

The life of Moses

Moses' Choice

Chapter 2

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Hebrews 11: 23 – 29

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The life of Moses is one of the most unusual life stories in all the Scriptures. He is one of the very few people whose entire life from birth to death is recorded in the Bible. His name means “drawn forth” and truly, God drew him forth from his mother, his family and his nation to make of him a great leader and to set his people free. Moses was faced with several choices in his life and for our consideration in this chapter it would be good for us to look at two portions of Scripture. We will be considering first of all Acts 7:21 – 23 and then we will move to Hebrews 11: 23 – 29.

As we consider the life of Moses we cannot help but be struck by the fact that the greatest characteristic of Moses was his faith. Hebrews chapter eleven uses the word “faith” five times about him. This is amazing when we consider the number of times that Moses complains to God about the circumstances of his life. He wanted to have his people released from captivity. Yet, when he went before Pharaoh, the result of his request was not their release but that the sufferings of the Children of Israel become heavier. He trusted God to have the people follow him as he struggled to lead them out of Egypt. Yet, when their burdens grew greater they hated him. He trusted God to move on

Pharaoh's heart to let the people go. Yet, God simply hardened Pharaoh's heart the more. So many of the circumstances would have seemed to deny the fact of God's working in his life. Yet, he still trusted God. Moses seems to have learned the lesson that faith is not just a blind assurance that everything will be all right. Faith is still trusting God when you are sure that they will probably not be all right. Moses is learning, and so should we, that God is working in our lives to accomplish His perfect plan in us as well as through us. Again, faith is not just blind assurance that everything will be all right. Faith is still trusting God when you are sure they will probably not be all right. Growth in faith keeps our eyes on God even when we do not see the hand of God accomplishing what we think He should be accomplishing in our lives.

Moses' life was spared by his parent's act of faith. *"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."* (Hebrews 11:23). It seems that for a long period of time his faith was put on hold as he grew up in Pharaoh's court. What we know about those first forty years of Moses' life comes mostly out of Acts 7: 21 – 23. There we read, *"And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel."* Notice first of all, that he was "nourished"

in the house of Pharaoh's daughter "as her own". He had the finest of foods and medicines. He had the finest education and training. He was being groomed to become the Pharaoh of Egypt. Next, he was "learned of the wisdom of Egypt." This means that he was taught how to think. He learned how to plan, organize and to reason. He was being prepared to be a strong leader of men. He was taught philosophy and religion. I am sure that, in this, God was working in his life to show him the things that He wanted Moses to learn. As he studied the philosophies and religions of Egypt he could see the emptiness of the philosophies of the world. Many today have also seen that the study of philosophy and religion divorced from the true God of Heaven is empty, vain and meaningless. Man was created for fellowship with God. When we are not rightly related to Him we will always be left empty and unsatisfied.

Thirdly, we learn from Acts 7:22 that Moses became "mighty in word and deed." Moses had been selected by God to lead His people out of Egypt. God placed him in a special position to receive the finest training in the world for this task. Is it any wonder that Moses would excel in this training? Josephus speaks in his histories that Moses became an accomplished military leader during those first forty years and won great fame.

Yet, when he was forty years old God began to deal with his heart. Moses began to make choices that influenced his life's direction. In fact, they influenced the history of the world from that time to this. Acts 7:23 says that, "It came into his heart." I

believe that this is the Spirit of God moving him into the next part of his life. Here he makes several choices. He chose affliction over the crown. He chose reproach over riches. He chose the Heavenly Father over all that Egypt offered him.

I. HE CHOSE AFFLICTION OVER A CROWN.

Neither Pharaoh nor his daughter had any male children of their own that would be inline to assume the throne. This meant that Moses was the Prince of Egypt. He was in line for the throne. Yet, he chose to suffer with the children of God. His first thought was not for his own comfort, or his own needs. He chose to endure sacrifice so that he could be where God wanted him to be. Today most American Christians have forgotten what the word, “sacrifice,” means. We say that we love God but we prefer to do it inside our own personal comfort zones. It seems that we can tithe if all our needs and wants are taken care of. We can go to church as long as we are home in time to get our rest or see our favorite TV show. We love the Lord but see no need to serve Him to the point that our lives are affected to any real degree. Most would rather take the easy, convenient way. Sacrifice costs us something. What if Moses had thought like that? What would have happened to the Children of Israel if he had said, “I can’t leave Pharaoh’s house. After all, how will I support myself? Would it not be a sin if I did not look after my family properly?” When he was before the burning bush he might have thought, “I can’t leave Midian, what would the

