

Hebrews 11: 23-28: By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. 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. 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. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. 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.

Here's a little experiment. I am going to give you a fill-in-the-blank sentence, and I want you to remember the first thing that pops into your head. Just believe in _____. What popped into your head? Did you finish the sentence with "yourself?" I doubt if you really believe that, but that's the prevailing philosophy of the world today. The most important thing of all is to believe in yourself.

Really? Is that what faith is, to believe in yourself? Do you really want to make that your religion? How is that going to help you when you are on your deathbed, struggling to breathe, and wondering what's going to happen when you die? Does believing in yourself make that better? Your body is worn out. Your mind is confused. How does believing in yourself help you in that situation? How does faith in yourself help when you can't stop drinking? How does believing in yourself help when you can't stop lying? How does believing in yourself help when you've just committed the worst sin in your life and you can't bear the shame of it?

Our text talks about faith. This whole chapter talks about faith. It uses the word faith twenty-six times. By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain. By faith, Enoch walked with God. By faith, Abraham moved to the promised land. By faith he offered up Isaac as a sacrifice. By faith Moses chose not to be associated with the Egyptians and led the people through the sea.

By faith. Faith in what or in whom? What is more important than the faith of these people was the object of their faith. They believed in the gospel. They believed in God's promises. They believed in their God as their Savior. Today we want to see how the gospel changes us and makes us people of faith, like Moses in our text.

The Gospel Changes Us!

So let's look at Moses more carefully. **"By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict."** For years the Egyptians had used the people of Israel, over two million of them, as their personal slaves. Somebody had to build those pyramids! In spite of this harsh treatment, the people multiplied in number to the point that the Pharaoh

was afraid they were getting too strong. So he issued a command that every boy child born was to be killed. Girls made good slaves and they weren't as hard to control. Nice guy, huh?

When Moses' was born, his parents decided to save his life at great risk to their own. They saw that he was no ordinary child. I don't know how they knew that, but God made it known to them in some way. God already had a plan for Moses. There came a time when it was not possible to hide him any longer, so Moses' mother took him down to the river and put him in a basket. That was an act of faith on her part, too! She had her daughter stand by and watch to see what happened. When Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe, she saw the child and had pity on him. She decided to adopt him. At that moment, Moses' sister came out of hiding and offered to get a Hebrew woman to nurse the child. So for the first few years of his life, Moses was raised by his mother.

How long did she have him? Some commentators suggest that it was about three years. And then she had to give him up. Moms and dads, you will all have to give up your children someday! You will give them up to the person they marry, who may or may not be a strong Christian. You will give them up to a university, where they were educated in the ways of the world, the way Moses was educated in the ways of the Egyptians. Teach your children every day when they are very young and don't underestimate the power of the gospel to grow their faith and keep them in that faith!

For the next 35 years or so, Moses lived like an Egyptian. He was immersed in the life and culture of the Pharaoh of Egypt. He would have learned about the various different gods of Egypt and been taught how to worship them. He was taught by the best teachers of the land. He was given the pleasures of Egypt to enjoy, living the life of wealthy Egyptian royalty. There was nothing that he couldn't have, if he wanted it. He was Pharaoh's grandson. He could have a new Mercedes chariot if he wanted one. He could spend his days doing nothing if he wanted to, or hunting lions from his chariot. He could do whatever he wanted to do. He was the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

And when he was forty years old, he decided to leave that all behind. **“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. 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. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.”** “What's gotten into Moses?” I'll bet his mother asked herself that question, if she was still alive at this time. His brothers and sisters must have thought that he was absolutely crazy. Why would he do this? Slaves bowed to him. Why would he want to become a slave that bowed down to the Egyptians? What got into him?

The gospel got into him! Paul wrote in Romans 1.16 that the gospel is the **“power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”** See how the gospel changed him. He refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Why? Because the gospel convinced him that it was better to be known as a child of the God of Israel. It was better to be a son of the King of heaven than to be a son of the Pharaoh of Egypt. The gospel convinced him that it was better to live as a slave and be a child of God than live like a king

and be an Egyptian. Was this still the gospel that his mother planted in his heart as a three year old? Did he run into the Israelite who told him more? Someday we'll have to ask him.

The gospel changed his perspective in life. **“He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. 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.”** Notice that there are two comparisons here. One is time and one is value. We make that evaluation in our everyday lives all the time. If I offered to sell you a Mercedes Benz luxury car for ten thousand dollars, you would jump at the chance. But what if there are 500,000 miles on the odometer? You see, it has value but it won't last very long, so what is it really worth? On the other hand, if I offered to sell you a brand new moped for ten thousand dollars, you would have to decline. It might last you for years, but it has no value.

