

THE FAITH OF MOSES

Hebrews 11:23-28

Key Verses: 11:24,25

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time."

Moses is known as the most outstanding leader of all leaders who have lived in the world. Moses received the highest education in the palace of the Egyptian Empire. For the growth of inner character, he received 40 years of humbleness training in the wilderness among seven daughters of Jethro, tending Jethro's flock of sheep. They call this humbleness training or the wilderness seminary. When Moses had completed 80 years of training altogether, God could use him greatly. In the Bible, Moses was known as a servant of God who worked harder than any others to lead his rebellious people, and died without seeing the promised land, though it had been his only dream to see it. There is a saying, "Moses dipped out all the water of a lake, then David caught all the fish and Solomon cooked and ate them all." But the author of Hebrews says that Moses is great because he had faith that pleases God.

I. The faith of Moses' parents (23)

First, they saw he was no ordinary child (23a). Many great men in history were born in adverse circumstances or in tragic human conditions. Moses was no exception. Exodus 1:8-22 tells us the

background of Moses' birth. Moses was born when the Egyptian Empire was in political transition. A new king of Egypt, who did not know Joseph, came to power. At a glance, the new Egyptian king sensed that the Israelites, multiplying like thunderous grasshoppers which had once eaten up the crops of all the Egyptian land (Ps 105:34,35), would be a threat to the stability of his empire. Immediately, the king oppressed the Israelites by forced labor so that, as a consequence, their number might not increase any more. His policy did not work, because God was with them. The more the people of Israel were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread. Finally, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, issued an edict that every baby boy born to Hebrew parents had to be cast into the river and drowned. Moses was born into the family of a Hebrew slave in Egypt. In short, he was born in a bone-crushing situation.

Of course, all the people of the world think that their children are not ordinary, but something special. This kind of sentiment has extended even to the animal world. There is a story about a mother crow. She said to a hunter, "Please do not shoot the birds which look the most beautiful." So the hunter shot down the ugliest birds only. Later he found he had shot all the mother crow's babies. Moses' parents might be no exception; they must have thought that their child was a very special one. But Moses' parents' point of view was different from others. They saw their son from God's point of view, because they were God-fearing people. When they saw the child with the eyes of faith, they could see that he was no ordinary child; they were convinced that God was with him. Moses' parents did not know that God intended to raise Moses as the deliverer of 600,000 Israelites from Egyptian captivity after 430 years in Egypt. But they knew for sure that God was

with him.

Their captivity was the time for the Israelites to learn the cruelty of sinful humanity without God. It is amazing to know that in that dark time Moses' parents saw their child with the eyes of faith and realized that he was no ordinary child because God was with the child. This seems to be a small matter. However, through this small event, Moses' parents planted God in the soul of young Moses. This small event was a prelude to the Exodus.

Second, Moses' parents were not afraid of the king's edict (23b). Look at verse 23b. "...and they were not afraid of the king's edict."

Because of the king's edict all other people were only looking at newspapers and only thought about Pharaoh, what he was going to do next. Especially, the Israelites, who had lived in Egypt for 430 years as war prisoners, must have looked like the walking dead, or scrub trees in a forest.

In ancient times, no one dared disobey a king's edict, for a king was absolutely sovereign and despotic. So, many Hebrew parents, sorrowing and crying many tears over their fatalistic situation, threw their newborn sons into the river, for they were afraid of the king's edict. But Moses' parents were different. They were not afraid of the king's edict. Because Moses' parents feared God, they did not fear anybody, even the king. By faith they hid Moses for three months. When baby Moses began to cry loudly after three months, his parents placed him in a basket and he drifted out into the Nile River. God graciously intervened in Moses' life. Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile

River to bathe. She saw the basket among the reeds. When she opened it, she saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him because she had no child. She gave him to a Hebrew nurse, who was Moses' real mother. Pharaoh's daughter named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water." When Moses' parents believed in God Almighty, God was with them.

II. Moses' decision of faith (24-26)

First, Moses' choice (24,25). Many people live in a fantasy world. In their fantasy world, they want to be princes and princesses no matter who they may be. One prince of an Arabian kingdom was spoiled by his attendants. Later, he was bored with luxurious palace life. Finally, he became a mental patient. In his illusion, he thought that he was a street beggar. So he fantasized how happy he would be if he were a prince. Moses was born a slave. In God's providence, he was made a prince of Egypt. He was the envy of all Egyptians, especially Egyptian girls. Moses must have studied philosophy, history, martial arts and kingship. No doubt he had received all kinds of palace education as a prince. All mankind have to face a time of destiny without exception, to make a choice. Moses also had to face the time to choose for his future life direction. Now he had to choose between palace life and the life of faith.

Look at verses 24,25. "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time." We know how people work hard to be elected as the

president of any nation. If Moses had shut his mouth he could have been the successor of the Emperor of the Egyptian Empire. But by faith he gave up his glorious prince position. Moses chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasure of sin. These days, most people do their best to avoid suffering and go around to enjoy the pleasures of sin. If anybody does not seek pleasure he is considered a strange person. The people of the world want to get much benefit and much pleasure.

