

FAR-SIGHTED FAITH

"For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Hebrews 11:26.

Faith is fundamental in religion. It is the very essence of Christianity. It distinguishes men as being of this world only or as being of the unseen world also.

The great chapter from which the text comes tells what faith is and what it does. It tells that faith makes real the things that are hoped for and makes visible the things which are not seen. It pulls into the present the things that are future, and it makes visible in the present the things that are invisible. It makes men realize their hopes and see that which cannot be seen, makes men see with spiritual sense what cannot be seen with natural sense.

Paul put it well when he said that "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:18).

Faith deals with the eternal. Its sight is spiritual and sees the things which are unseen.

Among the illustrious examples of the feats of faith is Moses, who was a man of far-sighted faith. "He had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

I. A Life's Story.

After the death of Joseph the people of Israel continued in Egypt and multiplied. Another king arose over Egypt who knew not Joseph. This king mistreated the Israelites. Their manner of life became hard under cruel taskmasters. But God did not forget His chosen people. In due time Moses was born and protected and prepared to lead them forth from their captivity.

In original endowments, in the grandeur of his mission, and in the permanence of his influence, no other man has been more highly honored of God. Moses is one of the towering figures of history who stand out like mountain peaks against the prairie level of ordinary life.

Moses' biography begins with the family background on a note of parental courage: "By faith, Moses when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Their not fearing the king's commandment paid off for we read in verse twenty-seven that when Moses grew up he did not fear the wrath of the king. Like parents, like child!

Moses was highly favored in being born into a home in which God was known, honored, loved and obeyed. Because of Pharaoh's decree that all the male children should be put to death, his parents sought to conceal Moses. Due to divine providence, the faith of his parents, and through the love and shrewdness of his mother, Moses was consigned to an ark, which was placed among the bulrushes on the Nile River, and committed into the keeping of the eternal God. Even though his parents were poor, they were rich in faith.

Moses' sister, Miriam, watched to see the outcome of this remarkable venture of faith. God opened the way whereby the boy of destiny

might have the supreme advantage of a mother's loving care and discipline. Presently Moses was discovered by the daughter of Pharaoh, whose pagan heart was drawn to the babe to such an extent that he was adopted into the family of the royal house. Miriam arranged for their mother to become the nurse, and it seems that Moses remained in her care long enough to be led to put his trust in God. The real explanation of the wonderful career of Moses, of his place in history, and of his unending influence upon the world is that he believed God. It was in his early life that his noble manhood and heroic living began.

There are three things about the life of Moses that are noteworthy:

1. It was a life of refusal.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Hebrews 11:24). Moses had developed a keen eye for distinguishing between right and wrong. He did not permit his personal inclinations and interests to blind him. He knew that it would be sinful to choose the second best.

(1) Moses refused position.

He "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." From his earliest days Moses was clearly destined for fame and fortune; for eminence and authority. As "the son of Pharaoh's daughter," and from the worldly point of view, his prospects were very bright. It was his faith in God that caused Moses to refuse to be called something he was not. It led him to reject the unreal. He wanted to be called what he was, and to be what he was called.

(2) Moses refused pleasures.

Moses had ample opportunity to indulge in every type of sinful pleasure known to man -- sensual, social and intellectual. But, it can be said to his credit that he refused to contaminate himself with the then existing debaucheries.

(3) Moses refused possessions.

Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." It took a man deeply schooled in permanent values to make the refusal which Moses made. He considered the eternal of more importance and greater value than the temporal. For which world are you living? Are you living for the things that are passing and perishing, or the things that are permanent and eternal?

2. It was a life of reason.

To Moses faith was real and reasonable. Moses demonstrated wisdom in "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." His faith brought a choice of hardship rather than pleasure for a season. We need to learn what Moses knew so well, that the pleasures of sin are for a season only, and a very short one

at that. A reasonable person will not give himself to the pleasure of sin if he sees sin in the light of eternity.

Moses chose to live a life of obedience, even though it was costly. His choice indicated that he considered life as an investment, and not an evasion. He did not whine and complain that his lot in life was hard.

3. It was a life of reproach.

Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Moses weighed in the balances the results, the treasures, and the rewards of giving himself to the claims of Egypt over against the results and rewards of acceding to the claims of the Lord upon his life. Moses did not guess, or take the thinking of another. He was convinced that reproach of and for Christ was better than riches in Egypt.

