

Faith (Part 2)

Moses

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I do not know that I would go so far as to say that in Christianity faith is everything, but I will go so far as saying that without faith there would be no Christianity—there would be no hope of eternal life through this way.

All of us are familiar, at least to some degree, with Hebrews 11, but the introduction and pivot, (I think that is what I will call it), on which that chapter turns and rests is actually in Hebrews 10. I think it was unfortunate where the translators of the Bible happened to break the chapter. In Hebrews 10: 38 it says,

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

That phrase, "the just shall live by faith," is quoted three times by the apostle Paul; in Romans 1: 17, in Galatians 3: 11, and again here in Hebrews 10: 38. The first time that he uses it, the subject is faith, but it is leading to Paul's expounding that faith is a major part of the means by which justification is given. In Galatians 3, it appears in a context in which faith is contrasted to justification by works of the law. And here in Hebrews 10: 38, it is living by faith in God's promises. But we are going to begin this sermon by looking at this verse from where it was quoted.

Habakkuk 2:1 I will stand my watch. . . .

I should give you just a little bit of background here. In the first chapter, God shows that Habakkuk, who was a prophet, was upset with God because God had made prophecies regarding where the punishment of Judah was going to come from, and the punishment was going to come from the Chaldeans. Habakkuk was upset about that because God was going to punish the Judeans at the hand of a nation that Habakkuk considered to be worse than the Judeans. It was sort of "God, why are you doing this? Why don't you at least punish us by a righteous nation instead of sending upon us a nation that is far worse than we are? "

At least that was the way Habakkuk looked at it. I am sure God did not look at it that way because God would not have sent the Chaldeans if He did not think it was the right thing for Him to do at the time. So they were maybe worse in the overall sense, but who was more responsible for what they were—the Chaldeans or the Jews? Had the Chaldeans had God's way revealed to them as the Judeans had? Of course not. Maybe the Judeans were not as bad on paper, maybe statistically they were not as bad as the Chaldeans, but they were more responsible. To whom much is given, much is required.

God was going to punish them with a hasty nation, He says, a nation that was violent and rapacious in the way that they did things. Well Habakkuk did not like that one bit so he

appealed to God and his appeal was pretty hotly given. After he was done with his prayer he said,

Habakkuk 2:1 I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, [the way a watchman is supposed to do, a prophet] and watch to see what He [God] will say to me.

. . .

Habakkuk expected an answer to come from God and then he was also thinking, "Well, if God answers this way then I'm going to say back to Him this other thing, and if He says this then I'm going to say this back to Him," because he said

Habakkuk 2:2-3. . . and what I will answer when I am reprov'd. Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it" [right away God says that whoever reads this thing better have a sense of urgency—run!]. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak and it will not lie."

God is reminding Habakkuk that what goes out of God's mouth comes back to Him having fulfilled its purpose. God is not a man that He should lie. If God says something it is going to be done, and it will be done the way that He says it will be done, and it will be done in the time that He says that it will be done.

Habakkuk 2:3 "Though it tarries, wait for it"; [It may seem as though it is going to be a long time before it occurs] "because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Does not this begin to apply to you and me? Are we not looking for the end? Are we not waiting for it to occur? Are we not looking at the signs? Are we not looking at what is happening in the news? Are we not looking at what is happening in the church, what is happening in our own lives? Are we not feeling the pressure of the times and wondering how it can get any worse than it already is, and we say, maybe not out loud, but then again maybe we do, "How long O Lord are You going to wait? Isn't it bad enough? When will be the time that Your Son will return?"

Habakkuk 2:3-4 Though it tarries, wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.

Terrible times, God says, are coming and the proud are going to be caught in that time. If you want to live, if you want to be spared, if you want to be saved, if you want to be able to witness these things and live beyond it, and I am thinking here of eternal life, then you are going to live by your faith, and as we just saw, wait for it. It is going to require perseverance. It is going to require endurance.

