

THE EXPLOITS OF FAITH
Hebrews 11:24-26

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is God's hall of fame. In it we see a picture gallery of the heroes of faith. It is a muster roll of God's army. The history of the world is the history of faith. In this roll call of the worthies we see Abel, who represents faith, worshipping; Enoch, who represents faith, fellow-shiping; Noah, who represents faith, at work; Abraham, who represents faith, obeying; Issac, who represents faith, looking forward; Moses, who represents faith, refusing, choosing and being rewarded; Joshua, who represents faith, fighting; and Rahab, who represents faith, serving.

Moses' exploits of faith will encourage us in our own daily tasks. As a statesman, law-giver, poet, prophet, priest, and general, he has no superior and few equals. He possessed in a marked degree three absolutely essential qualities to success:

1. Talent
2. Energy
3. Ambition

From his Hebrew ancestors Moses inherited those qualities of character and religious principles which form the surest foundation for life's highest achievements. From the cultural influence of the palace and court of Pharaoh he learned the arts, sciences, and literature which enabled him to interpret the thoughts of God to man in a remarkable way. The New Testament interpretation of the character, life, and work of Moses ascribes all of his highest achievements. Faith was the force that kept him alive. Faith bore him onward; faith inspired him upward; and faith exalted him gloriously. These are some of the exploits of faith. Faith is not a passing experience; it is an active force. Faith is not something done to us, but something which is done in us. Faith is not a tacked on adornment of life; it is an ingrowing endowment of character. Faith is not a submissive servant; it is an aggressive master. Faith is not a destructive antagonist; it is a constructive cooperator. Faith plows its path across the trackless seas and discovers new worlds. Faith blazes the way through the forest, and builds new empires. Faith rises into the air and carries the commerce of nations. Faith builds railroads, constructs cities, organizes banks and big business, establishes colleges, builds orphanages, and erects hospitals. Faith glorifies God, crowns Christ, honors humanity, makes manhood, and secures success. Doubt is destructive, dangerous, and deadening. It depresses, discourages, and dooms. Faith works, builds, constructs, and progresses. Faith made Moses what he was and faith makes every man who is worthwhile in the world.

Our text introduces us to one of the grandest characters in history. The greatest event in his life is recorded in the text. In the text we have:

I. Faith's Choice

Moses was born of a despised race that was in captivity in Egypt. He was doomed to destruction. He was saved by the shrewdness and love of his mother, then adopted into the family of the Royal house. He was reared as a prince, and educated to the last degree of knowledge that then was attainable. With a mind peculiarly fitted to take on education, he stood apparently upon the threshold of all the things that men most desire in this world. There was nothing that wealth could give that he could not have. There was nothing in pleasure that was not accessible to him. There was nothing in position, honor, and government that was not open to him.

The momentous hour had come for him. His education was completed; his powers fully matured; his age was about forty; his hour of decision and destiny had come, and he was at the forks of the road. He had to decide whether he would identify himself with the suffering race who were his kindred, and whose cause was the cause of righteousness and mercy; or whether he would choose to rank on the side of their oppressors, with whom, in upbringing and position, he was already associated. Moses did not act rashly or unadvisably in his choice. He stood at the forks of the road looked at both roads, and to one of them he spoke a positive, vigorous, out-and-out "NO". He did something more than just refuse to take that one road. He chose to

travel the other road. "By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." He deliberately refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; to identify himself with the people of Egypt; to sanction their policy of oppressing the Hebrews; to continue in the service of the court. He chose to throw in his lot with his people, and surrender all this splendor of Egypt and the prospects that were offered him in order to do so. He refused a life of luxury and chose one of poverty. He refused a life of ease, and chose one of hardship. He refused a throne, and chose the life of a servant. This choice was a daring, adventurous, sublime, and self-sacrificing choice. There have been many choices inspired by the same heroic faith. A young millionaire accepted appointment as a foreign missionary to a far away field in preference to the bright lights and fast automobiles and faster society of his home land. A cultured young woman of Baltimore, born in the lap of luxury, reared with the best of cultural opportunities, turns her back upon the blandishments of worldly ways and goes to China as a missionary. There are those who say that she buried her life. There are others who say that if buried, there will one day be a glorious resurrection. Nothing but faith could inspire such heroic choices; faith in God, in His Word, in His work, in one's self, in the possibilities resident in the poorest people. Faith alone inspires such decisions and leads to such heroic self-sacrificing service. This faith overcomes all of obstacles, and mounts above all the forces massed against it. Look at what blocked the path of Moses: high social position, the pleasures of sin, the treasures of Egypt, the gratification of human ambition, a life of ease, and the dangers of death. But faith overcame them. This faith was implanted in domestic life by his mother-nurse. This is where all noble manhood and heroic living begins. This choice of Moses was also nurtured by patriotic principles. It was the call of blood, the call of his own people, the call of his own nation. His choice inspired by faith, was also the result of religious zeal. Moses chose persecutions, and rose to prominence. He chose loneliness and rose to leadership, because of his religious convictions.

II. Faith's Vision

"By faith Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible". The world owes a debt of eternal gratitude to its visionaries. The world's dreamers have been its greatest doers. Its seers have been its mightiest servants. Spiritual vision is the most productive, the most ennobling, the most uplifting force in the universe. The man without spiritual vision lags below his largest possibilities. He becomes a cringing, craven, coward. Without God a man is "a weltering chaos of despair, the plaything of time, the vagabond of space, and the wail of eternity".

The vision of faith enabled Moses to lead a race of slaves to become a well organized, well trained, unified nation which the persecutions of forty centuries have not been able to destroy. Faith's vision enabled Paul to lift the Epicurean stoicism of Greece out of the mire and despair, and the groveling materialism of the Roman Empire out of its weltering shame, and to send spiritual forces gleaming across the centuries. It lifted our blood drinking Anglo-Saxon ancestors into the position of world leadership which they have enjoyed for more than a thousand years. Woe betide those who lose their spiritual vision. Faith's vision inspired Luther to condemn the godless ecclesiasticism of his day, and to set a nation free. It gave Charles Wesley the power to shake a cold and worldly state church, dying in formalism, and to revive vital religion on two continents. Faith's vision sees God and believes. Faith sees God in the tint of the rose petal, in the rhythmic rippling of the brook, in the calming cadences of the clouds, and in the burst of sunrise. To faith the presence of God is everywhere, in the heart, in the life, in the mind, in the will, vitalizing, strengthening, reinforcing all.

III. Faith's Reward

"By faith Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward." He yielded that which was immediate for the winning of the distant. He had the treasures of Egypt, and even the crown itself, at his disposal. But no immediate and temporary gain lured him. He esteemed eternal as of more importance than the temporal. It is the absence of such faith in the future that makes many a person contentions for the little thing immediately at hand, and robbed him of the great thing that is just ahead. To a man of faith the ignoble and fleeting pleasures of the present pale into utter insignificance beside the glories of the great and divine reward of the future. A man of faith having become a real man puts away childish things. The paltry toys of childhood are nothing beside the achievements of a great life. Earthly delights shrivel, and dwindle, and disappear when the light of the recompense of God shines upon them.

The power to choose the spiritual rather than the material, the vision which sees him who is invisible, rather than that which only the eyes of the flesh behold; the ability to strive for the eternal reward rather than the temporal, are the forces which lift man to the highest heights and present him to God and the world as the chief asset of all time, namely, a purposeful, highly resolved, nobly consecrated personality.