

WHAT FAITH DOES
Hebrews 11:23-29
The Faith Chapter – Week
By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Hebrews 11 is all about faith. The first verse tells us what faith is. The rest of the chapter tells us what faith does.
2. We see this especially in the example of Moses.

II. WHO WAS MOSES?

1. *“Business Is Business” (1002 Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking)*

A young Jewish boy started attending public school in a small town. The teacher of the one-room school decided to use her position to try to influence the new student. She asked the class, “Who was the greatest man who ever lived?”

A girl raised her hand and said, “I think George Washington was the greatest man who ever lived because he is the father of our country.”

The teacher replied, “Well, that’s a good answer, but that’s not the answer I’m looking for.”

Another young student raised his hand and said, “I think Abraham Lincoln was the greatest man who lived because he freed the slaves and helped end the Civil War.”

“Well, that’s another good answer, but that’s not the one I was looking for.”

Then the new Jewish boy raised his hand and said, “I think Jesus Christ was the greatest man who ever lived.”

The teacher’s mouth dropped open in astonishment. “Yes!” she said.

“That’s the answer I was looking for.” She then brought him up to the front of the classroom and gave him a lollipop.

Later, during recess, another Jewish boy approached him as he was licking his lollipop. He said, “Why did you say, ‘Jesus Christ’?”

The boy stopped licking his lollipop and replied, “I know it’s Moses, and you know it’s Moses, but business is business.”

2. To the Jews, Moses is the man. Abraham may be the father of the Jews, but Moses is the greatest of the Jews. Moses was the man God sent to lead the Israelites out of Egypt into the promised land. He is also the human author of the first five books of the Bible, including the Ten Commandments.
3. From the life of Moses we can learn four lessons about faith.

III. FOUR LESSONS ABOUT FAITH

1. **Faith sees from God’s perspective.**

- i. Hebrews 11 highlights five events from the life of Moses. The first is about his birth.

- ii. **Hebrews 11:23** “By faith Moses, after he was born, was hidden by his parents for three months, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they didn’t fear the king’s edict.”
- iii. The story of Moses begins in the land of Egypt.
 - 1. The Jews had been living in Egypt for about 350 years since the time of Joseph.
 - 2. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, saw that the Israelites had outgrown the Egyptians. They had become the majority. He was afraid that they would one day turn on the Egyptians in war. So, he turned them into slaves and treated them with cruelty and brutality. But their population continued to grow. So, Pharaoh commanded that all the Israelite newborn boys be thrown into the Nile River and killed.
 - 3. One of those newborn Israelite boys was Moses. His parents didn’t allow their child to be slaughtered. Instead, they hid him for the first three months. When he was too big to hide, his mother got a basket and turned it into a little boat. She covered it with asphalt and pitch so that water could not seep in, and she placed little Moses in the basket and put him in the river.
 - 4. What happened next is amazing! Moses’ sister stood at a distance to see what would happen. Pharaoh’s daughter, the princess, happened to be bathing in the river and noticed the basket. When she opened it, she saw baby Moses crying, and she felt sorry for him. Moses’ sister said, “Should I go and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the boy for you?” The princess said yes, so who do you think Miriam called? Moses’ mother. So, Moses’ mother nursed him, and then when he was old enough he went to live with the princess and became her adopted son.
- iv. What does this story teach us about faith?
 - 1. By saving their child, they risked their lives. If caught, they could have been thrown in prison, tortured, or executed. Why did they risk their lives?
 - 2. The text says it was because they saw that the child was beautiful. What does that mean?
 - 3. Stephen, the first martyr, told the story of Moses right before he was killed for his faith. Notice how he interprets the story.
 - 4. **Acts 7:20** “At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful in God’s sight. He was cared for in his father’s home for three months.”
 - 5. Did you catch that? They didn’t just see that the baby was cute. They saw that he was beautiful in God’s sight. They saw that the

child was precious to God, and therefore it would be a great sin to let him be killed.