“He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. 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.” Do you see the time and the value? The gospel convinced Moses that even if he spent his whole life hunting and sporting and eating and drinking and having the women of Egypt on his arm, what good was that compared to spending the rest of eternity in heaven with the company of God and his angels? Only the gospel can convince us that God has prepared a place in heaven for those who believe.

And value? **“Moses regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt.”** There was no more glorious kingdom on the face of the earth than the kingdom of Egypt in Moses' day. This was the center of civilization. This was where the brightest and the best wanted to go to school and learn. This was where the nations came to gawk at the great buildings that the Pharaohs built on the blood of the Israelites. But what is the glory of Egypt compared to the glory of the kingdom of God and of his Christ? The kingdom of God is better by far. Moses' eyes could see that, and his heart could believe it because the gospel changed him.

Friends, we live in a time where instant gratification is so tempting. If I see something that I want, all I have to do is swipe my credit card and Amazon will drop it off at my doorstep in just a few days. Never mind that I'll wear it twice or seldom use it. Or that it adds to my credit card debt. If I want sexual gratification, I don't have to get married. I can download pornography to my computer and satisfy my curiosity all I want. After all, what's the harm? But at the moment you are not thinking of the cost to your family or your eternal salvation. And if I feel blue? Why that's easy to fix. Just a few drinks and I can forget my troubles until tomorrow. But again what are the long term effects on my spiritual life or my family life? Sin always offers a lot of pleasures right now that look bright and shiny – but in the end have no lasting value. Moses had everything he wanted in Egypt. He could have anything he wanted any time he wanted it. But the gospel convinced him that to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a short time was not worth the eternal reward of knowing and believing in the God of Israel.

Friends, only the gospel can change us. And our text gives us a beautiful reminder of what the gospel is all about. **“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.”**

Do you remember that story well? You should because it was the heart of the gospel in the Old Testament, which the children of Israel celebrated every year the way we celebrate Christmas or Easter. God sent Moses back to Egypt to lead the children of Israel back to the promised land. To soften Pharaoh's heart, God sent ten plagues on the Egyptians. He made life as miserable for them as they had made life miserable for his people. But the tenth plague was the kicker. On a given night, God sent the angel of death to go through the land and the first born of Egypt died. Every first born child died, even the animals. Raise your hand if you are the oldest in your family. Can you see the devastation this would have caused?

But God saved his people. He told them to sacrifice a lamb in every household and to paint the blood of the lamb on the doorpost of the houses. When the angel of death saw the blood covering that home, he passed over that house. When the Egyptians saw what God had done, they sent the Israelites out of Egypt with all the plunder they could carry. God redeemed his people by the blood of the lamb, and the children of Israel would celebrate this every year.

Do you see Jesus in this story? John the Baptist did, when he said, "**Behold the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.**" Do you think it was just coincidence that Jesus sacrificed his life on the cross on the week that the people of Israel celebrated the Passover? This story reminds you today what God has done for you. Jesus, your Passover lamb, has covered you with his blood. The whole world is under a sentence of death – not just physical death, but eternal death. That includes you and me as well, because the Bible says that **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** ROMANS 3:23 But Jesus has saved you from this death sentence. By his death and resurrection, he has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

And by faith in Jesus, not in yourselves, but in Jesus, you are a different person. You are a child of God. You are a son or daughter of the King. In Christ you have a whole new identity, and whole new purpose, a whole new perspective. A counselor friend of mine does work on the Apache reservation. One of the greatest temptations on the reservation is alcoholism and drug abuse. He counseled with a young woman who struggled with alcohol. When she went to Alcoholics Anonymous, every one introduced themselves in the same way. "Hi. I'm Bill. I'm an alcoholic. I've been sober for six months." When it came for her turn, she said, "Hi, I'm Sally. I am NOT an alcoholic. I am a child of God and I have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. My struggle in life, my greatest temptation, is alcohol. By faith in Jesus, I'm going to win."

By faith Moses could not see himself as an Egyptian and he left the sinful pleasures of Egypt behind so that he could live as one of God's people. The gospel also changes you. You are not an alcoholic. You are a child of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus. You are not a materialist who makes gods out of your material positions. You are a child of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus. The things of this world can never take Jesus place. You are not a liar, though you may struggle with that sin. You are not a gossip, though that sin may appeal to your sinful nature. You are not an adulterer, though you may struggle with such desires. You are a child of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus. The gospel has changed you from the inside out. And by faith in Jesus, not in yourselves, you can walk away from your sin every day. Amen.