

Lessons from the life of Moses

Text: Hebrews 11: 23-28

Have you ever felt like you are sitting on top of the world?
You've climbed the Pinnacles in the Grampians;
You've climbed to the top of the Sydney Harbor Bridge;
You've taken the lift up the Rialto Tower.

From that perspective you can see for miles and miles.
The view is breath taking...truly amazing.
Towns and roads are specks in the distance.

If you've hiked up you can probably see some of the winding trail that you had to take to get where you are.

Our lives are like that too.
We reach points where we look back on our lives,
with the lens of faith, and we see how God has used us and shaped us.

We can look back and see the difficulties we have had to endure and see how they were good for us.

We see things as they really are.

Now this goes for older folk...but younger people also.
There are points in our lives where we sit back and take stock.
Where we pause and see what God is doing.

I think that if we stood with Moses on Mt Nebo at the moment of his death and looked back down the trail of his life, we would see how God shaped him, through his faith.

Hebrews 11: 23-28 set out 4 life shaping moments in Moses' life.

READ VERSES

Now from 11:1 we see that faith is the thing that makes a difference.

True faith is active and works.

These verses in Hebrews show Moses demonstrating this active, working faith.

We need to look at each of the moments described here in these verses of Hebrews and see how they shaped Moses.

1. Faith delivers us from fear (V23)

Actually the faith of Moses has its origins in the faith of his parents.

Before he was born, a decree came from the king that all male Hebrew infants were to be thrown into the Nile River.

Pharaoh's agents roamed throughout the country, searching for pregnant women or newborn males so that they could take the babies and throw them into the Nile.

Moses—a true hero of the faith exists—he did not drown in the Nile – simply because Amram and Jochebed trusted God!

Verse 23 says that they saw, "...*that Moses was no ordinary child.*"

In other words with God-empowered sensitivity they observed their little boy and saw him unique and special.

His parents had faith that God would preserve Moses, despite the king's threats, for they knew God had a plan for their son.

Faith in God overcomes all fears.

Why should we fear a king when the King of kings is for us?

Moses parents saw the fingerprint of God on their son and this motivated them to save his life at all costs.

But they risked their lives by not killing the baby...
but they hid the child.

Here is an act of courage against the king.

Here is faith in things hoped for that gave them the radical courage and risk-taking love to defy the king and hide their son.

What are your fears?

Illness, disability, death, dying, fear of tomorrow or the future?

Faith in God helps you to face your fears confidently.

The faith of Moses' parents led them to hide Moses and how he came to be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter.

Moses was nursed by his own mother but he grew up in the king's palace in Egypt. The slave boy became a member of Egyptian royalty.

So faith delivers us from our fears

2. But faith also determines our choices (v24-26)

Being part of the Pharaoh's family would have meant that Moses attended school, probably the best in the world at this time

Moses learned hieroglyphics—the language of the Egyptians.

He would have also studied sciences, medicine, astronomy, chemistry, theology, philosophy, and law.

He would have studied the arts...sculpture, music and painting.

He would have studied military history and battle techniques.

So, Moses was well-educated.

He, as the Prince of Egypt, seemingly had it made.

In time however, Moses faith led him to refuse the life in the Palace, and identify with the suffering people of God.

No doubt the choice would have been hard.

But it was a deliberate decision...he 'considered'

Was Moses foolish to say no to the Egyptian world and all its splendor?

After all, was not the crown of Egypt within his reach?

His action could be compared to Prince Charles abdicating his right to the throne to preach the gospel of Jesus.

But Moses was like Jesus, who rejected Satan's offer of all the glories of the kingdoms of the world for the death of the cross.

By faith Moses "chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time" (Heb. 11:25).

By faith in the God of Israel and in his plan for the salvation of the Israelites, Moses chose righteousness and eternal life rather than royalty, worldly power, fashion, treasures, and the fleeting pleasures of the sin of Egypt.

He deliberately chose to suffer along with the people of God.

He chose the way of the cross, with its danger, beatings, scorn, and shame.

"By faith Moses considered" (Heb. 11:26). Faith thinks, considers, and reasons.

Faith is not a leap into the dark.

Moses used his mind to make his decision.

He weighed all the issues.