6. In other words, they put their lives in danger and saved their child's life because they saw from God's perspective. They saw what God sees. They saw from God's point of view. They saw with God's vantage point. That's what faith does.
- v. Abortion is a terrible sin in our nation. Even with the reversal of Roe v. Wade, more than 2,600 babies are killed by abortion each day in the United States. Why? The story of Moses tells the three reasons for abortion.
 1. Coercion. Someone is pressuring them to kill the child. Moses' parents were pressured by Pharaoh. Some women are pressured by a husband, or a boyfriend, or their parents.
 2. Fear. They fear what will happen if they keep the child. Moses' parents could have been killed for keeping the child. Some women are afraid of raising the child alone; they are afraid they can't afford it; they are afraid the pregnancy will hurt their figure.
 3. Blindness. They do not see the beauty of the child. Many women are convinced that it is simply a piece of meat; it's not a real human; it's not alive; it's just an inconvenience. But Moses' parents saw that the child was beautiful. It was precious. It had to be saved and protected. It had to be cared for. It was worthy of dying for. Why? Because they saw from God's perspective. They saw through God's eyes.
- vi. Faith is seeing from God's perspective rather than the world's perspective.
 1. It's seeing money from God's perspective. Our money belongs to God. We should tithe, help the needy, and wisely manage and enjoy it. Or someone else put it, money is not something to worship and serve, it is a tool, a test, and a testimony.
 2. It is seeing sex from God's perspective. God made sex for marriage for the purpose of procreation, intimacy, and enjoyment.
 3. It is seeing marriage from God's perspective. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman for a lifetime.
 4. It is seeing parenting from God's perspective. Children are a gift from the Lord, and parents should teach their kids to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.
- vii. Do you see from God's perspective? There's a popular song called "Hungry Eyes." Faith is having holy eyes. Some people wear bifocals. Faith is wearing bible-focals.

2. Faith is willing to suffer for Christ.

- i. The second lesson of faith comes from another event in the life of Moses.

- ii. **Hebrews 11:24-26** “24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter 25 and chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin. 26 For he considered reproach for the sake of Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, since he was looking ahead to the reward.”
- iii. Moses grew up a prince in Pharaoh’s household. He was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action (Acts 7:22). Jewish legends say that he was proficient in arithmetic, geometry, poetry, music, philosophy, astrology, and all branches of education (F.F. Bruce, Epistle to the Hebrews, 316). Another legend says that he grew up to become the greatest of all Egyptian generals (William Barclay, The Letter to the Hebrews, 155). And another legend says that since Pharaoh had no son of his own, but only one daughter, he had made Moses his heir. In other words, it is possible that Moses was in line to become the next king of Egypt – the next Pharaoh (William Barclay, The Letter to the Hebrews, 155).
- iv. In other words, Moses’ life was perfect from a worldly perspective. He had the best of everything. He was wealthy, educated, and powerful. But at the age of forty, Moses made a huge decision. He saw the plight of his people – how they were suffering terribly as slaves, and he felt that God wanted him to live among his own people and deliver them. But to do that, he had to leave his life of luxury, and wealth, and power – he even had to give up his status as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. And he had to live in poverty, in the slums, among the slaves.
- v. What does this story teach us about faith?
 - 1. Why was Moses willing to suffer for Christ? Verse 26 tells us.
 - 2. **Hebrews 11:26** “For he considered reproach for the sake of Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, since he was looking ahead to the reward.”
 - 3. Moses had faith that if he chose to suffer for Christ, then he would get a heavenly reward greater than any earthly reward. And for that reason, he was willing to suffer for Christ. Faith is willing to suffer for Christ.
- vi. The founding fathers of America knew something about suffering and sacrifice. Of the fifty-six courageous men who signed the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, many did not survive the war. Five were captured by the British and tortured before they died. Nine others died in the Revolutionary War, either from its hardships or its bullets. Twelve had their homes sacked, looted, burned, or occupied by the enemy. Two lost their sons in battle. One had two sons captured. Those men were willing

to suffer for freedom, for the vision of a free nation. People of faith are willing suffer for Christ.

- vii. Faith is willing to suffer for Christ. It is willing to do God's will – to obey, to speak up, to stand firm, to evangelize, to resist temptation -- even if it means the loss of job, money, friendships, marriage, children, parents, health, freedom, and even life itself. Because faith looks forward to eternal rewards that far outweigh earthly anything this world can give.

