

*23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. 24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.*

This is now our seventh week studying the topic of faith. What is it? Why is it important? How can we define it?

And we've said several times, the reason it's important is because faith is the dividing line between those who will spend a joyous eternity with God, and those who will spend eternity away from God in torment.

So if we're going to rate things on this earth by importance, we might say there is nothing more important than understanding what faith is.

The author of this book takes a stab at a definition in the first verse of this chapter, but then he takes a different approach. Faith is a hard idea to define, but this author defines what faith IS by showing us what faith does.

Last week we compared faith to electricity. We can't see it and it's difficult to define, but we can easily see what electricity accomplishes. And that's basically this author's approach. By faith, By faith, By faith over and over.

All these people accomplished all these things, by faith. So, in a sense, they didn't accomplish these things, God accomplished all of

these examples, through his people, because they believed.

You go through the list and you can see God at work, through His people, and this author says, by faith so and so did this, and by faith, so and so did that. God did it. But the person named did it. But it was because of their belief in a God who acts, that they accomplished the works. God did it through them. By faith, God works through His people.

By faith Able worshipped God acceptably and Cain didn't. Cain did it his way, and God rejected his self styled offering.

By faith Enoch walked with God until one day Enoch walked right up to heaven with God. By faith Noah worked to build something no one had ever seen for a purpose no one believed was rational.

By faith Abraham left his old country behind and believed God for promises he never realised in his lifetime. By faith he offered up Isaac, the son of promise.

By faith Isaac at the end of his life ultimately got in line with God's will and blessed Jacob and Esau according to God's revealed will.

By faith Jacob and Joseph both finished their long eventful lives still believing in the promises given to Abraham, even though the promises were for a time far off. They were un-realized.

None of those things would have happened except the people involved believed in a God who caused them to happen by His will, according to His plan, and for His glory.

We learn what faith is by studying what faith does. People and God combine to accomplish His plan for this fallen and lost world.

This week we look at Moses, and right off the starting line, Moses is miraculous. From birth forward, God, working through people of faith, accomplishes greatness in this man Moses.

*23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.*

This isn't about Moses faith, rather it is about the effects that faith in the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had on Moses parents.

In Exodus 6 and Numbers 26 we learn; *The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram: Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam.*

The king's edict at the end of Exodus chapter one; Kill Hebrew boy babies.

The Pharaoh decided the Hebrews were getting too powerful, so he commanded to have the male babies slaughtered.

But these parents ignored the king's command and hid the baby for 3 months. Babies sleep a LOT the first few months, so it isn't too difficult to hide him. But beyond that time frame, what to do.

It takes a ton of faith to put your baby in a basket and trust God to somehow work out what will happen to him. But the writer tells us more than that.

*By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child;*

Oh. What if he was a homely kid? Off goes your head if you're ugly? I was intrigued and so I began to study the word that is

translated beautiful and as usual, when you dig a bit in God's word, you strike gold.

The word is only used two times in the new testament, and both times to describe this event. Once here and once in Acts 7 when Stephen recounts this event before he is stoned.

But if you dig down further to the hebrew word used in Exodus 2:2, its the same word that God used over and over during creation when He would look at all the things He created and state that it was *good*. Same word.

Moses parents looked at little Moses and they said, he's good. And actually the word denotes value. Worth. God made things, and what He made had value. Worth. And babies have worth. Value.

We learn that God created man in His own image, and because of that, man has value. It's OK to kill animals for different reasons; they are a direct threat to humans which have more value, or you want to eat the flesh of animals. OK to kill them for good reason, but it's never OK to kill humans. Why?

Because humans have a dignity set apart from animals at creation when God created them in His image. Murder is never OK. God forbids it.

And Moses parents, in spite of an order from their governing ruler looked at Moses and said, we have to obey God, we cannot take this little life. Why? Because he had the dignity and value God gives to every baby, every human.

Moses parents didn't know little Moses was destined by God to be one of the greatest men ever in history. All they knew was there was an order from Pharoah to destroy their boy baby and an order

from God to not commit murder. They feared God, not Pharaoh.

There's nothing new under the sun. Satan wants babies dead. And a king in Egypt, the Pharaoh says, kill the babies. But people who have faith, who believe in the God of creation, who looked at His creation and said, it is valuable, it is good, those people look at babies and say, NO, this baby is God's doing, and it bears God's image, and it has dignity because of that, and we cannot murder it.

After studying the words, I'm convinced that Moses parents were activists motivated by a faith that says, God's will for babies trumps the government's will for babies. Babies have value. All babies bear God's image. We do not murder babies. We celebrate them, because they bear God's likeness in some form.

