

The Faith of Moses

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[0 : 0 0] Now with the Lord's help we pray. Let us turn and read again some verses from Hebrews chapter 11, focusing particularly on verses 24 relating to the faith of Moses. By faith Moses when he was grown up refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasure of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. The epistle of this letter to the Hebrews, it was written to Christians who had been brought up in the Jewish religion. They had heard the gospel and they had embraced the gospel, but for one reason or another they weren't totally committed to a life of faith.

This epistle is called the epistle of warning by one of the commentators. It's a warning to those who may have made a profession, but who aren't living according to the profession that they made.

The danger for these Hebrews to whom this letter was first written was that they were thinking of going back to the kind of religion in which they had been brought up, the Jewish religion.

Religion focused on the temple, focusing on the sacrifices and on the priesthood. All of these were tangible to them. They could see the sacrifice, they could see the priest, they could enter into every aspect of the worship in that setting of the temple and it's as if that still held an attraction for them. But the letter here makes clear that those who are followers of Christ must live their life by faith. And at the very end of chapter 10 we have these words at verse 39. The writer says, we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. He says, don't shrink back, don't go back, but live by faith. Commit yourself in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ so that you will preserve your soul, so that you will be saved.

And from the beginning of chapter 11 we see at the first verse there a definition of what faith is. It's not the only definition, but it is one definition. And it says, faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. And it's as if he's saying, the Lord has made a statement. He has given his word and in his word he has made statements and promises. And those who have faith, although they don't see God, nevertheless they trust him who has spoken. And they commit themselves to him on the basis of what he has said. And that was true with all of the Old Testament saints. And you have a list of these in chapter 11. It goes on at verse 4, by faith Abel, offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain through which he was commended as righteous and so on. Abel had heard or had been persuaded of the reality of God and also of the promises of God. God in the Garden of Eden had given a promise that they would come off the seat of the woman that would bruise the head of the serpent. In other words, as Jesus was coming, and obviously Abel believed that. And he lived a life of faith to God, faith in God, relying upon him, looking to him and living as one who loved and served him. And then he goes on, talks about Enoch. He was living a life of faith. He was taken out of this world without going through death because he had walked with God. He had walked a life of faith. He came across something interesting the other day. The story was that a Sunday school teacher was explaining about Enoch to the children. And the little girl came home and she told her mother. She said, we were talking about Enoch. And the teacher said, well, every day Enoch went for a walk with God.

[6 : 10] That's the way the teacher explained walking with God to the children. And there was this particular day and the walk was so long. It went on and on and on. And the Lord and Enoch walking together. And it became late. And it's as if the Lord said, well, it's so late. Why don't you come home with myself? Now that was just to the mind of the child, something that tried to explain what walking with God meant. And Enoch was taken home to be with God. Well, he was a man of faith when he lived here. And then it goes on talking about Abraham and others who lived a life of faith believing in what the Lord has said and trusting in the Lord whom they have never seen.

And that's essentially what we ourselves are called to do also. Receiving and resting upon Jesus Christ for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel. None of us have seen Jesus. But we have read the word of God about him. And we have read his invitations to come to him. We have read his promises to those who will come that he will cleanse them from their sin. And that at last he will receive them into heaven to be with himself. And you see those who have saving faith, have had that faith, worked in them by the Holy Spirit at the point of their new birth. He, the Holy Spirit comes and makes a new creation, gives us a new heart, new understanding. And he works faith enough. And that faith immediately turns to God and seeks to worship and serve and follow him. And then we have a case in point, the case of Moses. And in verse 24, it says, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. You remember that Moses, born in Egypt, at a time when Pharaoh had said, all the Hebrew male children are to be destroyed. But Moses' parents were people of faith. They saw that he was a beautiful child, and they entrusted him to the Lord. And they put him in a wicker basket, dogged with pitch, to make it waterproof. And they put it there at the border, among the flags at the river. And who comes along but Pharaoh's daughter? And when she sent her maid to have a look at the baby, the baby cried. Moses cried. And it's as if it reached the heart of this daughter of Pharaoh. And she said, I want this child for myself. And who was standing right next, of course, but Miriam, Moses' older sister. And she said, can I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you? Yes, you go. And of course, Miriam went. And she said to her mother, come. And Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother, you bring him up for me. So Moses was brought up in his own family circle, exposed to the scripture, exposed to our godly life, a life of faith. Now it says here by faith when he was grown up, he refused to be called the son of