3. Faith doesn't fear man.

- i. The next lesson of faith comes from the exodus.
- ii. **Hebrews 11:27** "By faith he left Egypt behind, not being afraid of the king's anger, for Moses persevered as one who sees him who is invisible."
- iii. His murder. When Moses left his life of luxury to help his people, something terrible happened. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, so he stepped in, killed the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. The next day he saw a Hebrew hitting another Hebrew and Moses asked him, "Why are you attacking your neighbor?" The man in the wrong said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you going to kill me like you killed the Egyptian?"
- iv. His flight to Midian. Then Moses knew that Pharaoh was going to find out about him killing the Egyptian, and so Moses fled. He ran away to the land of Midian for forty years. While he was there is married and started a family, and he became a shepherd.
- v. His call to lead. But God wasn't through with Moses yet. God told Moses to go back to Egypt and to deliver the Israelites from Pharaoh and lead them to the promised land.
- vi. His return. Moses did as God instructed. He went back to Egypt, to the palace, and he told Pharaoh, "God says, 'Let my people go.'"
- vii. What does this story teach us about faith?
 - 1. Faith doesn't fear man. It took a lot of courage for Moses to confront Pharaoh and demand the release of the Hebrews. Moses knew that such a request could result in his death.
 - 2. So why did he do it?
 - 3. Hebrews 11:27 says he wasn't afraid of the king's anger?
 - 4. Why not? The end of verse 27 says, "for Moses persevered as one who sees him who is invisible."
 - 5. Moses didn't fear man because he feared God.
 - 6. Faith doesn't fear man.
- viii. Fear is a common human emotion. It's something we all have to deal with. I looked up the top ten most common fears today: acrophobia (fear of heights); aerophobia (fear of flying); arachnophobia (fear of spiders); ophidiophobia (fear of snakes); cynophobia (fear of dogs); trypanophobia

(fear of injections); astraphobia (fear of thunder and lightning); agoraphobia (fear of being alone in a situation where escape might be difficult); mysophobia (fear of germs and dirt); social phobia (fear of social situations). We all have fears. But if you're not careful, fear can ruin your life. Brian Tracy says that fear is the greatest problem of human life.

- ix. And the most dangerous fear of all is the fear of man.
 - 1. **Proverbs 29:25** "The fear of mankind is a snare, but the one who trusts in the Lord is protected."
 - 2. Aristotle said that a chameleon changes colors because of fear. Fear will cause a Christian with weak faith to lose your religion faster than a chameleon changes colors.
 - 3. The Israelites didn't inhabit the promised land and had to live forty more years in the wilderness because they feared people. (Num 13)
 - 4. King Saul disobeyed God and lost the kingdom because he feared people. (1 Sam 13; 15:24).
 - 5. Peter denied Christ three times because he feared people (Jn 18).
 - 6. **Spurgeon** said, "Many would sooner be burned at the stake than be cruelly mocked."
 - 7. **Thomas Watson** said, "Fear is a debasing thing. It unmans man. It makes him afraid to be godly."
- x. But faith doesn't fear man.
 - 1. **Psalms 118:6** "The Lord is for me; I will not be afraid. What can a mere mortal do to me?"
 - 2. Or to put it in a better way, faith fears God more than man.
 - 3. **Luke 12:4-5** "4 I say to you, my friends, don't fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. 5 But I will show you the one to fear: Fear him who has authority to throw people into hell after death. Yes, I say to you, this is the one to fear!"
 - 4. Faith doesn't fear man because it sees that God is much bigger, much stronger, and much scarier than any man.
 - 5. Faith doesn't fear man because while man can inflict temporary pain, God can inflict eternal pain.
 - 6. Faith doesn't fear man because while you can hide things from man, you can't hide things from God.
 - 7. Faith doesn't fear man because there is nothing that man can do to me unless God allows it. Whatever man hurts, God can heal. Whatever man steals, God can restore.
 - 8. The person who has faith doesn't let the fear of man keep him from doing what is right, from saying what is right, from standing up for Jesus, from serving God, from saying no to sin.

9. The person of faith is not a people pleaser; he is a God-pleaser.
10. The person of faith is not a slave to peer pressure.
11. The person of faith is not afraid to be different for Christ.
12. The person of faith is not afraid to stand alone for Christ.
13. The person of faith is not afraid to look like a fool for Christ.
14. The person of faith is not afraid of rejection, and ridicule, and mockery for following Jesus.
15. Faith doesn't fear man.