It is so interesting that this word translated here "faith" is not the normal Hebrew word for faith. This word means more like our English word "fairness," that the just shall live by his fairness. He shall live by his stability. He shall live by his certainty. He shall live by his reliability. He shall live by his personal character. He shall live by his integrity. Because the word normally would be translated "faithfulness"—the just shall live by his faithfulness.

A person is faithful to God only because he trusts Him and therefore, in order to help us to

understand, the translators decided to inject the word there, or to insert the word "faith" because faithfulness on the part of a human being ultimately rests on his trust in God, and if a person is going to be faithful, it is because he believes what God says and he is motivated then to have a genuine commitment to righteousness. Thus, the translation "faith."

Let us go back to Hebrews 10. We are going to see this in a larger context. Paul writes:

Hebrews 10:32-33 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;

I want you to think while we read through this of what God says in Revelation 2 about the Ephesian church, about how they had lost their first love. There was a time when they were filled with enthusiasm and desire to please God and they were faithful, very faithful, very energetic, very zealous in pursuing the love of their life, who was God, and so they endured great struggles with suffering, and they were made a spectacle, and they were made reproaches, and they went through tribulations, and they became companions of those who were so treated.

Hebrews 10:34-36 For you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, [or boldness] which has great reward. For you have need of endurance [of perseverance].

Brethren, tie this in to Habakkuk 2:3-4 how God exhorted Habakkuk to wait patiently, because surely what God says is going to come, and that is exactly what the apostle Paul was doing to those people in the first century. He says "Hang on! Endure! Persevere! Be patient! Be bold in your faith! Be faithful!"

Hebrews 10:36-39 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition [or to destruction] but of those who believe to the saving of the soul [or the life].

Hebrews 11 then builds on top of what the apostle Paul says here and contains a powerful exhortation for those of us living at the end of an age, even as that Ephesian church was living at the end of an age. We are living at the end of another age and it is the age that precedes the return of Jesus Christ.

In the other places where this verse in Hebrews was quoted, in Romans 1 and Galatians 3, Habakkuk 2:3 was not quoted because waiting patiently is not the subject, but in Hebrews 10, it clearly is. For you have need of endurance. You have need of patience. The major counsel of Hebrews 11 is the patience of those who endured by faith.

Faith is often defined by the word "belief". That is a true aspect of faith, but in the context of Hebrews 10 and 11, faith is more synonymous with the word "trust." "Believe" simply means to hold an opinion. Sometimes it is stronger in meaning as in holding on to a conviction, whereas

"trust" indicates dependence or reliance upon the faithfulness or credibility of another over a period of time. Trust indicates dependence and reliance upon the faithfulness or credibility of another over a period of time.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith is defined as the "substance." Let us inject some other words that are synonyms. Faith is defined as the "foundation." Faith is defined as the "ground." Faith is defined as the "confidence." Faith is defined as the "assurance." You will find all of these translations in one version of the Bible or another. This word that is translated substance, foundation, ground, confidence, or assurance, is "hypostasis." You are very familiar with the prefix of this word "hypo." It is the opposite of "hyper."

Everybody knows what hyper is. It is a prefix that came into the English right out of the Greek untranslated. And we know when a person is hyper, they are all excited, they are up, maybe even full of anxiety. Well "hypo" is its opposite. It means down. Hyper—up. Hypo—down. Hypoglycemia means low blood sugar. Hyperglycemia means high blood sugar—diabetes. Hypostasis means "setting under" or "placing under." This is the word that is translated "foundation." Hence, a foundation.

A foundation is under a building for a purpose, but what does it do? It stabilizes the building, keeps it firmly in place and it keeps it from getting in a bad attitude. A building have a bad attitude? I thought people had a bad attitude. A building can have a bad attitude too, because "attitude" simply means an "inclination" or a "leaning." And you do not want your building to lean like the Leaning Tower of Pisa. It leaned because it did not have an adequate foundation underneath it, so slowly but surely it is sinking on the one side faster than it is on the other. I think you have all (maybe) heard old broadcasts of the Space Center in Houston talking to the astronauts up in the module and every once in awhile they would say, "How is your attitude?" They did not mean are you angry, upset, displeased, happy? They meant, "Which way is the spacecraft leaning?"