He considered all the status and pleasure he could enjoy in Egypt.

Then he looked at God's final judgment, and considered God, his people, his salvation, and his Christ.

Moses chose the reproach of Christ because he understood truly that this was of greater value than all the treasure Egypt could offer.

Jesus asked, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

May God help us to use our minds and understand what is real and abiding, and choose God's glorious plan of salvation!

Moses chose Christ and his people, his eternal life, and his treasure in heaven.

In contrast, Esau chose a cup of soup;

Achan chose a little silver and gold;

Lot's wife chose Sodom and its nightlife;

Judas chose thirty pieces of silver;

Demas chose the fame, power, and wealth of this world;

the rich young ruler chose his great wealth.

All of these chose the things of this world rather than Christ and his salvation.

The choices we make in time are important because they determine our eternal destiny.

Jesus chose to die on the cross for our salvation rather than to obtain the glories of this world by worshiping Satan.

Like Moses, Paul had many worldly advantages. Yet read what this great man said when God opened his eyes: "But whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ" (Phil. 3:7-9).

What are you choosing? What are you considering?

On what are you fixing your eyes?

Hear the call of Jesus: Deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow me. The disciples of Jesus left all and followed him to death, even the death of the cross.

I urge you to join Moses and follow Jesus, who alone can give you eternal life.

Forsake the pleasures of sin for a season so that you can enjoy the everlasting and satisfying pleasures of God.

3. Faith develops our vision

Why did Moses leave all and follow Christ and his people?

Why did he give the royalty, power, and pleasures of Egypt for the sake of Christ and a life of suffering and scorn?

Why did he leave Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king?

Moses did all these things because he was a man of faith.

Moses choice to forsake the world he knew was based on a faith that looked to the future.

He saw beyond the events of the moment to the ultimate purpose of God.

He saw God himself—the God of glory who created all things out of nothing.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us Moses acted as he did “because he was looking ahead to his reward” (Heb. 11:26).

We will not forsake the things of this world unless we see something else of greater value.

Moses’ eyes were constantly fixed on his reward, which was his great salvation and fellowship with God.

In faith he knew that God was working out his plan and promises.
In faith he knew that God would be faithful to his people and the promises he had made.

Moses did not know that he was the one who would take on this work...
But his trust was still in the right place.

In verse 27 we read that Moses “persevered because he saw him who is invisible”.
The key to perseverance is to see God.

But how do we do that?

You receive inspiration and strength by looking to Jesus: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Heb. 12:2-3).

Paul tells us what should we meditate upon: “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” (Col. 3:1-2).

We need to look to God...to lift up our eyes, as we sang before.

4. That’s why, lastly, we can say that Faith keeps us looking to God. (v28)
“By faith [Moses] kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood” (Heb. 11:27).

This tells us that Moses knew he was a sinner, along with all the Israelites.
He knew the wages of sin is death but he also knew that God gives eternal life by grace through the death of a fit substitute.

Moses, therefore, believed in the gospel of the Passover and acted on it by faith.
He and his people obeyed every detail of God’s instruction,
applying the blood of the lamb to the sides and the tops of the doorframes.
So, the firstborn sons of Israel were saved from the destroyer who passed over their homes.

Keeping the Passover was an act of faith.
Though they may not have known the full significance of the Passover at the time,
in faith they acted on God’s Word revealed to them.

That same word is for us too.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Paul says, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7).

Through the death of Christ, our sin problem is gone, our guilt erased, and our hell done away with.

Lord's Supper reminds us of this.

Rejoice and be glad!

We are the people of the Lamb of God who died for our sins.

We have been saved from destruction and saved to serve for God.

Conclusion

So when it came time for Moses to lead the people,

When he stood on Mt Nebo about to die

He could look back and see how perfectly he was suited to the task to which God called him.

Educated in Egypt.

Trained in the Israelite way by his mother.

40 years with his father-in-law Jethro and he knew how to be a shepherd,
and how to survive in the desert wilderness.

He could see how his faith and trust in God guided his decisions and his experiences.
And not all those experiences were nice.

What do you see when you look back on your life?

God shaping you through your experiences?

Faith and trust guiding your decisions?

Making hard choices because they are right?