

## Heb. 11:23 The Faith of Moses' Parents

In our text today we have a beautiful story about the faith of Moses' parents. It was written to those first-generation Christians who were being persecuted. They had come out of Judaism and the old Mosaic system, and by faith, received the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. And they were being encouraged with the example of Moses' parents to endure, not to go back, but to press on by faith in the promises of God. In the same way, these words are also for us as we live in this world. Therefore, we need these words today. And they will be helpful to us as we also live by faith in the promises of God. With this in mind, I want to revisit this story from Gen. 1 & 2 and try to apply some 3 truths for us today.

1. Faith knows that the counsel of the Lord stands forever. What God says, what God promises, **WILL COME TO PASS.** When we come to book of Exodus, considerable time had passed since the death of Joseph. Exod. 1:8 says, **“now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.”** And there was great turmoil among the Hebrews. As they were becoming numerous and powerful, the King of Egypt was fearful that if there were war, they would join their enemies. So, he gives orders that all male children be killed, hoping that in a generation, they would cease to be a people. However, what happens? The midwives do not follow the law. And in the midst of persecution the Hebrews multiply. Should we expect anything else?

If we go back to God's covenant with Abraham, we see the promise of land, and the promise to multiply his children (Gen. 13:15-16). And in Gen. 15:13-14 God tells of a time to come saying, **“Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.”** And following with Isaac and Jacob, we see the family grow, and even prosper. And if you remember the story, when Jacob was fearful to take his family to Egypt, God says, **“fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation”** (Gen. 46:3). Now, we aren't sure exactly how God spoke to Moses' parents in regard to their son. There is a lot of speculation here. But we know, that by faith, Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses, believed God's promises. And they knew God's plan would stand.

The same is true for us. No matter what change of government, change of authorities in this world, the gospel will still go forth. People's hearts will be changed. Churches will be planted. It may seem that things are going badly for the gospel as Christians are often displaced and scattered. But, God is still working his plan.

Listen to some verses: Prov. 19:21: **“Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.”** Prov. 16:9: **“The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.”** Job 23:13: **“But he is unchangeable, and who can turn him back? What he desires, that he does.”** Is. 14:24: **“The LORD of hosts has sworn: “As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand . . .”** Is. 46:9-10: **“ . . . I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose . . .”**

App. God's timing is often surprising to us. Moses' birth came at the height of a crisis with the Hebrews in Egypt. Exod. 1:12-14 says: **"But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field . . ."** Moses was born AT THIS TIME. It was God's plan to show his strength in weakness at that time. I think of Abraham and the offering of Isaac. Elisha and the chariots of fire around the city, etc. Often, help doesn't come until we are at the "end of the rope." Yet, God's timing is always right. And when He works in such ways, it always shows his power in weakness. This doesn't mean he will always act like these examples. But often he brings us to hard places before we see his special grace.

Application: Be content in both times of peace and times of turmoil. Eccl. 7:14 says: **"In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him."**

2. Faith trusts in God's promises. This is the obvious point of the passage and the entire chapter. Here we see a great act of faith with Moses' parents to hide Moses. In v. 23 we read that Moses was **"hidden for three months by his parents . . ."** Why? Because **"they saw that the child was beautiful."** Now, this word "beautiful" is also translated as "proper" in many versions. The immediate reaction is to think that the parents saw a physically beautiful child and then thought, *"we must hide him because of his beauty."* Now, Moses may have been a very beautiful child. But, I think the use of this word: *"beautiful"* goes beyond physical appearance. I do not believe it was the beauty of the child that caused them to hide him. The motive of hiding Moses was FAITH . . . in the promises of God. And *"faith comes by hearing, and hearing the word of God"* (Rom. 10:17). Amram and Jochebed had heard God's word of promise. And, there may have been further revelation that we do not know about. But, they knew, somehow, that the time of their deliverance was coming. And they believed Moses had something to do with God's promise.

