

Moses: Man of Faith and Faithfulness

To light a fire

Jack London's story, *To Build A Fire*, is about a newcomer to the Yukon who foolishly ventured out in the snow ignoring the warnings of an old-timer in Sulfur Creek. Soon the new-comer was in danger and his only hope of survival was to light a fire, dry his clothes and keep from freezing. The story tells of his struggle. Then after miraculously getting the small fire started, it was just as suddenly extinguished from an overhead branch dropping its load of clinging snow. The story concludes in hopelessness as his life-giving fire smolders and steams to its struggling end.

In the same way that a fire needs combustion to become a healthy fire, I realize that only the Holy Spirit can bring about combustion to the fuel of the Word of God, so that our lives might be ablaze with faith.

"Father, this is Your Word. Open it to our hearts and open our hearts to hear and catch aflame. Thaw out the coldness inside, that we might be warmed, comforted, filled, and then become men and women of faith for the sake of Your people, Your glorious gospel, and Your great purpose for our lives. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen"

- ²³By faith Moses, when he was born,
 was hidden for three months by his parents,
 because they saw he was a beautiful child;
 and they were not afraid of the king's edict.
- ²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up,
 refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,
²⁵choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God
 than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,
²⁶considering the reproach of Christ greater riches
 than the treasures of Egypt;
 for he was looking to the reward.
- ²⁷By faith he left Egypt,
 not fearing the wrath of the king;
 for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.
- ²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood,
 so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.
- ²⁹By faith they passed through the Red Sea
 as though they were passing through dry land;
 and the Egyptians, when they attempted it were drowned. (Heb. 11:23-29)
 The key word repeated five times in this portion of Scripture is ***faith***.

I. Faith and Great Struggle.

Can you think of a greater dilemma than the one Israel faced?

God's blessing was upon them so that they were multiplying in their population, so much so that the Egyptians were afraid of being conquered by them.

The story is told in Exodus

But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them. Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to this people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come Let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land" (Exodus 1:7-10)

First Pharaoh and the Egyptians increased the workload on the Israelites, So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel. The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them. (Ex. 1:11-14)

Next they initiated a population control measure.

At first they told the midwives to kill all the newborn boys as they were born. But the midwives feared the Lord more than Pharaoh and let them live. Afterwards they made an edict that the Israelites were responsible to throw all the boy babies in the Nile river.

Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive." (Ex. 1:22)

This is the setting in which Moses was born. We may wonder why so many difficulties happen to God's children. That's what faith is for.

Great Faith is birthed in times of great struggle.

²³By faith Moses, when he was born,
was hidden for three months by his parents,
because they saw he was a beautiful child;
and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

It was the grace and mercy of God that kept Moses alive. The family tried to keep him safe but in the end they had to surrender him into God's hands

Great struggles birth great faith as men are faithful in obedience.

Exodus 2:1-10

II. Faith and Right Choices

By Faith we choose what is right in order to see's God's provision

Paul wrote, "we walk by faith and not by sight." Because faith is sight.

By faith they chose to do right and believed God to take care of him.

During that time Moses' mother was able to nurture and train Moses to believe in the one true God, the God of their fathers.

When Moses grew up he chose the God of Israel over those of Egypt.

Though raised in royalty Moses chose to identify with the Hebrew brethren:

Hebrews 11:24-26 says

²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up,
 refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,
²⁵choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God
 than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,
²⁶considering the reproach of Christ greater riches
 than the treasures of Egypt;
 for he was looking to the reward.

Considering – hegeomai – involves careful thought, not quick decision. Moses thought through his decision, weighing the pros and cons. He weighed what Egypt had to offer against what God offered. Then took his stand with the God of Israel.

The pleasures of Egypt compared with the eternal riches of Christ.

Passing pleasures Vs. eternal riches

Pleasure or reproach.

By Faith we learn to stand alone against the world

I have decided to follow Jesus ... no turning back

The cross before me the world behind me...no turning back...

Though none go with me still I will follow ... no turning back...

Two characteristics of sin:

Passing and evil – the pleasures of sin will always fade because they have no good in them – no good to us, others or to God, and therefore are destined to fade.

Sin may look good but it is deceptive and fleeting.

Job asked, "Why do the wicked still live, continue on, also become very powerful?" (Job. 21:7-9)

Jeremiah plead, "Why has the way of the wicked prospered? Why are all those who deal in treachery at ease?" (Jer. 12:1)

The Psalmist asked the same question: “Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure.” (Ps. 73:12-13)

“Why is it that they are wicked and wealthy and I am pure but poor?”

