

**Remember: FAITH IS CONFIDENT OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD,
IN SPITE OF CIRCUMSTANCE OR CONSEQUENCE**

TODAY'S TEXT

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. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

7 "By Faith" Examples (11:3-7; pre-Abraham)

1. We believe God created all out of nothing
2. Abel offered a better sacrifice
3. Abel obtained righteousness
4. Abel still speaks today
5. Enoch did not see death
6. Noah prepared an ark
7. Noah became an heir of righteousness

7 "By Faith" (11:8-22; Abraham to Joseph)

1. Abraham obeyed in leaving
2. Abraham lived as a foreigner in his own land
3. Abraham and Sarah gave birth in old age
4. Abraham offered up Isaac
5. Isaac blessed his sons regarding God's future
6. Jacob blessed the Joseph's sons regarding God's future
7. Joseph ordered his bones leave Egypt

7 More "By Faith" Examples (11:23-31; post-Abraham)

1. Baby Moses was hidden by his parents
2. Moses identified with the Jews, not the Egyptians
3. Moses left Egypt for a life of preparation
4. Moses observed Passover and sprinkled blood on his doorpost
5. Moses passed through the Red Sea
6. The walls of Jericho fell by doing it God's way
7. Rahab welcomed the spies

In awe, will you not acknowledge that God's symmetry is amazing?! Three sevens of "by faith" - no more or no less. 3 - the number of God, and 7 - the number of perfection. And the groups of 7 are so clearly in thoughtful groupings: pre-Abraham, Abraham and his Genesis offspring, and post-Abraham.

And will you further be in awe that the first of the faith examples is us! – believers in God’s miraculous creation. YOU are in the hall of faith – even at the top of the list. Amazing.

Note: The opening group of 7 is more obvious in the NIV or even in the literal translation. In the NASB is slightly obscured in v. 4 and v. 7. There, it says “through which” and “by which” - referring to the previous “by faith.” If you count those, which again are clearer in the original, there are 7 in the opening group. The other two groups are far more obvious.

So let us now more to study the seven additional “by faith” examples we find in today’s text.

1. Baby Moses was hidden by his parents

Here again is the example as given in Hebrews:

Hebrews 11:23 *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.*

And here is the story from which it comes, as told in Genesis:

Exodus 1:22-2:3 *Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive.” Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. 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.*

The Hebrew author bases his faith argument on the fact that Moses’ parents found baby Moses to be a “beautiful child” (NASB) or “no ordinary child” (NIV). In actuality, the King James Version gets is closest to right when it says “a goodly child”, for it is the same phrase used in Genesis 1 when God says of creation that “it is good” (or “it is of God”).

Somehow Moses’ parents saw, with God’s internal confirmation, that Moses was especially appointed by God. He was a “goodly” or “Godly” child – not just a “beautiful” one. (After all, most parents would call their child “beautiful.”) So the hiding of Moses was “by faith” – trusting and obeying God. And furthermore, notice that his parents hid him for 3 months – again, God’s perfect number.

Before we move on, notice that the “wicker basket” Moses was put in was literally an “ark” – a little ark! – symbolic of the ark that saved Noah and his family and thereby the entire human race. And Moses was likewise “saved” by a little ark and thereby saved the entire human race by leading the Israelites out of Egypt and paving the way for the coming of the promised Messiah some 1500 years later.

This example of faith teaches us that we must follow the path of God, even if it opposes the path of men. Hiding Moses was “against the law” yet by faith Moses’ parents were faithful to follow God, despite circumstances or consequences. May we do the same.

2. Moses identified with the Jews, not the Egyptians

Exodus 2 tells us the story, though very briefly. Here is the account:

Exodus 2:11-15 *Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. He went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, “Why are you striking your companion?” But he said, “Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are*

you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and said, "Surely the matter has become known." When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian.

The Exodus account is quite stark, revealing Moses as a murderer who fled punishment. The Hebrews faith example, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, lets us know what Moses was thinking through all this and that there was spiritual motivation that pleased God.