And if we move forward to the NT, Setphen, during his speech to the Jews, says about Moses, **"he was beautiful in God's sight"** (Acts 7:20). And it can be argued that God sometimes uses physical appearance such as with King Saul, who was very tall and good looking, or with King David, who was also attractive. But, physical appearance does not equal faith. So, I believe the parents knew something about this child . . . at that time . . . that he was **"beautiful in God's eyes"** and that he would be used to bring about something great. The emphasis is FAITH . . . FAITH in the promises of God. They trusted God's promise to deliver Israel from Egypt. Look over again at 11:1: **"faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."**

Application: No matter what is going on in life, there is always a simple trust in the promises of God. And when I look at my life and I see my own deficiencies, my own sin, my struggles, my own doubts and fears, my sins before a holy God, the most pressing promise is that God will deliver me, not from Egypt, but from my sins. This is why we remember the cross of Christ today as we take the Lord's Supper. And it is not ONLY that God will save us from our sins; He will also carry us through this life. He will lead us to heaven. He will resurrect our bodies. He

will recreate a new heaven and a new earth. And by faith, NOW, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we cling to Christ. And we observe the Lord's Supper UNTIL HE COMES.

The patriarchs and Moses looked forward. We look back! We look back upon the person and work of Jesus. And for now, we live by faith God's promise to save. And, there are many more promises that flow down to us from Christ. For example: In the Great Commission from Matt. 28:18-20, Jesus says, "**ALL authority has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples to the ends of the earth . . . And I will be with you until the end of the age.**" This means "***He will not leave us or forsake us***" (Heb. 13:5). In Christ, God promises to hear your prayers. In John 14:13 Jesus says: "**Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**" He promises to take our burdens. 1 Pet. 5:7: "**Cast your anxieties upon Him; for He cares for you.**" (so many more)

3. Faith causes us to live differently than the world. We see this in Moses' parents' disobedience against the governing authorities. To hide Moses went against the law of Pharaoh. I can't imagine obeying such an order myself. But, I am sure there were those who obeyed out of fear, fear for their own lives, fear they may be thrown into prison, etc. But, there is something about faith in God and his promises that causes us to live differently, to make decisions the world doesn't make. What causes Moses' parents to hide the baby for three months from the authorities, knowing if they were caught, they would suffer consequences? What causes Moses' parents to make a floating basket and send him down the river? It was faith in the promises of God. And in hiding Moses, they were being obedient to God and not to man.

Now, the Bible tells us to obey the authorities God has placed over us. The general rule here is that as long as the governing authorities do not tell us to go against his commands, we are to obey. Now I know there are many gray areas, especially when we consider each individual conscience with each circumstance. Everything is not always black and white.

At the end of the day, as people of faith, we make different decisions than the worldly culture around us, even if we must disobey the authorities. I think of our time in Russia. After about 6 years of living there, a friend of ours was sending gospel tracts all over the neighboring region. And in the next state over a young, educated, Muslim preacher, read the tract and sent in for my friend to send him the NT Scriptures. He began to read and over time became a Christian. He was baptized in a river that froze the next day. He started to teach what he was learning in his mosque. And finally, there came great conflict. He lost his job. He had to leave his village and his family (all persecuted him) and move to a larger city. He lived as a poor man for the foreseeable future. Nobody would hire him because of his faith in Christ.

So, why would this man live like this? Because of his faith in Christ! He realized his hopeless position as a sinner. He learned of God's great love for him in sending his Son. He read of the cross of Christ as there Jesus bled and died for him . . . taking the wrath of God and throwing his sins as far as the east is from the west. He read that Jesus rose from the dead. And by faith, he made the decisions of his life . . . and I have heard he is still doing today. Why do we do the things we do? Kids, why do your parents raise you differently than other families in your school? Husbands and wives, why do we take a different view of marriage than the world? Employers,

why do you treat your employees differently than other employers. Why do we not cheat on our tax returns? Young men, why do you not join in when your friends watch something on their phones? Church, why do we send our own to the ends of the earth? On and on we can go! It is because we live by faith. We believe that all God's promises are "yes" in Christ. And we live accordingly.

Application: Know that the world will stand against you live differently than they do. And, they will not understand. And, they will think (though not tell you) you are crazy. And they may even listen to a sermon such as this and think the preacher and the Word he reads is crazy. I don't know how many times I've heard that religion, specifically Christianity, is the cause of wars and strife in this world. And, if you don't know already, following Jesus and living as He lived will be the cause of strife, even in your own family. The gospel often divides!

Turn with me to Matt. 10:34-39: **"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."**

Brothers and sisters, our lives are different. And if they persecuted our Lord, they will persecute us. We may live through times of peace or through great times of persecution, but through it all those who follow Jesus and live in godliness will not find peace in this way. But, we will find peace unlike the world as we no longer bear our sins. In summary, we know that God's counsel stands forever. We live by faith in God's promises. And our lives are very different than the world!