



Hebrews 11:23-29

²³By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. ²⁴By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. ²⁹By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

SUMMARY

The recipients of Hebrews would have thought highly of Moses. So the author devotes several verses to showing them that the difficult road of faith they were tempted to turn off was the same road their hero walked.

In fact, without faith, Moses wouldn't have survived long enough to become their hero! Before mentioning Moses' faith, the author reflects on the faith of his parents (v 23). Moses was born at a time when Pharaoh had commanded all Hebrew boys to be killed (Exodus 1:22). Defiantly, Moses' parents hid him for three months (2:2).

Two reasons are given for this: first, "they were not afraid of the king's edict". Boldly, they hid an illegal child despite enormous risk to themselves. Second, they

saw he was “beautiful” (“he was no ordinary child”, NIV). This doesn’t simply mean they thought he was cute, but that by faith they sensed God would do something significant through him.¹

Verses 24-27 recall events that can only be explained by faith. Adopted into Pharaoh’s household, Moses grew up with all the privilege, status, riches, and physical pleasure one could seemingly ever want. And then he renounced it all, trading in his Egyptian identity for solidarity with the mistreated people of God (v 25) and for “the stigma that rests on God’s Anointed” (v 26, NEB).

By worldly measurements, nothing about Moses’ decision makes sense. But faith sees things others don’t (cf. Hebrews 11:1). Moses walked away from Egypt’s treasures because he saw a reward to come (v 26). He left because he saw the God who is invisible (v 27). He knew material treasures were temporary and that God’s reward would last forever.

The author then shows how two of the most significant moments in Jewish history – the Passover and crossing of the Red Sea – were themselves acts of faith. In the Passover, Moses, like Noah, made preparation for a yet-unseen judgment. And the crossing of the Red Sea was an act of faith by the entire people of Israel. By faith, they obeyed God by moving forward into the sea and were delivered from their enemy.

DISCUSS

Comparing Hebrews 11:25 and Psalm 16:11, we see that God and sin both provide pleasure. But what’s different about the pleasures provided by each?

Moses had to choose between a comfortable life in Egypt and a life of suffering with God’s people. What does this choice look like in our own times? What modern comforts and “fleeting pleasures” do Christians today give up in following Jesus? What does being “mistreated” look like for God’s people today? In what ways is it a “stigma” to be called a Christian?

When faced with the choice between obeying or disobeying God, we too make a calculated decision as to what we believe offers a greater reward. Consider a sin

¹ “...there was some mark...of future excellency imprinted on the child, which gave promise of something out of the ordinary.” (John Calvin)

that you regularly battle. What, in your mind, is the payoff for choosing that sin? What do you feel you'd be missing out on by *not* pursuing it? What payoff does God offer instead?

What are some trials you are currently walking through? How can "looking to the reward" God has for us as Christians affect the way you respond to those trials?