So they hid him for 3 months and then they fixed up a basket with pitch so it wouldn't sink in the water, and they set little Moses a sail, trusting in God.

Faith that recognizes the value of human life. Faith that is willing to dis-obey a government when that government opposes God's commands. Faith that sets that baby afloat and leaves the outcome up to God.

When we get to heaven we can ask Amram and Jochebed, did you calculate the risks, knowing just about exactly what time and place Pharaoh's daughter would come to the river to bathe, hoping for a tenderer heart than her father had.

If you're a young parent seperated from your babies by the president, the president's wife might be the person to write the letter to, right?

I get the distinct feeling that if plan A hadn't worked, if Pharoahs

daughter hadn't come to that place, or if the basket floated by unnoticed and the babe wasn't crying, that Miriam would have fetched him right back home to try again another day. We can ask when we get there, but that's sort of how I read the story.

Listen to Exodus 2 with these truths in mind; *1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. 2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. 4 His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him.*

*5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it to her. 6 When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?" 8 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go ahead." So the girl went and called the child's mother. 9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. 10 The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, "Because I drew him out of the water."*

Miriam was a pretty sharp little cookie. Got a baby? Need a nurse? I happen to know one. So Jochebed and Amram get paid to care for the son that Pharaoh would have had slaughtered.

This is a wonderful story to see the combination of faith and the

intervention of God to produce a miracle outcome. By faith Moses was spared and his parents were paid to keep him. That's a God outcome, but it could only happen because of faith.

What I love is that the words here that tell us about the value of babies are still pertinent to us in 2018. This little story, just a few words long in the book of Hebrews is relevant to us in 2018 America.

Babies have value, and anyone who would murder them is acting against God who placed that value in them. Satan wants babies murdered and God is furious with a country that does that. That's why this Roe V. Wade thing is a wound that never heals.

Amram and Jochebed are models of faith for us. They looked at that baby and said we have to disobey the king, because God gave this baby worth, and we will do everything we can to preserve that value. Babies are beautiful things. God gives them their value.

I believe God blesses people who bless babies. And I likewise believe God curses people who murder their babies. You can study and learn that one of the reasons God utterly destroyed the Canaanites was because they were murdering their babies. Putting them through the fire. Offering them as burnt sacrifices to Molech.

Killing babies honors Satan. It is a great wickedness. God hates it and He WILL judge it.

OK, moving on;

*24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the*

*reward.*

I want you to focus on the first word in vs. 25. Choosing. Choice. It pleased God and it honors and glorifies Him that he created us to choose to honor and glorify Him.

Even in a fallen and sinful world, the choice to honor and glorify God remains intact. In every case that this author gives us in chapter 11 we see human free will at work. People choose to do the harder thing. Often the obtuse thing to the rest of the world.

To choose to do something against the grain of this fallen world because of an unseen God who has promised rewards in another place at another time, to honor Him and often receive only the rebuke of this world, the rejection and pain, for what? A God unseen and promises in a different life?

To the world that seems crazy. Unhinged from reality. Foolish.

We have a new-hire out at work and I was sharing that I am a preacher in Tonopah and that we exposit this book verse by verse. He said people like me are in the same category with folk who believe in flying saucers.

Do you believe in flying saucers? Yes. Have you ever seen one? No. Well, then, you have no evidence, you're just believing in something because you want to believe in it, not because of any physical evidence.

And I thought to myself, how can you ride around in this car with this beautiful world on display and believe you have it all figured out. This world and the vast night sky . . . where did that come from. You believe it made itself by something called chance. Bully, your faith in something unseen is far greater and more

rediculous than what you think mine is.

I didn't say that. I'll save it for later. I feel that new people who are worried about fitting in and trying to impress you need to get a pass for a time.

All of the people in Hebrews 11 made choices that the rest of the world around them thought were insane. Against the grain. Obtuse.

What does faith look like? It begins with a belief in a God who has in fact revealed Himself first in His creation, and then to many witnesses who wrote what He revealed about Himself in a book.

There is physical evidence. Pinch yourself, there you are. Look around you. A world with an environment you can survive in. It's hot, but we aren't dead.

He provides enough oxygen to sustain the rather narrow bandwidth of oxygen that we need. He provides us with water. Well, not in Tonopah, but he gave us enough intelligence not to live on a rock where there isn't water.

And then later, enough intelligence to invent pumps to draw water out of the ground and send it in pipes to places we decided we needed to be at.

The majesty of creation, even in it's fallen state, is breath-taking. The limitless skies. The stars and universes. And He tells us, I just put that there as a barrier so you can't see me.

