

**Text:** Hebrews 11:23-28

**Title:** The Faith of Moses

**Truth:** Much of Moses' life was marked by deep-seated faith in God.

**Date/Location:** September 25, 2011

## Introduction

The text is laid out in four parts, each beginning with the phrase "by faith" (v. 23, 24, 27, 28). These notes include verse 23 even though Moses' parents are the main characters of the verse.

### I. Moses' Parents Disobeyed Pharaoh by Faith, v. 23

Old Testament passage to read: Exodus 1:15-2:3.

- A. It is not Moses' faith that is highlighted, but that of his parents, Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20).
1. They had strong enough Biblical convictions about life and murder to disobey the governing authority, the superpower Egypt. That government could, if it willed, extract the ultimate penalty from the parents for disobeying its expressed will.
  2. The midwives were commanded to commit "full birth" abortion, akin to partial birth abortion of today (or any type of abortion, actually).
  3. Abortion is the same thing in the modern era. Chinese are told to abort (kill) a second child should the woman become pregnant again. Or, they are encouraged by the culture to select a boy over a girl. By faith they must not obey the law or culture. People throughout the world are pressured by authorities, parents, boyfriends, and even spouses, to kill their unborn baby. By faith in God this pressure can and should be overcome and the right thing should be done.
- B. Was it *just* the child's beauty that caused them to do this? That was a reason, but not the ultimate reason.
1. Why was the child beautiful? Because God made the child; God had given life; and this baby, like all others, was cute. All children qualify as "beautiful" in these ways. It is not as if had they had an "ugly" child they would have obeyed the king's command! Think back to the first time you saw your firstborn son or daughter as young parents.
  2. Moses' parents also may have had some inkling of his importance to the people of Israel, though there is no specific account of revelation being given to them about this.

C. The text adds that **they were not afraid of the king's command.**

1. They not only preserved the child because of the child and God's gift of him, but also because they were more afraid of God than they were of the Pharaoh. Their faith was so strong that they were not going to be flapped by the king's dreadful command.
2. Other texts on so-called *civil disobedience* are Acts 4:19 and 5:29.

D. **Application:** Amram and Jochebed established a faith-filled home from the beginning of their marriage. The influence of Moses' parents continued after the first three months because God worked it out that his own mother would nurse him after that point.

1. We must have the same kind of faith-filled home.
2. We must teach our children Biblical truth by word and example.
3. We must teach them discernment as to when to believe/obey or not believe/obey those over them. In this day and age, we may have to make some more of those decisions than our forefathers have.

## II. Moses Chose to Associate with God Instead of Sin, v. 24-26

Old Testament passage to read: Exodus 2:11-15. See also Acts 7:17-41.

A. **Became of age.** No particular age is given. Based on the events recorded in Exodus we would have to say he was an adult. Stephen tells us he was 40 years old at the time he "visited" his Israelite brothers (Acts 7:23). Sometime along in those years of 20-40 he rejected his Egyptian upbringing and harkened back to his Israelite roots.

1. It was during his adult years before leaving Egypt that he developed this disposition against the treasures and sins of Egypt. God was evidently at work in his heart, sickening him to the idolatry and human-centeredness of the Egyptian culture. He stood up to defend his people (Exodus 2:11-12).
2. Apparently this turn-about in his thinking caused him to believe that he would be a leader to his people to deliver them, but they rejected him in that role.

B. **Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.** This is a kind of *separation* as we call it today. He un-adopted himself from Pharaoh's family, put distance there to be closer to God.

- C. He chose **affliction** over **sin**. He could have chosen the **pleasures of sin** and the **treasures in Egypt**. Those things are “fun” in a sense, for a while at least. But he realized that those pleasures were temporary.
- D. He **considered** that the reviling he took because of Christ was worth more in ultimate reward than anything he could gain in Egypt.
  1. So, he made the conscious choice to turn away from all that and be associated with God’s people, those who worshipped the true and living God. He chose for the eternal reward instead of for the temporal one.
  2. Note that his change of mindset cost him all the worldly status, power, fame, and the rest.
- E. It was by faith he refused, chose, considered, and looked to the future reward.
- F. **Application.** Moses *had* to choose this way, not because it was more convenient, and even less because it reduced his political power in Egypt, but because it had to do with idolatry and his relationship to God. How could he embrace the Egyptian life with its sins and idols...and be a man of God? He couldn’t, and neither can we. Anyone who hears of Jesus has to make the same choice: persevering faith or turning away in unbelief. To the Jew, to see Moses do this in the face of reproach and even rejection by his own people has to be a powerful example.

**Transition:** There are still two more examples of faith from Moses’ life.

### III. Moses Forsook Egypt by Faith to go to Midian, v. 27

Old Testament passage to read: Exodus 2:15-22.

- A. Moses did fear the wrath of Pharaoh, but he probably could have done some other things and stayed in the country. Hebrews 11 tells us specifically that he left, not out of fear, but out of faith in God. He had to believe in God to go this humbling route...to learn the meekness that he later possessed (Num. 12:3) and for the historical preparations to be made for the Exodus to occur.
- B. Moses persevered in faith, as if he were seeing God Who is invisible. He had more regard for God than for the king he could see before him (Pharaoh). That is a great example of Biblical faith as defined in Hebrews 11:1.
- C. This point is really an extension of the previous point of his separation from Egypt. He totally left the glory of Egypt for a shepherd’s life.

## IV. Moses Kept the Passover by Faith, v. 28

Old Testament passage to read: Exodus 12:1-30, 43-51.

- A. Here is yet another unseen and future situation in which Moses obeyed God by faith. Never had a death angel done such a devastating work among a nation, yet God told Moses and the people to obey by faith that it was coming later on the night of the Passover.
- B. The meal and the sprinkling of blood were key parts of this command. The Israelites partook of the sacrificial benefit of the blood and the physical nourishment of the lamb's meat.
- C. We could say that the people were saved by doing an act (killing a lamb and sprinkling its blood). But that would miss a major point. Their obedience ultimately was sourced in faith that what God said would happen. How could Moses know that killing a lamb and painting the door frame with its blood would keep away a plague that was about to overtake every *other* household in the land of Egypt?! It could only be through a sturdy faith in God. So their obedience was a faith-originated obedience.

### Concluding Application

We cannot miss this key fact: **faith does something—in fact, faith does the right thing by obeying God, and it is *how* the right thing is done in face of danger and opposition.** Faith does not just *talk* a big story. Granted, our text considers faith as the *means* by which the activities were done. But without faith, the actions would not have been done at all given that they were basically impossible to do apart from faith. Faith underlies and drives godly actions, such as:

1. Disobeying a civil power when it commands you to sin.
2. Choosing suffering rather than sin. See 1 Peter 4:1.
3. Separating from a comfortable but sinful place and taking the low road of humility (a pay cut, a career change, a smaller church, ...).
4. Keeping God's commands even when it seems strange in the eyes of the world ("what are they doing with all that lamb blood?").

Faith directs our choices. We make choices every day about how to behave, where to go, what to do, with whom to associate, etc. If we have poor faith, we will make poor choices. Good faith makes good choices.

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