II. A Life's Secret.

Our text reveals the secret of Moses' life: "For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." The revelation of this secret is simple and significant.

The first word of the text, which is "for," explains the unnatural choice and conduct of Moses. What is this explanation? This verse says that "he had respect." The word literally means that "he looked away" from the treasures in Egypt.

Moses' faith gave him eyes to see afar off. He saw wealth in the light of eternity. He looked to this eternal wealth rather than to Egypt's temporal treasures. The text says that Moses looked away from the treasures in Egypt unto "the recompence of the reward."

The word here translated "the recompence of the reward" literally means "the pay-off wages." Moses' faith saw pay-day ahead -- the eternal pay-day. This word is used in the New Testament in Hebrews only and its three occurrences are interesting. It is used in Hebrews 2:2 of the pay-day of transgression and disobedience. It is used in Hebrews 10:35 of the pay-off of Christian confidence. It is used in Hebrews 11:26 of the pay-day of faith.

There is a pay-day of transgression for the sinner and there is a pay-day of reward for the faithful Christian. Moses saw faith's pay-day and built his life on its promise.

By faith Moses looked away to the eternal reward. He did not choose present pleasure, but future reward. And what a glorious reward it was! He chose the reproach of Christ and he is seen in consultation with Christ upon the Mount of Transfiguration.

III. A Life's Sequel.

The sequel of Moses' experience is striking. By faith Moses led a nation for God. What a history it was! Midst murmurings and miracles, by cloud and by fire, through wilderness and wandering Moses led the nation to the sight of the promised land. By faith Moses gave laws from God. What laws they were! Upon them have been based the legal codes of the highest civilizations.

After the lapse of thousands of years, we may pause to inquire if the results justify the wisdom of the choice of Moses. Where now are the pleasures, and treasures, and glory, and learning of ancient Egypt? All forever gone. But look at the monuments of Moses. His Pentateuch speaks in all languages. His ninetieth Psalm echoes at numerous funerals, and his song of deliverance at the Red Sea is one of the hymns of heaven, according to Revelation 15:3.

In word and witness Moses, though dead, yet speaketh. Material monuments perish, but faith's witness abides. It is wordless and lasts beyond the world and worldly things.

Think too of the pay-off in eternity for Moses. Think you that the vision of faith which Moses had was not far superior to what the natural eye sees of present pleasures and temporal treasures?

Moses has forever set a standard of life for Christians in his far-sighted faith: "For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." "For he had an eye to the pay-off day."

There are three classes of people in this world: those who consume with the day all that the day provides, those who lay up something for the future here, and those who lay up something for the eternal future. Moses belonged to the last of these classes, and labored not for the meat that perisheth, but saw better the recompence of the reward.

Here is far-sighted faith that brought far things near to be seen. What are pleasures and treasures of time compared to what is ahead for men of far-sighted faith?

Our text is a call to every real believer to so trust as to put the emphasis not on the present good, but on that which awaits in God's pay-off. This verse is a comfort in days of trial for Christ's sake and a promise of the reward of faith that endures.

What a call to Christians who are tempted by present pleasures and temporal treasures! Be not deceived by the sight that makes small things look big now, but trust to the sight that brings far things near with their future promise.

What a call to preachers and church leaders and church members to tie on through faith to invisible sources of power and to eternal promises of reward!

We miss the full meaning of Moses' far-sighted faith if we think of it as passive faith only. He looked to pay-day, but he worked while he looked. With his eyes of faith on heaven Moses worked in and by faith on earth. His faith was not an empty creed but an active exercise.

Salvation is no selfish looking for the peace and happiness of heaven, but a thrilling consciousness of every day doing in the faith that looks away and afar to the recompence of the reward.

Faith shows in experience and is seen in works. Moses found his eyes and looked upon God's promise of reward and went fearlessly to the work of doing a task for God and of blessing a world for God.

Moses' feat of faith brings a needed message to this faithless world. It tells where faith functions and what it does. True faith makes wide choice--- eternal choice. True faith blesses an individual, a nation and a world. True faith does not stop short of God's Word, fully realized in Christ and Christian promise and Christian hope.

Moses looked away to the eternal pay-off, and what a glorious pay-day it is! So may we pray for a faith that trusts and works to God's eternal glory and our eternal good. God give us the faith that functions as Moses far-sighted faith did -- the faith that is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen --- the faith that overcomes the world.