Pharaoh's daughter. Some of the view that he would have been taken from his mother's home, his father's home, to the palace at the age of probably three. Others think it was a little bit older, maybe nine. In any case, he would have had a grounding or an exposure to the scriptures at home. And when he went into the palace, of course, he would have been fast tracked into the education of the Egyptians. We'll come to that in a moment. So when he came to a particular age, this happened in his life. And there are four things in these verses I want to highlight that highlight the faith that he had. First of all, by faith, he made point of saying, there are certain things I don't want. You refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. It's a refusal. And that's part and parcel of his life of faith. Certain things he refuses. Secondly, it says that he made a choice. Verse 25, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He made a choice and he continued to make a choice.

This word choosing is a part of simple. In other words, having made the choice, he continues to make the choice every day of his life. And I think that's important. The third thing is that he is considering things. Verse 26, he considered the reproach of Christ. He weighed things up. And that word considered also as a participle. He considered it at the beginning, and he continues to consider these things. And he always comes down on the life of faith, comes down on the side of faith, on the side of Christ. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasure of Egypt. And finally, there was something he was looking to.

He was looking to the reward. These four things. What he refused, what he was choosing, what he was considering, and what he was looking to. Looking to the reward. First of all, then he made a particular choice. And it says he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

[13 : 29] Now, if you can imagine what the palace must have been like in Egypt in Moses' day. We read from historians that there were a very progressive society. There were very learned people in men areas. They were learned in astronomy, learned in mathematics. They were very learned in oratory, learned in medicine. They were learned in many aspects of literature. Also, they were powerful militarily. They are a very mighty army. And you can see that when Moses, let's say, he went into the palace at the age of nine. He would have been placed in a school and taught all of these disciplines. And of course, along with all of that, he would have the privilege of being the son of Pharaoh's daughter with all the trappings of luxury and privilege that that carried with it. He was a man favored, a young man, greatly favored, a young man with riches, beyond our wildest dreams, with power, with privilege, with position. And you see, some of the view that he may eventually have ascended the throne of Egypt, become Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. That was a real possibility, some believe. So if you look at his prospects as a young man, humanly speaking, he had everything going for him. But it says in verse 24, by faith, when he was grown up, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Well, that's some statement, isn't it? How many people in our country with the prospects I've described lay at the feet of this man, Moses, how many would turn away from these riches and power and authority and privilege? By nature, we would love all of these things. But it says here that this man, he refused them. Why was that? Well, because the Lord had come into his heart, into his life. The word of the Lord had been made known to him. We don't know how it doesn't say, but it was made known to him in his heart, in his conscience, in his understanding. He realized who God was, who God is. He's not like one of the gods of Egypt. He is the Almighty God. He is the God who is in all His fullness everywhere. He is the God who is holy, holy, holy. Nevertheless, he is the God who can't descend it, to speak to us in our plight of sin and misery. He is the

God who speaks to us words of grace and gives us promises regarding our sins being taken away when we receive Him and trust in Him. These things majored with Moses, more than the riches of Egypt, more than the authority, more than all the things that went along with his position. He said there is something more important. And what gave him to see and to know that? It was that the grace of God had come into his heart and he was able to see things clearly. The Lord had opened his eyes, spiritually speaking. Opened his ears, spiritually speaking. Opened his heart, spiritually speaking, that he would respond to God's word in faith.