Hypostasis gives a person firm footing. It gives a person a footing so that he does not lean—get into a bad attitude out of what is good in the eyes of God.

The word "substance," faith is the substance, came into the English language from the Latin language, not out of Greek this time, and it also came untranslated. It is actually two words "sub stans," which in Latin means "standing under," very close to hypostasis. This word "sub stans" is interesting because it was the word the Romans used for a title deed. If somebody had a title to a piece of property, he used the word "sub stans." There was something firm there that gave him possession of the property. It was proof, and so the "sub stans," or the title deed, showed legal proof of ownership. Faith is legal proof of ownership of something that is hoped for, something that is not yet seen. So property belongs to the one holding the title.

We need to carry this just a little bit further. What foundation do we have for our hopes? Do you want to be in the Kingdom of God? Do you want to have eternal life? Do you want to share life with God forever and ever and ever without end? Do you want to fellowship with God, with His Son Jesus Christ, and all of those others who are going to be part of His Kingdom? What is your

"sub stans" for that? What is your title deed? What kind of foundation do you have for that kind of hope—that you will be in a resurrection of the dead? It is faith.

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Therefore, we can reach a conclusion. The fulfillment of all of our hopes depends on how secure the authority of the title deed is. The security of the title deed is the Word of God. Everything, brethren, depends on His faithfulness. If there is no God, or His Word can not be trusted, we have no foundation whatever our hopes might be. If there is a hope that a person has, and it is not part of the Word of God, then it is entirely possible that that hope is entirely baseless. It has nothing under it. Nothing holding it together, nothing giving it substance. There is no title deed for what one might hope for.

If we have heard nothing of the Word of God, we have nothing to believe, I mean in terms of a resurrection of the dead. There is no room for real faith. We may think it. We may imagine it. We may hope for it, but we cannot possibly have faith for it because we have heard nothing from God's Word about it. Our hopes are vain without the true foundation, without the true substance, without the true title deed.

Remember what the Bible says about Abraham. Abraham is the father of the faithful. Abraham believed God, is what it says. What was the process? God spoke. Abraham heard. Abraham trusted God. Very simple in the saying. It was not so simple in the living, but it is very simple in the saying. And the same process is at work for you and me. God spoke. Do we believe? That is, do we trust after we have heard?

God's Word caused Abraham to have hope; hence, trusting God, his faith in God's Word was the foundation, the ground, it stood under; it gave substance to what he hoped for. As important as what we believe is, perhaps there is something even more important and that is who we believe. It is not the sincerity with which we believe that is important, but the truth of what we believe. If we hear something from men, we can never really be quite sure. But you see, God is faithful, He is always true to His Word. He is not a man that He should lie. When He sends forth His Word it always accomplishes what He sent it forth to do.

There is something else that we can learn from Hebrews 11:1. It is in the word "evidence." Faith is the "evidence" of things not seen. This is the word "elenchus" and it means a "proof." Faith is the "proof" of things not seen. But the usage of the word goes a little bit further than that. It means "that by which anything is tested or proved"; hence, "evidence."

Evidence is a correct usage of this word "elenchus." Imagine yourself in court and you and somebody else are giving testimony there. You were witness of an event. What you give is a word picture of what you saw. That is your "elenchus," your witness, your proof, your evidence that what you are saying is true. When the word "elenchus" is applied to a context like this is in Hebrews 11, it has to do with the state of one's mind regarding an attitude toward something; hence, the words "conviction" or "persuasion." So faith is the persuasion that we offer to the public in our witness that what we believe is true. It shows that we are convicted; that we have had it proved to ourselves that the Word of God is right and true.

This word is used in other contexts that you may be familiar with. For example, in John 8:46,

Jesus asked the Jews there as He was defending Himself:

John 8:46 Which of you convicts Me [elenchus] of sin? [Which one of you can prove me guilty? Which one of you can bring forth evidence that I have ever sinned in my life?]