God graciously turns the lights of understanding on for His elect, His people who He calls out of this world. Everything makes sense. Even the evil that surrounds us fits into what is revealed.

A fallen world that chose sin over God. Men who are spiritually dead who have seared what was left of their consciences and who are blindly in a duped state following after Satan who has usurped the rule of this world for a time.

Of course there are senseless murderings and slaughters. What do you expect? This world is sold out to sin. It follows it's ruler, Satan. And the only thing that restrains is the revelation of God, and His law.

So when that law and that God are ignored and set aside, why would we be surprised when some insane person with an oozie walks into a school and starts murdering little pictures of God. Children made in the image of God.

I'm not surprised. Are you. What does surprise me a little is how gross things are getting. God judged other civilizations that stooped to our current level. I have to believe the reason He is temporarily withholding judgement is because the final judgement is coming like a tidal wave that's almost reached land mass.

Everything fits. God turns the lights on, and the more we read this book, the more puzzle pieces get put in place.

Those blessings and cursings are built into the cosmos and they teeter on choice. Look at verse 25 again. We'll read them in context, beginning at 24.

*24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,*

Why? Why Moses? Are you nuts?? You fell into it man. Of all people, you fell into the top spot this world had to offer.

There was no nation richer or more advanced in it's learning than Egypt. They were the pinnacle of the earth. And Moses landed at the pinnacle of the pinnacle. He had it all!

Good looks. Unspeakable wealth. All the knowledge the world had assembled together at that time. All the pleasures the son of the top person in the pinnacle of the earth could imagine.

He was like number 2 person on earth. Only Pharoah had more than Moses. And Moses was in line for that job.

The world asks, what kind of lunatic turns their back on that and walks away? To what?? Slavery and oppression? Why?

*26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.*

What is the reproach of Christ? Paul outlines that for us in Philippians 2:5 - 11 A passage that I hope is becoming familiar to you because we've been here often.

*5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a doulos, a slave, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every*

*tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Jesus left equality with God behind and came to this fallen world in the most humble position. He died in our place. But God exalted Him so that His name is above every name.

Moses wasn't a mad man to walk away from the pinnacle of this world's wealth and wisdom and opportunity. He did that because he wanted a better position in a future world. Later.

Moses had a distant uncle named Joseph who also was number 2 man in Egypt. As a child growing to maturity in his parents' household before the palace experience, did he hear the stories of the promises to the patriarchs from whom he was descended, and the story of Joseph who wanted his bones carried out of Egypt when that day came.

The God of the universes made those promises.

Why does a young man turn his back on being the world's rock star? I always fall back on what the scientist Blaise Pascal said. His famous quote.

*“All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.”*

Moses made a choice in vs. 25, not as a mad man, but as a lucid person of faith who could see the as yet unseen and believe it by faith.

Like Pascal says, he weighed the choice in the balance and took the better part. He chose oppression and slavery in the short term because he believed in the promises of his God, in the long term.

Jesus speaks of this kind of choice in the parables. I'm a horse trader so I love this logic. It makes sense to me. Matthew 13:

*44 "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."*

The treasure of knowing God and having Him is far above any treasure this world can offer anyone. Notice that in each of these parables, the one who discovers the better thing has to sell everything in order to get it.

Moses had to walk away from His life of privilege and pleasures in order to obtain the promises of God, in another world. He had to sell everything to buy what? Oppression. Slavery. Reproach. The reproach of Christ.

But Moses weighed in the balances the pleasures of this world and the pleasures of having God and His promises in the next, and he gave it all up. Gladly.

*45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."*

Moses said, I'll sell everything this world can offer and become an oppressed slave, so I can have a share in what God promised. And he did.

He weighed Egypt, his position as son of Pharaoh's daughter, vast wealth, unspeakable pleasures of every kind of sin, the whole package, he weighed it in the balance with belonging to the God who made the promises, and chose the latter.

It doesn't cost anything to be a Christian these days. And I have to wonder who would be left, if it did.

Moses calculated the price, and it was enormous by this world's standards, and he chose to leave everything behind in order to belong to God.

That's what faith looks like. That's our picture.

*26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.*

Pascal was right. We calculate the benefits and we make our choices. We want to be happy, and we will endure startling stresses and costs in order to achieve what we believe is the better thing, the thing that will make us happier.

Moses did the calculation and in his case, it costs virtually everything this world could offer anyone, in order to obtain the promises of God.

Faith is that thing that opens our eyes to understand that having God, being with God and enjoying His promises, perhaps never in this life, but with all of the elect in the next one, is the choice that will bring us the pleasures of God forevermore, and by faith, we will give up this world to have that one.