The answer is simple: death and judgment. The ultimate end.

For the believer there are God’s promises and His rewards for those with faith.

²⁶considering the reproach of Christ greater riches
than the treasures of Egypt;
for he was looking to the reward.

Moses chose the reproach of Christ – these were the people through whom the Messiah would come. Bearing their reproach was to bear the reproach of Christ. Paul wrote, “our momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” (2 Cor. 4:17; Rom. 8:18).

III. Faith and Overcoming Fear

When we follow God faith overcomes fear.

²⁷By faith he left Egypt,
not fearing the wrath of the king;
for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

When Moses left Pharaoh the first time it was after he had killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave. The second time he left Egypt another Pharaoh wanted to keep Moses from taking the children of Israel with him. In both situations he was in trouble.

Pharaoh hardened his heart against Moses and the Israelites, and he increased the pressure on the children of Israel.

“You are no longer to give the people straw to make brick as previously; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the quota of bricks which they were making previously, you shall impose on them; you are not to reduce any of it. Because they are lazy, therefore they cry out, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God’ Let the labor be heavier on the men, and let them work at it so that they will pay no attention to false words.” (Ex. 5:7-9)

The increased workload discouraged the workers, so that even their taskmasters were having trouble. The work wasn’t just difficult, it was impossible.

Moreover, the foremen of the sons of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, “Why have you not completed your required amount either yesterday or

today in making brick as previously?” Then the foremen of the sons of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, “Why do you deal this way with your servants?” (5:14-15)

When Moses and Aaron pressed Pharaoh to let the Children of Israel have three days to worship, he not only refused; but punished the workers, so that they cried out against Moses.

“Fear is a great pressure, and all of us are tempted at times to bend when standing for the Lord requires us to say or do something that is unpopular or dangerous. But true faith does not fold under the world’s pressure.”

{J. MacArthur}

Fear was left behind when he **forsook Egypt** and followed God.

Key to overcoming fear: “seeing Him who is unseen.”

“The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith,
and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.”

George Mueller

IV. Faith and God’s Provision

The Passover was the final plague against Egypt in which the death angel would kill the firstborn of every household. God’s provision for his people was to kill a lamb and sprinkle its blood over the doors and windows of their house.

²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood,
so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

(Heb. 11:28)

The Exodus account of this event:

For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you...Now it came about at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. (Ex. 12: 23, 29)

The Passover was symbolic of Christ’s sacrifice by which He conquered death for all who believe in Him. Though they didn’t understand the full significance of the

ceremony, they obeyed what God required and it saved them from the final judgment.

When someone accepts God's provision in Christ for salvation he is saved by faith.

To the world, good works seem like a much better way to please God than faith.

But the world's way is not God's way.

To Him, "All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment" (Isa. 64:6).

Faith accepts Christ's righteousness applied on our behalf.

This is God's way, and is therefore faith's way.¹

Jesus was our Passover Lamb.

John declared,

"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." (John 1:21)

V. Faith and God's Promise

Faith follows God's leading opening the door for miracles.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote, "Faith is the refusal to panic"

Imagine leaving Egypt on that final day.

All your life you have know nothing but slavery, bondage, abuse and even death at the hand of the Egyptians. Now the day had arrived to leave; after a year of judgments from God through Moses. Just as everything seems to be perfect there is an abrupt stop. The leaders have reached the sea, with the murderous armies of Egypt closing in from behind. There's no way of escape!

²⁹By faith they passed through the Red Sea
as though they were passing through dry land;
and the Egyptians, when they attempted it were drowned.

It took faith to take the first step into the sea.

They believed the promise from God and walked across on the seabed when the waters had parted. They were experiencing God who is always faithful.

The Egyptian army pursued them

Faith takes God at His word and is victorious.

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Hebrews*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983) p. 357.

Presumption denies God's word and is destroyed. The Egyptians persistently hardened their hearts to the Lord and presumed to trust themselves and they were drowned

The test of faith is trusting God when all we have are His promises.

When the waters are piled high all around us and problems and dangers are about to overwhelm us, this is when faith is tested, and when the Lord takes special pleasure in showing us His faithfulness, His love, and His power.

When we have nothing but His promise to rely on, His help is the nearest and His presence the dearest to those who believe... When we truly believe God, we will know that in everything He has our best interest at heart, and we will always decide for Him.

Charles Wesley wrote,

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to God alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, it shall be done.