Nobody could. It is used in John 16:8 where Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes it will convict the world of sin. It will present evidence to the world and bring it to a state of guilt where the person's mind is convicted, or the person's mind is persuaded that they have sinned, that they have broken the law of God. So "elenchus" in this case is a strong feeling or attitude in response to the knowledge of sin. Thus in Hebrews 11:1 it means a deep, in this case, satisfying attitude about the certainty of possessing what one hopes for.

There is a similarity between eyesight and faith. Eyesight gives substance, reality, and conviction. It persuades us about what it is that we witness. What we see with our own eyes has tremendously greater impact on the mind than what somebody merely reports of their experience. Seeing something with our own eyes causes the mind to commit to a much firmer conviction than what someone else reports of their experience. I will rephrase that in another way. We use the phrase "I know and I know that I know because I saw it. I saw it with my own eyes." You are convicted (elenchus). There is a strong feeling in your mind because you saw it with your own eyes.

Faith does the same thing in the invisible realm of God. When you see something with your eyes it commits you to something, does it not? Therefore, when we move to the area of the spiritual, faith does the same thing to us spiritually. Faith, therefore, is the act of commitment to the invisible things of God. Hang on to that thought. Faith is the act of commitment to the invisible things of God.

Let us go back to a scripture in II Corinthians 5 and I will seemingly contradict what I just told you.

II Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

I said that there were similarities between eyesight and faith. The similarity is simply in the area of the effect that they have—one on the physical, the other on the spiritual. But in terms of what we are talking about here in II Corinthians 5, faith and eyesight are also opposites. Remember the verse in Hebrews 11 which said that faith is the evidence of things *not* seen? Faith is the conviction of what we have heard but do not see. Faith comes by hearing. Faith is the conviction of what we have heard but do not see.

Man says seeing is believing. So when a man sees something he is convicted and his mind, then, is inclined to what he saw. In the life of the righteous, faith is the controlling factor that motivates his conduct. In terms of eyesight and what I said in regard to it is true in the physical realm, but eyesight means almost nothing in the spiritual realm.

Consider Israel after the flesh. They saw a multitude of miracles in Egypt and in the wilderness, but it seems to have profited them almost nothing. They saw the river turn to blood. They saw the frogs. They saw the lice. They saw the darkness. They saw the hail. They saw the fire on the ground. They saw the murrain kill the cattle. They saw the firstborn die. They saw the Red Sea part. They saw the pillar of fire and the cloud. They saw all those things.

They saw water coming out of the rock. They saw manna on the ground every day for forty years. It did not affect their minds spiritually at all! Because eyesight means almost nothing in terms of the spiritual. Faith is the foundation, the assurance, the substance, the confidence of things not seen—the invisible realm of God. And what a person can see with his eyes is more likely to frighten him in terms of faith and to create doubt than it is to build faith.

Faith according to Ephesians 2:8 is a gift of God. It is a gift because we did not have real spiritual faith until God began His calling of us. It is a gift because by a mighty miracle God has impacted our minds so as to enable us to understand His Word in such a way that we can process the evidence we hear from His Word and make right choices relevant to His Kingdom.

Remember that phrase "active commitment?" Hang on to it because Hebrews 11 is an entire chapter of illustrations from the lives of men and women committed to God's way. They were committed because they believed. They were committed because they trusted what they heard from God and so they acted. They acted because they were committed and it was their faith that committed them. They acted because of what they heard; not because of what they saw, but because they heard the Word of God.

I mentioned in the sermon on the Holy Day that these men and women in Hebrews 11 were a mixed bag of strength and weakness, but there was one area that they were of towering strength—I mean examples held up for all of us to see—and that is the area of spiritual faith.

Hebrews 11:2 For by it [that is by faith] the elders obtained a good testimony.

