

It Takes Faith Part 11

Hebrews 11:27-29

We read in vs. 24-26 how Moses left the palace because he no longer wanted to partake in the pleasures of sin and instead saw greater value in the purpose of God.

And he could go through with this major life change because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Now, as we get into the next few verses we'll see Moses' faith in leading the Israelites out of Egypt.

It takes faith to stay the course despite the opposition.

1) Moses' faith was in the unseen (27). - *"By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible."*

I think this mainly applies to Moses when he was willing to approach Pharaoh to demand the Israelites be released from their bondage.

Although I also think it took courage to be willing to leave the palace and not be afraid of the Pharaoh's response.

There was some fear after he killed the Egyptian but not when he made the decision to leave the palace.

If Pharaoh wanted to he could've had Moses put to death.

His mind was made up; he was going to do what God wanted him to do.

Moses' faith in God superseded his fear of man.

We need to do what God wants us to do despite the potential fears and fallout.

Sharing the gospel can be scary but our desire to be a witness for Christ needs to supersede our fear of doing it.

In Eph. 6 Paul asked the people to pray that he would fearlessly declare the gospel.

Making sacrifices for the Lord can be scary.

When we tithe we can be afraid of not being able to pay all the bills.

There are times in our life where following Jesus may invoke certain fears.

That's when we keep our focus on the invisible God more than our visible circumstances.

"He persevered because he saw him who is invisible".

Moses developed relationships within the Egyptian community.

Moses would've had a strong bond with the woman who raised him.

I'm sure he had a good relationship with his surrogate grandfather, the Pharaoh.

So when Moses made the decision to leave the palace he had to have thought about how Pharaoh and others would react.

But God's will outweighed his will and the will of those he loved and who loved him.

He followed through with his decision because of what God laid on his heart.

And his commitment would be seen in his dedication to leading the Israelites from Egypt and through the desert wanderings with all the drama that would ensue during those 40 years.

Yes, he was in the presence of God on the mountain when he received the ten commandments but God was not a visible presence in his everyday affairs.

He relied on his faith to continue to get him through on a daily basis.

Perseverance results from keeping our focus on God.

When we're focused on God our problems are quite small in comparison.

Moses' faith caused him to follow through with God's command to challenge Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

Moses' faith allowed him to be more concerned about the wrath of God than the wrath of Pharaoh.

Moses feared God; not man.

Psalm 56:4, "In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?"

David's trust was in the immortal God; not the mortal man.

David was convinced of the fact that the power and ability of God was greater than the power and ability of man so what was there to fear?

This was the principle Moses lived by and we should live by it too.

We will persist through our visible situations when we are focused on the invisible God.

2) Faith involves trust and obedience (28-29) - "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."

Up until now there had been nine plagues.

First was the plague of blood where all the water in the Nile, canals, streams, ponds, reservoirs, even the water in buckets and jars would be turned to blood.

The fish died and the stench was awful.

All the Egyptians had to dig along the riverbank to find drinking water.

But, what's interesting is that Exodus 7:22 says the Egyptian magicians performed the same feat.

I doubt it was anywhere near what Moses had accomplished since he had already performed it but nonetheless because of that Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen to God's decree to let his people go.

Then came the plague of frogs.

There were so many frogs they were everywhere-on their beds, in their ovens and kneading troughs, they covered the land.

But, again, Pharaoh's magicians were able to do the same.

However, why I don't think it was of the same magnitude was Pharaoh sent for Moses to make a deal-call off the frogs and I will let the people go and worship.

God honored his end of the bargain but Pharaoh did not.

Then came the plague of gnats.

Gnats were everywhere. But Pharaoh's magicians couldn't duplicate this one.

Nonetheless, Pharaoh's heart was hard.

So, God brought the next plague upon the Egyptians-flies.

Swarms of flies invaded the land and filled the homes.

But God wanted Pharaoh to see that the Israelites would not be affected by this; only the Egyptians.

Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and told him they could sacrifice in Egypt and Moses said, no can do; we must take a three day journey into the desert.

So, Pharaoh initially conceded. But, after a minute, his heart became hard again and he changed his mind;

which ushered in the plague on the livestock.

All the livestock of the Egyptians died but Pharaoh would not budge.

Then came the plague of boils.

Festered boils plagued the people and still Pharaoh maintained his position.

So, #7 on the plague list was hail.

So, Egypt saw the worst hail storm it had ever seen.

The crops were ruined.

So, you had livestock ruined, crops ruined, people suffering; what was next?

This time Pharaoh supposedly had enough but once again, changed his mind once the plague was stopped.

So, in comes #8-locusts.

Whatever the hail didn't eradicate the locusts would.

Exodus 10:14 says that never before or since has there been a plague of locusts like this one.

It says they covered the ground until it was black.

Nothing was left on tree or field when they were done-like it was a barren wasteland.

Pharaoh, once again, had seen enough and told Moses they could go.

But, as we have seen already, another dose of hardening of the heart occurred and Pharaoh changed his mind.

So, #9-the plague of darkness.

Have you ever been somewhere where it was so dark you literally couldn't see anything; even your hand in front of your face?

Kind of uncomfortable-isn't it? A little eerie, spooky, scary even.

Well, that's what the whole land of the Egyptians had to deal with now.

For three whole days no one could see anything or anyone—they didn't leave their houses.
Imagine for three days not being able to see anything!
After everything else that had been happening I think I might've reached a breaking point by now.