But Moses gave up all the privilege of being Prince Moses. When Moses chose to be mistreated along with his people, he abandoned pleasure and chose suffering. Humanly speaking, Moses was crazy. But it was not easy for Moses to decide to identify himself as one of the Hebrew slaves, abandoning his luck as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, a prince of Egypt. Even though it was hard, Moses had to make a choice. Perhaps the night he had to make a decision, he thought about many things. He remembered the crowds of people, waving their hands as he returned to the palace from royal trips, riding his white charger. Obviously, he cried many tears when he thought about betraying his foster mother, Pharaoh's daughter. Obviously, he had thought about what would happen when he offended King Pharaoh's pride. Obviously, he had no strength to choose to leave the palace when he thought about fugitive life as a political criminal. But Moses chose to suffer with his people instead of being the prince of Egypt because he loved God.

When one missionary first came to the States, spiritually he was under the leadership of his wife. But by faith he made a decision of faith that he must be the spiritual leader of his family and that he

should accept God's high calling as his own. Since then he has been a good influence among us, even though he suffers a lot because of his choice.

When we read about Moses in the Bible, we learn that he made the right choice. Because of his choice, he did not become a mummy. Instead, he was used by God and he could be a blessing to all of his spiritual descendants. The Christian life requires a choice before God. When President Abraham Lincoln made a choice before God to emancipate slaves and give them freedom and equal rights, he suffered endlessly. President Abraham Lincoln had to undergo the Civil War. But the right choice of one person, President Abraham Lincoln, before God, begot the United States of America. Otherwise, this country could have been like South America, which had been divided as much as it could be. Any choice made before God bears much fruit in the long run. So let's make a choice before God.

Second, Moses' value system (26). When Moses made a decision of faith, he lost all the privilege of being a prince and was treated like a political criminal. Why did he do so? Look at verse 26. "He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." Everybody wants to be praised and honored. No one wants to be mistreated. But Moses chose to be mistreated. Why did he do so? It was because Moses valued the life of faith more than the pleasures of sin. In short, Moses had a value system. He valued suffering with his suffering people rather than enjoying the fleeting pleasure of sin as an Egyptian prince. A man's nobleness is measured by his value system. If a man values bananas

most, he is an ignoble person. If a man values holiness or faithfulness to God most, he is indeed a noble person.

Third, Moses' reward. Moses had another reason for choosing to suffer with his people. Look at verse 26 again. "He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." Moses' human reward was the promise to be the successor of the Emperor. But Moses abandoned human reward, because he was sure of God's reward. His choice caused him disgrace and exile. These days there are many people who have no true sense of reward. There are not many people who want to dedicate themselves to God's work and receive God's reward...his recognition, eternal life and inheritance in the glorious kingdom of God. Most people want to be office clerks or janitors rather than being servants of God.

III. Moses' act of faith (27-28)

First, Moses escaped from the king's anger (27). Look at verse 27. "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible." Immediately Moses became a rebel to the despotic king. Moses' life seemed to be a flickering candlelight because of the king's anger. But to Moses, his choice was inflexible. He made up his mind to run for his life. Then God gave him spiritual eyes to see that God is almighty and the king of Egypt was nothing but a mummy candidate. Verse 27b says, "he persevered because he saw him who is invisible." This tells us more clearly the reason why he was not afraid of the king's anger and persevered through all the hardships. It

was because Moses could see God who is invisible with his eyes of faith.

Second, Moses was the leader of the glorious Exodus (28). Look at verse 28. "By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel." The author doesn't tell the whole story of the Exodus but only the climax of the story. During the 430 years the Israelites spent in Egypt, their numbers increased, but they had to live in slavery. They were imbued with a slave mentality.

But God had great hope in them. He wanted to make them his own people, a people who would proclaim his glory to all the world. God sent his servant Moses to Pharaoh to liberate his people. The mission God gave Moses demanded absolute obedience. Moses challenged the king by faith.

By faith Moses obeyed God's command to deliver his people from the hand of Pharaoh. By faith Moses went and boldly challenged King Pharaoh to liberate his people. But Pharaoh became all the more stubborn in spite of the infliction of nine plagues. Finally God commanded Moses to tell Pharaoh about the plague of death, which would take the lives of all the firstborn of Egypt, of both man and beast. To Moses, this was an impossible command to obey. But Moses obeyed the word of God. By faith Moses boldly challenged Pharaoh to let his people go; otherwise, all of the firstborn of Egypt would die.

Moses also challenged the people of Israel. They were sick with a

slave mentality, so much so that they did not want to move.

Nevertheless, Moses challenged them to move; Moses challenged them to move to sprinkle the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their houses.

When the angel of death swept over Egypt, he would pass over the houses sprinkled with blood. Moses challenged them to make the glorious Exodus from Egypt even though they were impossible people.

Through the Exodus God willed to make his people a most glorious people--a kingdom of priests. God's hope for the people of Israel was indeed great and glorious. Exodus 19:5b,6a says, "Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." God wanted to make his people a kingdom of priests. But God had to wait until one person, a person like Moses, appeared. God challenged his people to move under the leadership of Moses. Under his leadership, 600,000 Israelites escaped the hand of Pharaoh and marched toward the promised land. God used one man, Moses, when he made a decision of faith. God could lead 600,000 Israelites when there was one man of faith. Here we learn that one man of faith was more precious than the dispirited 600,000 Israelites. Moses had faith that pleased God, and God was pleased by his faith.

These days there are too many people who have no power to make any decision. There are also many people who commit to no one. In this passage we learn that Moses is great because he made a choice before God. He is great because he committed himself to God. He is great because he obeyed the word of God at the cost of his life. May God bless you to be like Moses.