It was by faith that the elders, meaning those who lived in olden times, the ancients, received God's approval and made a good testimony. It means that because of faith they were enabled to become good witnesses. If you will think of this word "testimony" or "witness" and connect it with Hebrews 12:1 where this same apostle said that we are "surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses," meaning it is not that these people are watching us, but rather we are surrounded by people who witnessed in their lives that they had faith in God and we see them now in our mind's eye.

It is not that they are looking at us. They are dead. But we can look at their lives and it is as though they yet live. Like Paul said about the blood of Abel crying out from the ground that he yet speaks because it tells us multitudes about Cain and multitudes about Abel. So this great cloud of witnesses are there for us to observe so that we can see the testimony that they left. How that they used their faith. How that they, primarily in this chapter, endured. How they persevered. How they hung on. How they glorified God by the things that they said and by what they did.

It was faith that strengthened them and enabled them to overcome. It enabled them to suffer. It enabled them to endure the privations of their lives and it is this patient waiting under trial that is the primary object, or teaching, or subject of this wonderful chapter.

Do we not want to follow the same powerful examples and likewise be made as an effective witness for God as these people were? Much of their effectiveness was because they firmly believed what it says in verse 3.

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

I explained this, at least briefly in the sermon the other day, that "worlds" means "aions" or "ages." It is a woefully bad translation here in the King James and New King James. It means ages. We are living at the end of an age. There was an age that the Bible talks about that goes from the creation of Adam until the flood. There is this present evil world that is another age. And there is the world to come, that is another age. And there are other periods of time that can be divided up and made into and be seen as ages or periods of time in which something is working, in which God is doing things in a certain direction.

By faith we understand that the ages were framed, or prepared, by the Word of God. That God is guiding and directing. That there is an invisible hand manipulating events so that the person of faith can understand that history is not an endless cycle of repetition, even though much of that is evident in the history of men, but we can understand, and it better be a part of your operating faith, that history is not circular, but lineal. It is going somewhere. God is drawing things to a conclusion. His purpose is coming to a climax. Not the great climax yet. I am convinced that that great climax will not come until New Jerusalem is on earth and we are in that Last Great Day, because that is as far as the Bible really takes this age of mankind.

But we are coming to the end of an age and God is framing things. God is manipulating things. God is preparing this age and He is drawing us toward its conclusion. When that conclusion is reached I guarantee you that if by faith we are yielding to God we will be prepared in the way that He wants us to be when the time comes for Him to draw things to a close in this age. You will be that way because verse 3 of Hebrews 11 is part of your operating agenda. You see the hand of God working, not only in the big events of this world, but you also see Him working in your life. Time and history are moving linearly to the conclusion that God is framing.

Since we are so close to the Days of Unleavened Bread we are going to take a good look at the central human figure in the Exodus and the wandering—Moses by name. There is much to learn from this man's example of faith and the reason I say that is because I believe that most of us have gone through, in principle, much of what he did. There is much in this chapter that we do not experience in the way that we experience the things that Moses went through.

For example, none of us make a sacrifice in the way that Abel did because we do not sacrifice in that manner any longer. None of us walk with God the way that Enoch did because the implication is that he walked with God not merely, I should say, spiritually as we do but he walked with God literally and God loved him very much. None of us is building an ark like Noah did for 120 years. None of us have been asked to leave our own land and to dwell in tents and then be promised a son and then after that son is grown, probably to adulthood, be required to sacrifice him and give up his life. None of us go through anything like that. But many of us go through the kind of things, not to the same degree, but yes we go through the kind of things that Moses went through.

Hebrews 11:24-29 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater

riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.

There are also some things about him, especially in his early life, which we rarely touch on. It says "By faith Moses" or "he" three times in direct reference to him, and a fourth time [verse 29] it shows us in Exodus 14 that he was very deeply involved.

Let us look at this a little bit closer. By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. I think it is difficult for us to rightly appreciate what Moses gave up. We have never been on the threshold of power like he was. It is entirely conceivable that he gave up more in the material realm than any other human being in history and that nobody will ever be called on to give up as much as Moses did.

