

Moses' Enduring Faith

Hebrews 11:27

Halifax: 19 November 2023

Introduction:

Today we will continue our sermon series in Hebrews.

- We have been looking at models of faith for us to imitate.
- Last week, we came to Moses, and I told you that we'd probably have two or three sermons on him.

Today we are going to focus on Hebrews 11:27.

- It tells us that Moses endured by seeing God who is invisible.
- We touched on this verse last week, but today, I want to dig deeper into Moses' example of faith that endures.
 - This model may seem out of reach for the likes of us!
 - But we must remember—the Holy Spirit has given it to us for us to imitate.
 - We are to ask God to help us have faith like Moses.

Listen now as I read to you from God's word.

- Like last week, I will begin with Hebrews 11:23 and read to verse 27.
- This is God's holy and infallible word:

Hebrews 11:23-27: By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of

God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

May the Lord help us to have faith that endures.

I. You endure by faith—when you believe that God will do what He has promised.

A. Let me tell you about this man Moses!

1. He was born to the nation of Israel, the people that God had chosen to bring Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, into the world.
 - Some 400 years prior, the Lord had told their forefather Abraham that his family would grow very quickly, but that they would be slaves in Egypt.
 - But after 400 years, He would bring them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and bring them into the land of Canaan, where God had sent Abraham.
 - It would be their task to destroy all the people of Canaan because of the wickedness and idolatry of those people. They were steeped in idolatry.
 - People turn to idols because they hate God, so Israel was to destroy them all and live in their land under God's rule—loving Him and loving each other and living in the beautiful ways He designed us to live.

- God would also give them priests who would make sacrifices for sin that would testify that God was going to provide a Saviour to take away their sins.
 - Moses was born to this people of Israel as the time was getting near for the promise of emancipation from Egypt to be fulfilled.
 - But at the time, it looked utterly hopeless.
 - Pharaoh was concerned about them because they had become about 500,000 men plus women and children—perhaps one and a quarter million people.
 - Pharaoh had put them under slavery to keep them subdued and the slavery was rigorous.
 - Since they had continued to increase even with that, he had ordered that all males born to them be cast into the river.
 - As we saw last week, Moses’ parents trusted God. They knew the promises God had made to their people, and so to them and their son.
 - So they hid him, trusting God. After three months when they put him in a little ark in the river among the reeds to keep him hidden.
 - In God’s providence, Pharaoh’s daughter found him and adopted him. She even agreed to let his mother be his nurse.
 - As a result, Moses got the best education Egypt could offer, had the privilege of being the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, and yet at the same time, was taught by his birth mother about the promises of God.
 - Last week, we saw that when Moses grew up, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and choose rather to identify with God’s people—even though they were afflicted.
 - He recognised rightly that it was much better to be identified with God’s people than to have all the riches and pleasures of Egypt because the blessing of God was eternal—Egypt’s was only temporal.
 - Moses believed God’s promise. He knew that the time had drawn near for him and his people to be delivered from Egypt.
2. In view of God’s promise, Moses began to make some efforts to help his people...
- We are given this account in Exodus 2:11-15: **Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. ¹² So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³ And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you striking your companion?” ¹⁴ Then he said, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” So Moses feared and said, “Surely this thing is known!” ¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.**
3. We could say that this was the first time Moses forsook Egypt, but this is not the time we are told about in our Scripture text, Hebrews 11:27.