wife's folks say?" Maybe he could have argued, "Why, I can't lead the Children of Israel. What about my own children? There would be no family life." Certainly our families are important, but where is God's will in our priorities? God's will became more important to Moses than his own personal goals and comfort zones. He chose affliction and he made himself uncomfortable. He chose sacrifice that the cause of God would go forward. How many times have we chosen to put the cause of Christ ahead of our own personal agendas? Have we ever chosen affliction over a life of ease? We work hard every day, and one day a week we have visitation at church. You can count on that day to be the hardest and busiest day of the week. Satan does not want you going out to visit with the pastor and other people of the church. Can we sacrifice an hour or two so that someone else might hear the Gospel and may be saved? Is our easy chair calling too loudly? Missionaries come to our church and our hearts are burdened to help them. However, if we increase our giving how will we ever pay for that special treat we have been looking forward to? Have we really forgotten how to sacrifice? Are we willing to choose affliction over the ease of this life? God's Kingdom has all ways gone forward as His people put His will ahead of their own comfort. Moses chose to endure the afflictions of exile rather than enjoy the courts of Pharaoh.

II. HE CHOSE REPROACH OVER RICHES

Hebrews 11:26 tells us that he chose to esteem, *“the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”* Moses chose to follow God rather than follow the riches of this world. Often times when we have a decision to make and are having a hard time deciding which way we should go, we will make a list of pros and cons. This helps us list the good points of a certain choice as opposed to the bad points. Perhaps Moses did this. Maybe his list would have read something like this. He was asking whether to leave the palace and go with God or stay in Pharaoh’s court.

GOOD

He would enjoy the
Palace of Pharaoh.
Power of the Throne
Prestige of the office
Comfort of the palace
The gardens of Egypt

BAD

He would experience the
reproach of men.
Persecution of the
Hebrews
Exile in the desert
The discontent of the
people

Even with all the comforts of the palace he chose the suffering that he knew he would endure in the desert. Why? He had respect to the recompense of the reward. He realized that the reproach of Christ is worth more than sin for a season. He was far sighted. He could see the outcome in Heaven. That is the problem with so many of the people of the church today. We are not willing to sacrifice today so that someone will be in Heaven for eternity. We are short sighted. We cannot see

beyond today. The missionary Nate Saint said it this way, “He is no fool that gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” Are we willing to sacrifice so that the cause of Christ may prosper? Are we willing to be uncomfortable so that others may enjoy Heaven for all Eternity?

III. HE CHOSE THE HEAVENLY FATHER OVER EGYPT

Finally, Moses chose the Heavenly Father over the nation of Egypt. Moses had a vision of that which is invisible. Moses grew up in the presence of the most powerful man in the world. He was the grandson of Pharaoh. He knew what his life would be like as King of Egypt. Yet, God revealed Himself to him in such a powerful way that Moses chose the Heavenly father over the visible Pharaoh of Egypt. Moses is an example to us today. Have you seen the power of God in the lives of your friends? Has God revealed Himself to you in a special way? Has the Holy Spirit spoken to your heart? Why then do we sing “O How I Love Jesus” and still we choose to serve the god of our flesh? We sing, “Take the World and Give Me Jesus” then choose to follow after the things of the world. Moses chose the Father. Have we chosen Him? I think that the decision comes down to a passage in proverbs. In Proverbs 3:4 – 5 we read, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Are we willing to leave every choice in our lives to the Father and

trust Him to give us the correct paths for our lives? We can trust Him to have our best interests at heart and He will never hold from us any good thing. Let us step out in faith and put the kingdom of God ahead of our own interests and desires.

Moses chose affliction, reproach and the invisible Father. He did not respect the worldly pleasures of the palace of Egypt. He had respect to the recompense of the reward. If you are reading this lesson and have never received Christ as your Savior you may not be able to understand why anyone would choose a life of service over a life of ease and self-fulfillment. I can only testify that the Lord gives us a real reason to live. He gives fulfillment far beyond our ability at this point to imagine. Yes, the Lord may ask us to sacrifice some part of our own comfort but He has promised all the blessings of Heaven. Psalm 16:11 has long been a favorite verse to many people. *“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”* If you give your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ you may not have the easiest live but you will have a life of fulfillment and importance that you could not have imagined possible. Christian, don’t hesitate to put His will ahead of you plans for your life today. Can you sing with the songwriter of old:

Must I be carried to the skies,
on flowery beds of ease,

While others fought to win the prize,
and sail through bloody seas.

Sure I must fight if I would reign,
increase my courage, Lord.
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
supported by thy Word.

To help our understanding:

1. Give an example of a time when you knew that things were not going to work out, yet you still trusted God.
2. How is a study of philosophy that is divorced from the true understanding of God meaningless?
3. Give an example of someone you know who put serving God before their own comfort.
4. When should we place the will of God ahead of our own families?
5. What could possibly result from our choosing the will of God ahead of our own interests?
6. What does it mean to be a “far sighted believer”?
7. How is God asking you to put His will ahead of your own?