Hebrews 11:24-26 *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.*

How glad we are that Scripture often interprets and explains Scripture. Here we learn that Moses made a choice to be identified with God's people rather than the people of the world. We have learned that "faith is confident obedience to God's Word, in spite of circumstance or consequence." And Moses made a choice contrary to worldly pleasure and prestige. We also learn that Moses identified with the "reproach of Christ" in his decision, and that he was looking forward to a heavenly reward, worth far more than the earthly "reward" of sinful pleasure and riches. May we do the same, as we seek to please God by faith.

3. Moses left Egypt for a life of preparation

Hebrews tells us that Moses did not fear the king Pharaoh, for he was seeing and seeking the greater King who is unseen. What a great example for us. Moses had 40 years of preparation ahead of him, but already he clearly trusted and followed God. May our faith cause us to fearlessly and consciously seek God rather than men, whatever that might mean.

4. Moses observed Passover and sprinkled blood on his doorpost

We too are asked by God to do strange things to follow Him. We are asked to be "dunked" in water (baptism) to be identified as his followers. We are asked to regularly partake of "bread" and "wine" in remembrance of his physical sacrifice. We are asked to attend weekly worship celebrations of his resurrection. We are asked to "take up your cross" – meaning at least to suffer through our own personal difficulties – in following Him.

Our partaking of communion has replaced the Hebrew Passover. We now partake in remembrance of Jesus, rather than in anticipation of Him. And we exhibit faith everytime we remember and look forward to His coming again. The sprinkling of blood on our doorpost continues metaphorically. For it is by the blood sacrifice of Jesus alone that we are cleansed and forgiven. "What can wash away my sin? – Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

God certainly had the ear of Moses. Moses was in "lock-step" with God's wishes and therefore pleased God by faith. May we do the same.

5. Moses passed through the Red Sea

The Hebrews author simply states the facts of what happened:

Hebrews 11:29 *By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.*

And yet behind this most important story of Hebrew (and Christian) history is a great spiritual teaching. This Exodus from Egypt is the spiritual equivalent of being miraculously released from the bondage of sin and being led into the promised eternal life of God. By grace, through faith, we are saved! (Ephesians 2:8)

What a remarkable act of faith for Moses to lift his rod over the Sea, expecting and knowing by faith that God would part the waters. And yet he was following what God had promised would happen. Confident! Obedient! Faith!

And now, for the last of these 7 additional faith examples we leave Moses and move to Joshua, Jericho and Rahab.

6. The walls of Jericho fell by doing it God's way

Hebrews 11:31 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

This is the simple statement of Hebrews. It speaks of the faith of Joshua who listened to the command of God and thus instructed his troops. Did God's command make military sense? – No. But did Joshua act in confident obedience to God's Word which yielded victorious results? – Yes! This Biblical account is an example to us, in metaphor, of seemingly impossible walls that will fall if we will but only proceed by following God's lead, trusting in Him all the way.

7. Rahab welcomed the spies

Our last example is of a woman who became an ancestor of Jesus – Rahab who was the great-grandmother of King David, the mother of Boaz who married Ruth. Though she was once a Gentile prostitute, her faith in the God of Israel elevated her to a new life and an eternal heritage of godliness.

What an amazing example she is of one who can rise from a life of desperation and immorality to a life of hope and purpose. We learn that her faith was specifically expressed by welcoming the spies "in peace." She shifted loyalties. She went from being a friend of unrighteousness to a child of righteousness. She went against her past and embraced her future. Oh what an example of faith for all of us!

Do you notice a general theme in these 7 faith examples? Each of them speaks of going against the flow of the world and choosing to go "upstream" following God.

A SUMMARY REMINDER

1. I must follow the path of God, even if it opposes the path of men
2. I must identify with God's people their suffering for the sake of Christ
3. I must leave behind that which is not of God
4. I must ever "cover" my life with the forgiving and restoring blood of Christ
5. I must pass from the bondage of sin into the promise of God's freedom
6. I must believe that impossible walls will fall by trust in God's provision
7. I must welcome God's people as a critical part of my spiritual health

Will you turn these reminders into a prayer of commitment to your God?