingly, then just wait and see what God can do.

Moses spent forty years living as a prince of Egypt. He was educated and trained for leadership at the Egyptian’s expense. NO doubt he would have even had a shot at being Pharaoh one day, but God had other plans. Imagine being given such wealth and privilege. Imagine having such authority over the people of the land. Joseph had once been in a similar position, and he had never forsaken his people. Moses was exactly the same. He saw the condition of his people, and he could not, no matter how he tried, turn a blind eye to their suffering. *The Bible* tells us that “by faith” he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter any longer. He walked away from everything, to join with the persecuted people of God. He gave up the royal spender of the palace, to be among those that he loved.

Now, we must remember the audience of the letter to the *Hebrews*. They were Jews, who were considering going back to Judaism because of the persecutions they were facing. Imagine the conviction that came upon them, when they were reminded of Moses giving up the palace for his persecuted people! I would assume that this cut them to the very heart and exposed their own selfish longings in the light of God’s holy truth. If Moses could give up his easy life to obey God, then so should they all. I especially love how the writer of *Hebrews* ties Moses’ decision as one to suffer for the sake of Christ:

"For he considered reproach for the sake of Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, since he was looking ahead to the greater reward."

Hebrews 11:26

Now **that**, is awesome! He is saying, in essence, "If Moses was willing to forsake everything to follow Christ then why aren't you?! Good question, isn't it? Moses' faith helped him to choose Christ and His purpose above all else. In comparison to Christ, Pharaoh's palace was a mere sand castle. We are called to compare Christ with this world in like fashion. Maybe its time that we kicked down our own "sand castles" and joined with the "persecuted people of God", The Church. Moses was willing to give up a lot of "stuff" for the cause of Christ. His faith didn't allow him to be comfortable just lounging around the palace. It required him to choose, once and for all, Whom he would serve. He chose God. As the writer of *Hebrews* would so eloquently say to all of us "So what is your excuse?"

The Passover

"By faith he left Egypt behind, not being afraid of the kings anger, for Moses persevered as one who sees Him Who is invisible."

Hebrews 11:27

Moses didn't just go from prince of Egypt to Deliverer of Israel. There was a process involved. You see, God doesn't expect us to accomplish His goals by human efforts and schemes. When Moses first left the palace, apparently he decided to be "Batman". He became a vigilante for the Jewish cause. He saw a Hebrew slave being beaten by an Egyptian taskmaster, and he took the law into his own hands, killing the Egyptian and hiding his body in the sand (**Exodus 2:11-12**). He thought that he had gotten away with it, but the very next day he found out that he had not (**Exodus 2:13-14**). He quickly found himself on "Egypt's Most Wanted" list and fled into the wilderness for his life. It was another forty years later, when God would send him back to Egypt.

You see, God didn't need forty year old Moses, the "freedom fighter". God doesn't use people like that, but Moses the eighty year old man of faith, who had seen God in the burning bush, now **that** is the kind of person that God uses. You see, as long as Moses was a "tough guy" then he might get the glory for what God was about to do, but an 80 year old with a speech impediment? If that was who ended up delivering Israel, then there would be no doubt as to Who really did the delivering. God doesn't share his glory with people, nor should he.

"I Am The LORD. That is My Name, and I will not give My glory to another or My praise to idols."

Isaiah 42:8

Moses couldn't do anything significant for God in his own strength. But when he was old, and no one would believe him to be formidable, in and of himself, God spoke to him in the burning bush. He gave Moses specific instructions to return to Egypt in the strength and power of The Almighty One and present His demands to Pharaoh. Moses begged to be let off the hook, but God would not hear of it. He commanded Moses to go, and so, he went.

The first appearance in Pharaoh's court actually made things worse for the Israelites. Moses must have felt terrible, when he saw how his actions had actually made the Pharaoh make things harder on the Jews. Not only was Pharaoh against him, even the Jews had turned on him. Moses wanted to give up. He told God that he was not worthy to speak on His behalf (**Exodus 6:1-12**). Once again, God refused. He commanded him to return once more to Pharaoh. That was when all the miracles started to happen.

Pharaoh wasn't in any mood to just release all of his slave labor into the wilderness, never to be seen again! After all, who would build his cities for him, if the Israelites were set free? He tried to take his stand against God, but in the end, that is always a hopeless cause. He did manage to maintain his resolve through nine horrible plagues, each one that followed a little more severe than the one before it, but that tenth plague... was the one designed to bring even the most powerful man in the world down upon his trembling knees: The death of the firstborn.

God instructed Moses to slaughter lambs for the first Passover. The blood of these lambs was to be applied upon the doorpost of all the houses of Israel. The angel of death was coming. He would “passover” the houses, where the blood had been applied, but to those of the Egyptians, even unto the very palace of Pharaoh himself, the first born child would die that night. By faith, Moses obeyed the commands of the Lord, and by faith, Israel was finally free. Moses had seen God, and God had enabled him to persevere through the trials and discouragements. God had brought him through it all, and rewarded his enduring faith with the Passover.

“By faith, he instituted the first Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch the Israelites.” Hebrews 11:28

The Promised Land

“By faith, they crossed the Red Sea as though they were on dry land. When the Egyptians attempted to do this, they were drowned.” Hebrews 11:29

After Pharaoh let the Israelites go, he had a change of heart. He had a change of heart, because God wasn't through making an example of him. Pharaoh foolishly sent his army to catch up with God's chosen people. We all know the story. The people were trapped between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's soldiers. The Israelites began to panic, but God commanded Moses to stretch out his rod across the waters. When he obeyed in faith, the seas parted, so that the people could walk across on dry land. It was an incredible miracle of God. Blinded by rage, Pharaoh commanded his troops to follow, but the waters fell upon them, and they were never seen again. You see, if any of us are to ever enter the “promised land”, we can only do so on God's terms... **by faith.**

Many people believe that they will be allowed into the land of promise (heaven) based upon their own good works, but sadly, this belief will only lead to ruin. There is only one way to God, and that is through faith in His Only Son, The Lord Jesus Christ. He is our only hope. He is our only way. God has promised an inheritance for us, just as He did for the Israelites. It is a city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (**Hebrews 11:10**). Are you following Jesus, our Deliverer, to lead you to that promised land? All it takes my friends is faith. Believe God's Word and **live** accordingly. Faith requires action, and that action will allow others to see Christ **in** us.

Let's take the example of Moses. He was “born” under miraculous circumstances. He was heir to the very throne of Egypt, but he left all of the splendor that was his in order to humble himself and save his people. He applied the blood of the passover lamb to their homes, so they would be spared. Then he led them miraculously to the Promised Land. Does any of this sound familiar?

Jesus gave up the splendor of Heaven to come and be miraculously born as a man. He humbled Himself to save His people. He IS the Passover Lamb of God, and He gave His life to save us. If we believe and follow Him, then He has promised to be our Deliverer and take us into the Promised Land!

Now here is a spiritual reality. Do you know how you can tell if someone truly has saving faith? You will be able to see Jesus in them! In the same way that Moses' faith demonstrates Christ for us, the true believer will be an image of Jesus. The word “Christian” actually means “little Christ”! So ask yourself this question this morning: Do I have **genuine** faith? If you do, then everyone will be able to see Jesus... **in you!** True faith always requires action, and that action will produce a life that is Christlike.

And ALL of God's people said... TRUTH!!!