- Heb 11:27 says that he was not afraid: **“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.”**
 - When he left on this first occasion, he fled because he did fear the king!
 - He went to Midian and ended up marrying the daughter of a priest who lived there. He became a shepherd and remained there for forty years.
 - We can see that he was quite discouraged because he had two sons, but didn’t even give them the sign of God’s promise to His people—circumcision.
 - It seems that he had lost confidence in the promise of God’s deliverance.
4. But then one day, God came to him in a glorious theophany—He spoke to him out of bush that was engulfed in flames, but did not burn.
- God told Moses that He wanted him to go and lead the people out of Egypt—all of them. He was to go and tell Pharaoh that the LORD God said, “Let My people go that they may serve Me!”
 - God said that Pharaoh would not want to do this, but that He would do all kinds of signs to humble Pharaoh and make him yield.
 - And then Moses was to bring the people out and lead them to the land that God had promised to their father Abraham some four centuries before.
- B. It is now, in going to Egypt this second time, that we see the incredible faith of Moses!
1. Look at Hebrews 11:27 again because it describes how Moses conducted himself this second time when he came to take the people out of Egypt:
 - **“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.”**
 - He was fearless because he saw God who is invisible.
 - He had faith in God who had promised.
 - He believed that God, who he saw by faith, could and would deliver the people from Pharaoh.
 2. Just think about how utterly impossible it was for Moses to bring these people out of Egypt by human strength or force.
 - Moses was a rejected prince of Egypt that Pharaoh had wanted to kill.
 - And now Moses was going to walk up and tell Pharaoh that God whom he did not acknowledge was demanding him to release 600,000 slaves along with their families so they could offer sacrifices to Him.
 - No way would he do that!
 - And what could Moses do?
 - He knew that the people had lost hope. They were not willing to stand up.
 - He knew that even if they tried, the Egyptians had a very tight and rigorous hold on them.
 - And how would he take them across the desert to the land of Canaan... and once they got there, how could they overthrow the Canaanites?
 - Would these great and mighty people just let them walk in and destroy them?

- The whole enterprise was completely impossible—but God had promised!
3. This is where faith comes into the picture.
 - By faith Moses endured because he believed God’s promise.
 - He trusted God to do what He said He would do. Moses endured by faith.
 - His example is truly outstanding.

TRANS> In a moment, we are going to look at some of the things that he endured, but first,

II. Make sure that you connect with Moses as a model for you.

- **Moses shows us how we ought to trust God—what it looks like to trust Him.**

A. God has ultimately had one promise from the beginning.

1. He has said that He is going to fill the earth with people that beautifully live for His glory in pure and holy love for Him and for each other.
 - From the very day that He created the first man, he blessed him and called him to fill the earth with people...with people who were beautiful worshippers of God and image bearers of God.
2. Our first parents trusted God to enable them to do this—for a short time—but then they severed themselves from God by rebelling against His rule.
 - God pronounced sorrow and death upon them, but He also renewed His plan to fill the earth with godly worshippers who live in His beautiful ways.
 - He told of a people that would be born of the woman who would return to Him, and of a Son that would be born to them who would deliver them all, establishing God’s beautiful kingdom of righteousness that would fill the earth at last after a time of conflict.
3. Moses and his nation were the people that God had brought forth to be His people at the time of Moses...
 - The next great event for them was to be their deliverance from Egypt so they could live under God’s rule in Canaan, the promised land.
 - The time was at hand. Moses was to lead them out of Egypt...
 - That was the work that was to be done in his generation that related to the great promise of God to establish His glorious kingdom.
4. A lot has happened since then!
 - God did bring them out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, and eventually (after Moses was dead) He did give them the promised land where He set them up under His rule—and He kept making the promise of His Son who would come to deliver them more and more clear.
 - Then, 2000 years ago, He sent Him—Jesus, the righteous Son of God.
 - And Jesus did what no one else could do.
 - He went to the cross to atone for our sin that we might be forgiven, and then He rose from the dead and sent out His disciples to make disciples of all nations with the promise that He would rule from heaven until He makes all His enemies His footstool.

5. We are involved in this great work to fill the world with godly people just as Moses was involved in this work in bringing about the early stages of this kingdom.
 - And it is just as impossible for us to expect to do this as it was for Moses to expect that he could bring the people out of Egypt in his day.
 - Moses endured because he saw Him who is invisible.
 - He kept on believing the promise even though it was utterly impossible for it to be fulfilled, apart from God bringing it about.
 - Hebrews 11:27 presents Moses' endurance as a model for us of how we ought to endure. It was given to the Hebrew believers in the first century and it is given to us.
 - It is so easy to become discouraged and to wonder how we could ever see the earth filled with godly people—
 - If we focus on our ability, we will want to go off to Midian and forget about it.
 - We will want to go off and have children that we do not baptise because we have lost hope.
 - But instead, we need to hear the promise of God and the call of God and go forth with renewed hope!