The daughter of Pharaoh had preserved his life as an infant, but even more than just preserving his life she adopted him, saw to his education as her own son until, it says in Acts 7: 22, that he was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt and mighty in word and deed.

When did Moses refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter? It is generally assumed it was done when he was forty years old and left Egypt. But there is no proof of that. It might have been a great deal earlier than that. Any of you who saw the movie, *The Ten Commandments*, will remember that they showed that Moses spent some time in the brick yards treading in the mud, putting straw in there, tramping it up and down, forming its shape. Maybe. We do not know. Maybe he was in there for years.

But let us not concentrate on that so much. Let us concentrate on the decision that he made because rank, power, honor, place, titles, dignities, all of these were before him and well within his grasp because he must have had quite an education. He must have been prepared to be something awfully great to receive the kind of education that he did. He was somebody. He was looked up to. People were at his beck and call waiting on his every need. These are the kinds of things that men struggle for. Moses, by faith, would have them as a gift simply because he was part of that family.

He walked away from it. He turned his back on it and not only did he do that but it says that he turned away from pleasure: the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes; the pride of life; whatever sensual pleasure; whatever artistic pleasure; whatever intellectual pleasure; whatever social pleasure; whatever struck his fancy if it was in reach. He had the power, he had the means, and he had the resources to be able to do it.

This is the kind of thing that most people live for. People differ in what seems to give them pleasure. Some people's pleasure might be in entertainments. Some people's pleasure might be in retiring from business early with a fortune. Some people love, they receive pleasure from, traveling. Others from hunting. Others from partying. Others from sporting events. Others from clothing. Others from having a fabulous home. Others, all of them together. They were at Moses' fingertips. He could have had anything that he wanted. All of those riches. Everything: wine, women, song, dance, beautiful fabrics. He could have had orchestras to play for him and

artists to entertain him. Anything. Anything.

"*Moses*," the movie said, and rightly so. He was a man of great stature and he turned his back on it by faith. He refused riches too. There are enough of the monuments of ancient Egypt still standing at sites like Karnak and Luxor to let us have a pretty good idea that Egypt was tremendously wealthy and artistic. They had all kinds of power. I do not mean just wealthy power. They had all of the trappings that go with wealth as well, and Moses deliberately chose to walk away from them and he did it, not in a youthful fit, not because he was old and his body was worn out and he no longer could enjoy those things. He did it when he was in the bloom, in the very strength of his life, and he did it with all the wisdom of Egypt. He turned his back on all that by faith.

Now what did he deliberately choose? He chose suffering and affliction. It was not like on the surface, not like he could see with his eyes that going with the Israelites was going to be better for him. Because turning to them and making himself a part of what they were was stepping into bondage, was stepping into pain, was stepping into agony, was stepping in to feel the lash. He left ease and the comfort of Pharaoh's court and he openly took part with an enslaved and persecuted people and he became an object of distrust, of suspicion, of ridicule, and hatred. He took part in the bitter cup of an enslaved people. And he did this when his eyes could tell him that there was absolutely no hope of deliverance. Outnumbered. No money. No army. The Israelites were weak and downtrodden and seemed to have no organization at all. If ever a man chose pain, trials, poverty, lack, distress, anxiety and perhaps even death, with his eyes wide open, Moses was the man.

I want you to think for a moment about what you would like to have in your life. Would you not like to have a settled home? Would you not like to have, at least seem to have, some control of your circumstances? Would you not like to have at least the nice trappings of a middle-class American or Canadian life? Sure you would. Your mind might reach out for even more, but most of us would be satisfied to have that, and we would feel a measure of comfort. We all naturally shrink from pain, but Moses by faith perceived that the suffering that lay before him was there, it was real and he deliberately chose that path by faith even though it did not look possible that there would ever be any kind of freedom again.

