

**LIVES THAT REMIND US ABOUT GOD - Meeting Yourself In The Sacred Text - Part five - Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**  
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**MOSES - The Cultivation and Power of Faith in the Ordinary Individual (various texts)**

- 1) **FAITH AND OBEDIENCE BEHIND THE SCENES - Hebrews 11:23**  
 - **“By 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.”**

The writer obviously describes not the faith of Moses, but his parents. A little known woman named Jochebed was indirectly responsible for the deliverance of the entire nation of Israel. Except for her unapplauded faithfulness against tremendous odds Moses would have been a brutally murdered, unremembered baby. He lived because she dared and prayed. One simple slave woman, amidst a sea of numberless captive humanity changed world history because she remembered and trusted God the Creator.

Jesus Himself talked about the incredible power of even small faith expressed at the right moment **Matthew 21:21-22** - **“And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen. [22] And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”**

I know these verses raise questions in our minds, but apparently we underestimate God's power to deal with obstacles which seem insurmountable at the time. The idea isn't that prayer is a magic lamp to always get us what we want. Rather, prayer isn't to be discounted just because the situation seems totally impossible. Faith never rules God out.

Do you think Jochebed fully understood the vastness of what she was doing when she put Moses in the reed basket? She probably thought this was the last desperate act of a person at the end of her rope.

- 2) **THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH AND ZEAL - Exodus 2:11-15** - “One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. [12] He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. [13] When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?” [14] He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” [Notice that the hatred these Hebrews had for correction was even grater than their hatred for their Egyptian oppressors]. Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” [15] When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.”

Moses retained a love for his people even though he was raised in the luxuries of Egypt. He never lost sight of who he was. He refused to have his convictions compromised by surrounding customs and circumstances. This much was very good.

But there's another lesson for Moses to learn. It's not enough to do what God wants him to do. He must do it the way God wants it done. We see again that ***self-reliance*** is a deadly enemy of the work of God. Does Moses seriously think that he can knock off ***all*** of the Egyptians with his own two hands? ***How foolish our own zealous efforts can be in doing what God calls us to do.***

- 3) **MOSES' TIME ALONE WITH GOD AND THE BURNING BUSH - Exodus 3:1-5 - "Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. [2] And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. [3] And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." [4] When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." [5] Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."**

This is a real learning time for Moses. As he learned the hard way, misdirected zeal is like a bull in a china shop when it comes to pleasing God. The burning bush shows Moses that the important part of doing anything for God is not the human instrument but the presence of God in that instrument. It's not the **bush** but the **flame** that counts.

There is so much for us to remember here. All of us wrestle with feelings of inferiority when called upon to serve the Lord in some situation. And it is easy to try to compensate for what we know we lack with an equally empty, pumped up zeal we often equate with genuine faith in God. We need to remember this simple picture of an ordinary bush alive with the flame of God himself. If an ordinary bush can burn for God then your life and mine can be set ablaze as well.

This lesson is driven home again in **Exodus 4:1-5** - "Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.' " [2] The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." [3] And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. [4] But the Lord said to Moses, "Put out your hand and catch it by the tail"—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— [5] "that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

Moses certainly would not have guessed that the stick in his hand had any potential for service to God. And that's the whole point. It is not **greatness**, nor even **abilities** as we measure them, that makes us candidates for God's call and purpose. The whole issue seems to be selfless **availability** - a willingness to simply be placed in God's hand.

Perhaps it is this lesson that Moses most needs to learn. Unlike Joseph, who comes **into** his place of leadership after long times of solitude in prison and servanthood, Moses is led **away** from his position of leadership in Egypt. Moses goes through this period of **emptying**. God does not use him in his natural position of leadership in Egypt. Joseph was led **into** a position of leadership to serve his people. Moses was led **out of** his position of leadership to learn fresh dependency on God alone.

- 4) **WHAT MOSES LEARNED ABOUT FAITH - Hebrews 11:24-27 -**  
 “By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, [25] choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. [26] He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. [27] By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.”

These are the lessons all persons must grasp if they are to make their lives count for God:

- a) ***The priorities of faith*** - Moses knew he couldn't pursue everything with his life. He knew how to zero in on what was most important. The real issue is ***how does one establish values?*** Which are the impulses that can be trusted? Our desires pull us in many conflicting directions. What are the best targets for a life?

The passage yields a couple of clues. Notice how the writer says Moses “***....refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter***”(25). This is powerful. It describes how Moses displayed his ***public image***. It paints a powerful picture of how Moses saw ***himself*** and how he ***portrayed*** and ***defined*** himself before the eyes of others. Moses gave himself something to live up to.

Another clue is given in **verse 25** - “....**choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.**” He knew that the pleasures of sin were ***“passing”***. Moses knew better than to live for fleeting satisfaction. In choosing the call and will of God He chose to live for things that would outlast his own natural appetites.

This is much to ponder here. We all know **Matthew 6:33** - “**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**” Now the question. How do you ***measure*** whether you seek God’s kingdom first or not? And this text says there is a tell-tale sign. Look for the immediate available pleasures - pleasures pursued by everyone else you know - that you ***refuse*** to devote more of your energy and time to the things of God’s kingdom.

- b) ***The vision of faith*** - Moses knew how to keep his eyes on ***“Him who is invisible”*** (27). There is everything in this world to discourage and tear down, or seduce your faith. That is why Paul tells us not to set our heart here - **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** - “**So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. [17] For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [18] as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.**”

Like a runner who keeps going when others quit because he knows the value of the reward and they don't, Paul urges us on by calling us to **see** what others miss. Faith dies where there is no **vision** of eternity kept before the soul. Faith gives the **taste** of the eternal finish line to those still straining as they run with aching sides and burning lungs.

- c) ***The endurance of faith*** - This is underscored in **Hebrews 11:27** - **“By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.”** - Endurance doesn't just come from ***will-power***. It comes first from ***understanding***. Because Moses didn't have his heart set on the visible, passing things of this earth he was able to outlast all the storms of life.

***You can tell what is propping a life up when those things are slowly knocked away.*** Only the life built around the things of God will have true staying power - **Romans 8:35-39**- **“ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." [37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**