He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Secondly, we see that he was choosing something, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin. Wow, that's a statement, isn't it? This prince of Egypt and he would go around looking around the area where the Israelites who were enslaved at the time in Egypt on the building sites trying to make bricks to satisfy the quota set by the taskmasters and they came to the point where they weren't even granted straw to make their bricks and still the quota was kept as it was and most of them would see these people. And there was one day and he, when he thought he was going to be able to redeem them or release them from their terrible plight, but I won't go into that particular area at the moment, the time hadn't come for him to lead them. He had to learn a lot about himself. Like one of the commentators says, he had to go to Midian for 40 years before he was fully qualified to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. He was at the back of the desert and this man said he was doing his BD, the back of the desert, took him 40 years to be fully qualified to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. But the thing is he was here considering something and he was choosing something and he chose this to be mistreated with these people than to enjoy the pleasures of sin per season. But the pleasures of sin are there's a variety of them aren't there? They're sins of the mind that please people, sins of the flesh that please people, worldliness that pleases people, honour and power and so on, pleasing people and that's what people naturally seek to have, that kind of satisfaction through worldliness and through sin. That is our fallen human nature, that's what we have an appetite for, that is what satisfies us as we are by nature. But this man here he said I see these people, they're tyrannized, they're enslaved, their life is hard but I want to identify myself with them. Why? Why Moses? Well the answer may come in these terms, I see that they are a special people. I see that the Lord is with them, despite the affliction they suffer. I see that the hand of the Lord is upon them, that there's something that God has for them greater than this present terrible situation that they're experiencing. I know that they are a covenant people, a favoured people and they are my people, not just that he was a Jew like themselves or a Hebrew like themselves, he was that.

But he identified with them at a spiritual level, at a covenantal level and he says like Ruth said of old, to Naomi, your people are my people and your God is my God. In treat me not to leave you, not to turn from following after you. For many of us can say that this morning, looking at the Christian community, looking at your Christian neighbours, your Christian friends, would you say you are the one I want to identify with rather than the people in the pub or the people who give themselves to various sins in life, no I want to be with the Lord's people, however much they suffer, however much they're downtrodden, however much the word of God is abused and cast underfoot today, however much the witness of the church is despised today. I want to be one of God's people, I want to follow them and be with them and help them and pray for them and do my utmost to bring good into their experience. And this is what this man said, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin.

[23 : 23] And as I said already, this word choosing, it goes on and on and on. It's not just one day, one moment's choice and I think it's important. Like one of the lecture ocean college used to say to us, remember he said there's grace in the grammar, in the grammar of the Hebrew or of the Greek, you find grace there. And that's what I meant when I said this word choosing, it is a participle, it is something that had a beginning when he first made his choice but then it goes on. It doesn't turn back from the choice he made, he continues. And that's part and parcel of the real power of this epistle that the writer wants them to continue in the road of faith, continue choosing to be mistreated with the people of God. We don't know what mistreatment we may yet suffer in this country, in our age, with the way there is so much anti-Christian feeling, rising throughout the world at the present time. Well, however much it costs us, if we're truly Christians, we'll be still happy to identify ourselves with Christ and his church.

The Covenanters said the same, Puritans said the same, they were willing to die for what they believed. The Atom and the Ridley were burned at the stake for what they believed. And this is what this man also is said to have done. He was choosing to be mistreated with the people of God and to enjoy the freedom and pressure of sin. Thirdly, he was considering something. It's as if he was weighing things up. Moses' conversion wasn't just an emotional high that he had for 10 minutes at a meeting. It was certainly an emotional high, but the effect of it continued all of his life.

He considered and considered and considered and continued to consider and weigh up that the reportorial Christ was of greater value than the treasures of Egypt.

The reportorial Christ. Are you embarrassed when somebody calls you a Christian?

Are you embarrassed to stand for what the Bible says in every situation of life, in the workplace, in the classroom, at home, in a contentious situation?

[26 : 36] What wins the day with you in situations like that, while if you're a real Christian? It's what the word of God says that must go. That must be your backstop. That must be what you fall back on at all times and not be ashamed of it. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, the Apostle Paul said, right into the Romans, because it is the power of God and to salvation, to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. The word of God. Choose it and be manly in your continuing to choose it as the basis for your faith and for your lifestyle.