He deliberately chose the company of a despised people. Do we not naturally choose to associate with people of accomplishment if we can? People of respectability? People who make us feel good? People who bring us pleasure? Do you know why we do this? We do it because we feel it is enough for us to bear our own troubles and worries, let alone have brought upon us the pains and anxieties and hang ups and problems of other people. We do not want to be burdened with somebody else's too. But I know when I am accosted on the street by someone begging, I do not always have the best of feelings for that person and I start looking for a way around the situation. Moses deliberately chose to confront, not one beggar on the street, but two million of them and to take on the burden of two million or more murmuring, griping, complaining, bitter slaves.

But even above all of that he chose something that is maybe even harder to bear. He chose, it says here, reproach, scorn. Men would tell him that he was mad, foolish, weak, silly, loony, out of his mind, mentally ill, weird, freakish, odd, crazy! And those people who formerly said

"Moses" would now laugh and kick his name around like it was a soccer ball and say "Did you hear what that crazy Moses did?"

He would lose his influence and forfeit the favor and the good opinion of all with whom he had lived into manhood. With people that maybe he had fought wars beside. With people that he had sat in court with. With people that he had judged the land of Egypt with. There are few things that are more powerful and deflating than ridicule—to be made a joke of, jested, sneered at, thought to be a silly fool. And this was coming on a man who was no weak, ignorant, illiterate person who did not know what it was all about. He could feel every barb because he was a man of sensitivity and intelligence. He voluntarily, deliberately chose by faith.

The Scripture makes that very clear. And we are told that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, and in order for Moses to make these choices that he did he must have had somehow or another communicated to him what was God's will for him. That is in some ways an assumption, but it is a very safe assumption because otherwise there would be no alternative for him than to go with the flow in Egypt and to take advantage of all his worldly privileges. He did what he did not because of what he saw with his eyes, but because he believed what he was told by God. *Did you get that?* He believed what he was told by God. God somehow must have communicated with him before he made that decision to give up the throne.

Hebrews 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

You know what the command was. That every male child born was to be put to death. Moses' parents were not afraid though. Moses' parents had faith. I think that we would have to say that Moses' spiritual roots were strong, to say the least. Now again the scripture does not directly say, but there must have been some sort of communication to his parents so that they could act in faith, because faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Something was communicated to them. If one is in ignorance regarding God's will then one cannot have faith because one has not heard God's Word and there is no substance then to what they believe. There is no foundation. There can be no real conviction that comes from the Word of God.

Now I do not mean that God gave them every detail. I think that we know that better from the way that he deals with us. He has not given us every detail. We have an overview of what is going on in the world. But where each one of us fits within that overview we only vaguely know; that we are part of a body, a body being prepared for His Kingdom. But whatever they knew, it was enough to motivate them, even as what we know is enough to motivate us, and so they trusted God. They trusted that God would oversee the results of what they did by casting him on the water. Is it not interesting that he floated right to Pharaoh's daughter?

Let us look at his ancestry just a little bit further.

Exodus 2:1-2 And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months.

Now we know that this was Amram, the father who was of the house of Levi, and the one that

he took for a wife was named Jochebed. Now Jochebed and Amram were both Levites. But there is a difference between the two and God makes that clear. Amram was of the "house" of Levi. That merely means that he was of the "family" of Levi, or he was descended from Levi. It says about Jochebed that she was a "daughter" of Levi.

I Chronicles 6:1-2 The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. The sons of Kohath were Amram . . .

It is interesting that Amram who was a grandson of Levi married his aunt, Jochebed, who was a daughter of Levi. She is not named here but we know that she is and I am not going to spend time here chasing her out. Amram married his aunt. It is an assumption but I feel that even though he married his aunt, they were probably pretty much the same age. We will not go through all of the details, but Moses' ancestry is even more interesting than that when we begin to compare the chronology of those who preceded him. The generations of these people that I am going to name overlapped in such a way that the family history would have been easily passed from one generation to the other.