So, as you might surmise, Pharaoh summons Moses, grants his request and yes, as before, he changes his mind.

But, before you shake your head and say, what's wrong with this guy? Remember this: how often are we the same way?

"God if you get me out of this I promise I won't do it again."

Then, when the suffering and consequences wear off what do we find ourselves doing...again?

We go through the same process and repeat the same dialog only to go back on our word.

And notice how God (as he does for us), knowing Pharaoh would not follow through, removes the plagues each time he makes a promise.

No one is able to say God does not do all he can to get us to live up to our end of the bargain.

But, the worst was saved for last.

The final plague was the plague of the first born.

Exodus 11:4-8, "So Moses said, *'This is what the LORD says: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well.*

There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.' Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, 'Go, you and all the people who follow you!' After that I will leave. Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh."

Moses approached Pharaoh regarding the last plague to strike Egypt.

Think about the faith that led up to this point.

In the beginning Moses brings a plague and the magicians match it.

I wonder what went through Moses' mind when he saw this; and not just once but twice.

He was being tested to continue to trust and obey—despite what he was currently seeing.

We will be put to the same test of faith.

Its a test to continue to put our faith in God when it looks like the enemy is just as powerful.

But we see Moses was hot with anger as he leaves Pharaoh's court.

With Pharaoh constantly changing his mind it's no wonder Moses was reaching a boiling point.

Later, God instructed Moses that they were to slaughter lambs and apply the blood over the doorposts of their homes.

Exodus 12:12-13, "*On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt."*

By Faith Moses and the Israelites did what God told them to do.

They trusted that God would destroy every firstborn save for the houses with the blood of the lamb over them.

Here is something very interesting – I wonder if you have ever noticed it.....

Up until now, God kept the plagues from touching the Israelites without them having to do anything but for the last one they had to do something to ensure their protection.

After this heartbreaking plague Pharaoh concedes and finally lets the Israelites go.

Exodus 12:31-32, "*During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me."*

The Israelites embarked on their departure from Egypt. But then there was trouble.

They soon found themselves on the bank of the Red Sea. What would they do?

No time to go around it because Pharaoh, having changed his mind once again, gathered the troops and went after them.

Understandably the Hebrews are in a panic as the angry Pharaoh and his army are gaining ground. Are they doomed? Not with God watching over them.

Exodus 14:10-14, "As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

What powerful and encouraging words. Do not be afraid; stand firm. The Lord will deliver; the Lord will fight for you.

This was the faith of Moses being communicated to the Hebrews.

We need to have this level of confidence when we face the looming threats of the enemy.

When we face situations that seem hopeless; when we feel like giving up the fight.

When we feel we have no strength to carry on, when we're panicking and sarcastically crying out to God we need to hear the Lord's words, 'do not be afraid; stand firm.'

Don't panic; be still and watch the deliverance of the Lord'.

And deliver he did. **Vs. 21-22**, "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left."

Think about it. Yes, you have just seen a massive miracle in God using Moses to part the Red Sea.

However, now you're being asked to walk along the sea bottom and cross to the other side, trusting that these massive towers of water will not collapse.

Regardless of the miracle it would still take faith to walk across.

We're not talking about crossing a stream or a river-this is a sea.

Granted it's one of the extensions of the Red Sea but it was still no small endeavor.

It has been observed that the part of the Red Sea where the Israelites are believed to have crossed was 84 feet deep.

To put that in perspective that's around the height of St Joseph Courthouse.

So picture yourself walking along the bottom of a sea bed with Courthouse sized walls of water on either side of you; that technically could cave in on you at any moment.

And this was their reality all night long; that's how long it took them to cross.

So, it would definitely take faith to trust that these enormous walls of water would stay as they were until they made it to the other side.

And the Egyptian army followed after the Hebrews and when their chariot wheels starting coming off and other things started happening it became obvious that God was fighting for the Hebrews.

They tried to get out but it didn't happen.

God told Moses to stretch his hands out again and the walls of water caved in on them and they all drowned.

Heb. 11:29, "By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned."

What an experience. Can you imagine trying to take it all in and process what you had just witnessed?

The Israelites came to the right conclusion after all this.

Exodus 14:30-31, "That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. And when the Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant."

I believe their faith and trust existed prior to this; when the plagues were happening they saw God at work and they were willing to follow Moses out of Egypt.

However, when they saw the display of power in parting the Red Sea and seeing the Egyptian army come to ruin they became truly convinced of who God is and who he had chosen to lead them.

Moses' faith caused him to continuously see God at work.

If Moses had not gone through with God's mission he would've missed out on witnessing the majestic displays of the Almighty God.

We need to be convinced of who God is and what his capabilities are; along with being convinced of what we our capabilities are through him.

Gladys Aylward, missionary to China more than 50 years ago, was forced to flee when the Japanese invaded Yangcheng. But she couldn't leave her work behind. With only one assistant, she led over 100 orphans over the mountains toward Free China. But during Gladys' harrowing journey out of war-torn Yangcheng - she grappled with despair as never before. After passing a sleepless night, she faced the morning with no hope of reaching safety. A 13-year-old girl in the group reminded her of their much-loved story of Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea. "But I'm not Moses," Gladys cried in desperation. "Of course you're not," the girl said, "but God is still God!" You're not Moses, I'm not Moses, but guess what? **God is still God!** What mountain is God asking you to climb today? What sea is he asking you to pass through? It takes faith.