4. Faith obeys God's word.

- i. Hebrews 11 tells us two more stories from Moses' life that both illustrate the same principle. Let's look at the first story.
- ii. **Hebrews 11:28** "By faith he instituted the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch the Israelites."
- iii. God sent Moses to deliver the Hebrews out of Egypt, but Pharaoh wouldn't allow it. Each time Pharaoh refused, God sent a plague against the Egyptians. This happened ten times. (1) First, all the water in the land was turned to blood. (2) Then God overwhelmed the land with frogs. They were in the bedroom, on the bed, in the oven, in the dishes. (3) Then God assaulted the land with gnats, (4) and then with flies. (5) Then God inflicted a severe plague on their livestock. (6) Then God struck the Egyptians with boils on their skin – on the people and the animals. (7) Then God rained down the worst hail in the history of Egypt. (8) Then God attacked them with locusts that ate all the crops. (9) Then God covered the land with thick darkness. (10) Finally, God punished the Egyptians with the death of the firstborn. On a designated night, God was going to send an angel to every house in Egypt to kill the firstborn son, and the firstborn among the livestock.
- iv. But God gave Moses detailed instructions so the Hebrews would not be harmed. He told him that each family was to take a lamb and smear its blood on the doorframe of the house. And that night if the angel of death saw the blood of the lamb, he would pass over their house and not harm them.
- v. The night of plague came, and all the Jews followed God's instructions. The Egyptians all lost their firstborn, but the Hebrews were untouched. Ever since then the Hebrews remember that day with a holiday called the Passover – because God over their homes
- vi. The last story about Moses is found in verse 29.
- vii. **Hebrews 11:29** "By faith they crossed the Red Sea as though they were on dry land. When the Egyptians attempted to do this, they were drowned."

- viii. After the tenth plague, Pharaoh didn't just let the Hebrews leave, he ordered them to leave immediately. So the Hebrews left Egypt, and they stopped and camped by the Red Sea. But after they left, Pharaoh had a change of heart. He and his soldiers got in their chariots and they chased after the Hebrews. When the Hebrews saw Pharaoh coming, they cried out to the Lord. God gave Moses instructions. He told him to raise his staff, and stretch out his hand over the sea. When Moses did that, the waters of the sea parted, and the ground became dry. Then the Hebrews walked through the Red Sea safely to the other side. But when Pharaoh and his men got there, they tried to follow them through, but the walls of water came crashing down on them, killing them all.
- ix. What is the lesson of faith here?
1. Faith obeys God's instructions.
 2. By faith, Moses obeyed God's instructions and told the people to smear their doorframes with the blood of the lamb.
 3. By faith, Moses obeyed God's instructions and raised his staff over the Red Sea.
 4. When God commands, faith obeys.
- x. Elizabeth Elliot tells the story of when her brother Dave was very small and hated the ocean. When he took a short trip to the beach, their mother tried again and again to persuade him to come in and ride the waves with her, but he screamed and ran away. At the end of the stay, he timidly ventured into the water. Soon he was jumping and diving, plunging and splashing through the waves in an ecstasy of delight. Suddenly it came over him that this ecstasy was about to end, for the summer was over and tomorrow we would head back to the city. He burst into tears and howled at their mother, "Why didn't you make me go in?"
- xi. Why didn't that child obey his mother? He didn't trust her. She told him it would be fun and he would love it. But he didn't trust her. He knew that she loved him and was much smarter than him, but he didn't trust her, so he didn't obey. And because he didn't obey, he missed out.
- xii. Why don't we obey? Because we don't trust God. We don't trust that His will is truly what is best for us.
- xiii. Faith obeys God.
- xiv. Faith and obedience are inseparable.
- xv. **W.E. Vine** said, "When a man obeys God he gives the only possible evidence that in his heart he believes God."
- xvi. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** said, "Only he who believes truly obeys, and only he who obeys truly believes."

- xvii. Faith believes there is a God, who is in charge, who has given us commands, His commands are for our good, and He will reward us for obedience.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. Hebrews 11:1 tells us what faith is, and then the rest of the chapter tells us what faith does.
2. What is faith? Faith is confidence in God, that He is who He says He is and that He will do what He says He will do.
3. What does faith do?
 - i. Faith sees from God's perspective.
 - ii. Faith is willing to suffer for Christ.
 - iii. Faith doesn't fear man.
 - iv. Faith obeys God's word.
4. Moses lived 120 years. He spent his first forty years thinking he was a somebody. He spent the next forty years learning that he was a nobody. Then he spent his last forty years discovering that if you have faith in God, a nobody can be a somebody.
5. God wants to do amazing things in and through your life. Your story is not going to be like Moses' story; God wants to give you your own amazing story. But it begins and ends with faith in God. Confidence in God.
6. It begins with faith in God's son, Jesus Christ, whom God sent to die on the cross for your sins. When you believe in Jesus, God will give you eternal life. He will change you. He will grow your faith. He will begin your faith journey.
7. Have you put your faith in Jesus?