Now consider this. Adam's life overlapped Methuselah's by 243 years. They were contemporaries of one another, so we have from the beginning of the creation up to Methuselah who died in the flood. Methuselah's life overlapped Shem by 100 years, so we can have a history that went from Adam to Methuselah to Shem who went through the flood and Shem lived a long time after the flood. I believe the length of his life was about 600 years. Shem's life went all the way up to Jacob! Would you believe that? Right through Abraham, Isaac, and up to Jacob. There are some chronologists who have his life overlapping Jacob by 50 years. I do not believe it is that long, but at least his life went up to Jacob. You see that? Adam to Methuselah to Shem to Jacob to his son Levi to Jochebed. It is very possible that Jochebed heard the story directly from Jacob himself. Now undoubtedly part of what she heard was this that was prophesied of by God in Genesis 15.

Genesis 15:13-16 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

Moses learned all the wisdom of Egypt, but he also knew a very great deal about the history of his people. He knew that the 400 years were almost up. He knew that the fourth generation was then living in Egypt. He could add. He could subtract. He could look around. He could understand. He knew that he was an Israelite. He knew who his ancestry was. He knew that he was directly descended from Jacob who was descended from Abraham. He knew what his lineage was. And it must have been communicated to him in some way that he was going to be the one through whom God was going to deliver His people because the time had come. The question was: would he believe it? Would he trust it? What would he do about it? Would he have enough faith to turn his back on those things that could have been such a powerful pull—all of those things that he could see with his eyes?

Acts 7:24-25 And seeing one of them [meaning an Israelite] suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.

The word "supposed" means "reckon," "add it up," "put the pieces together." He reasoned from the evidence he heard from God and he thought that they would reason too. It must have been general knowledge that Moses was the man. Moses was the deliverer. But they did not have faith in it. Moses knew that God had a people. He knew Israel, though in bondage, was that people. He had heard of the things to come—that Israel was to be delivered. He heard the things of Christ, according to Hebrews 11. I do not know all that God communicated to Moses, but I do know that God set before the eyes of his mind what His will and purpose was for him.

Moses, like Abraham, put credit in what God said and trusted Him. He believed God would keep His promises even when reason and senses that were fueled by the things that he could see, said it was an impossible condition. Faith told Moses that all the dignity and greatness of rank was sheer vanity. Faith told Moses that the pleasures of sin were ruinous and displeasing to God and short-lived. Faith told Moses that the rewards for obeying God were more durable and greater than that of Egypt. Faith told Moses that it was honorable to be mocked and despised for Christ and that suffering the afflictions in this regard were not evils but the schools for helping produce the character and the mind of God.

Luke 14:25-30 And great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"

Moses did that. If there is anything that Moses teaches us it was that he counted the cost and his faith in God's Word moved him to see that no sacrifice that he would make was so great that he could fail to break trust with what he heard of God. And we can be assured because of what Moses went through that no sacrifice that we are required to make will be greater than anybody else, because Moses has already done it. That there is nothing in this world that we have to give up that can even begin to compare with what God has required of others who have gone before and are now witnesses against us.

Moses teaches us that though the trail to God's Kingdom is long and difficult, but that God will always supply the need. That God will give the strength to perform our function and in the end He will give us many times more in abundance, in honor, in pleasure, than we would otherwise have had had we not followed faith.

Moses teaches us that the reason so many are worldly is because they have little or no faith. Otherwise they would follow John's advice and not love the world. The world is a snare. You can see it so clearly with Moses. Moses' choice has been followed by the witness of what Moses did

now for thousands of years. If Moses had chosen to stay with Egypt nobody would know him except maybe some archeologists who dig around in the garbage piles of civilization. But now there is hardly a person in the Christian world who does not relate to Moses and imagine what is yet in store, what is yet coming for him in terms of honor and abundance and greatness as part of his reward. The world is a snare and it eats up our time and our energy and it fills our minds with excitements that are only a passing value. That is its danger.

Living by faith is a choice. God has given all of us some of His Word. We do not have it all and we do not all have the same amount. But what we do have we are responsible for and it is up to us to process the education in His Word that He has provided, study how it applies to us, trust in what He said, and do it. Paul said, quoting Habakkuk, that the just shall live by faith.