Choosing, he said, to suffer reproach while whatever it costs continue like Moses did.

He goes on to talk about the way he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood and so on and so on. You see, however difficult the task of leading the children of Israel through the desert for 40 years was, Moses never went back on this choice that he had made. He continued looking out to the Lord and living as one to whom the Lord was, to whom he found the Lord precious as Savior.

But he considered then the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt. And I mentioned how luxurious and which Egypt was at this particular time.

Fine, Moses is, doesn't count for anything as far as I'm concerned, that rather have Jesus than this world's fame, rather have him than anything this world can offer me.

[28 : 52] Is that true of you? And finally, Moses had his eyes wide open. The end of verse 26, he was looking to the reward.

That was his focus. You see, the Lord had called him. And when it says in the New Testament, we are called, well, the not-wred calling. Not just that the call of God, effectual call, comes from heaven to us. Yes, but it calls us upwards.

And you see, we are asked to run our race with patience, looking onto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. He is the great example of faith. He is the one for the glory that was said before him suffered the cost, despising the shame. And that's the great example of the people of God, how he said before them, I know this man, he was looking to the reward.

The Lord had promised not only grace, but also glory. And he was looking for it. Why is it called a reward? Looking to the reward.

Is he here saying, well, because I've lived so well and made the right choices and made the right refusals? And so on. Is that what he's talking about? Is going to be rewarded according to the way he's lived? Well, not really. Not really. What he is saying here particularly is that Christ, who has been promised to him, he is going to give eternal life on the basis of what he is to do.

[30 : 57] And that's the question. Christ hadn't yet come. But Christ was in God's purpose crucified from the foundation of the world. And, you know, his death's effect went backwards from the cross to the very beginning. I don't know if I'm explaining this very well.

But Christ died, the efficacy of his death, went backwards into the Old Testament, so that since in the Old Testament time, we look to Jesus for salvation, they were saved on the basis of what Christ was going to do. And then since in the New Testament, they are saved on the basis of what Christ has now done. The same basis, the same finished work, the same kind of salvation. The Old Testament saints looked by faith to Jesus, who was promised.

A New Testament saints looked to Jesus, who has come in fulfillment of the promise. And now who has finished the work, and who is going to reward his people on the basis of the work he has done, and he will give them eternal life, know all its fullness, oh, he has given them an earnest, a taste of it here. But they all look forward to the fulfillment of that eternal life promised. Father, I will, that they also whom you have given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory. That's the reward to be with him where he is throughout the endless ages of eternity. We have known people in this world with whom we had fellowship in the Gospel, and who have gone ahead of us into that glory. They are experiencing the reward spoken of here, to be with Christ, which is better by faith. These four points, and you can think about them, the refusal he made, the choosing or the choice he made, what he considered, and the fact that he was looking forward to the blessings of glory. May God give us that saving faith ourselves.

Let us pray. Help us, Lord, to be thankful for your word, that we have been reading and upon which we have been meditating. We ask for your grace to fill our hearts and lives.

We might not be left empty despite our oft involvement with your word. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, we pray. Sanctify us and draw us closer to yourself and give us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to whom shall be the glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

[34 : 27] I will conclude our worship at this time, singing again from Scottish Psalter Psalm 85, at verse 18. I'll hear what God the Lord will speak. To his folk he'll speak peace, and to his saints, but let them not return to foolishness. To them that fear him, surely near is his salvation, that glory in our land may have her habitation. Verses 8 to 13 of Psalm 85, I'll hear what God the Lord will speak.

I will be a God the Lord will speak. To his folk he'll speak peace, and to his saints, but let them not return to foolishness. To them that fear him, surely near is his salvation, that glory in our land may have her habitation.

Through death, with mercy, righteousness, unbeached is futurely. Through spring, from earth, unrighteousness, looks down from heaven high. Ye who disobey the Lord shall give, our land shall yield increase. Justice to set, our sin is set, shall all be gone in space.

I now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.