TRANS> This is very helpful. But there is also a warning in Moses' example about misplaced trust:

B. You must be careful to trust in what God has actually promised.

1. Moses had discouragement at first because though he had the promise that his people would be delivered from bondage in Egypt,
 - He went about trying to make it happen in his own way and he was about 40 years too early.
 - It was right and good that he wanted the promised deliverance, but it was not good that he did not wait on God.
2. Over the years as a pastor, I have often seen God's people misrepresent what God has promised.
 - Instead of trusting in what God has actually promised, they trust in what they want Him to promise—and then they get discouraged.
 - I ran into some old people about 35 years ago who told me that the Lord had told them that He was going to return before they died.
 - I don't know where they got that, but it wasn't from God.
 - I know two men who said God told them the girl that they were to marry, but in both cases, He didn't tell the girl.
 - Both of these men lost confidence and God and their faith failed. One of them has limped along, and the other has completely left the true faith.
 - I have known people who prayed that they would be healed or that a loved one would be healed, but they forgot that our Lord told us in this world we would have much tribulation.

- Healing will come for all who are in Him, but it will not come in this present time, but at the resurrection. Anyone who is healed now is only temporarily healed until they get sick or injured and die.
 - I have seen lots of people take one of God’s conditional promises—like His promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14: **“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”**
 - They will pray for God to heal our land and then be discouraged that God has not kept His promise and start to doubt Him.
 - But the promise is to those who repent...
 - Likewise, there is the promise of God to our children.
 - That is a promise to be claimed indeed, but it is conditional on our diligent observance of His covenant which we can only do by His grace.
 - When we turn to idols, God will often chasten us the way He chastened David when he turned to adultery with Bathsheba.
 - To use another illustration—God says that He will preserve His church. Sometimes a believer will pray for their church and it will go downhill and become completely apostate.
 - The believer will say, “What happened to God’s promise to preserve His church? I was in the United Church and now the whole denomination has abandoned the gospel and the ways of God. Where is God’s promise?”
 - And the answer is that the LORD never promised to preserve every congregation or every denomination.
 - He promised to preserve His church and He is doing that.
 - When Jesus came, most of the church including the official leaders rejected Him as Messiah—but the church went on in those who believed. Jesus preserved it.
3. So what is the point of all of this?
- It is that your faith needs to be in the promises of God—not in things that He has not promised.
 - His promise is that He will establish His kingdom of righteousness and that it will fill the earth.
 - Just how or when that will happen, only God knows.
 - But it is for us to tenaciously believe the promise and cling to it even when it looks like it could never happen.
 - We need to see Him who is invisible.
 - Then we can endure. Then our faith will not fail.

III. Now let’s take a look at some of the things that Moses endured that we must endure by seeing Him who is invisible.

A. You need to endure when God’s promise is impossible.

1. We have already seen this. It is the main point of our text.

- Moses was to go and bring about 1.5 million discouraged people who were carefully watched slaves out of the most powerful nation of the world.
 - He was to lead them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan.
 - Then they were to overthrow the people there because of their wickedness and live there as God's people.
 - Moses held on to the promise—He saw Him who is invisible.
2. We are called to be godly people who will fill the earth with godly people.
- Yet, we see all most all the seats of power taken by those who do not love God.
 - We see our nation and other nations becoming more and more ungodly and we see many of our brothers and sisters around the world ridiculed and persecuted.
 - Endure—seeing Him who is invisible. He will bring it to pass.
 - Keep on trusting, keep on praying, keep on leaning on Christ, keep on reading His word, keep on worshipping, keep on testifying of your hope, keep on obeying your God.
 - He will bring it to pass.
- B. Second, you need to endure by seeing God when you are intimidated by man.
1. Moses was certainly intimidated when God told him to go and tell Pharaoh, “The LORD says, ‘Let My people go that they may serve Me!’ ”
- He knew that humanly speaking, Pharaoh had the power to destroy him.
 - He was concerned about his eloquence, but God reminded him that He made his mouth.
 - Moses went and Moses endured, seeing Him who is invisible.
2. Who intimidates you?
- Are you afraid to tell others about your faith for fear that they might ridicule you or that you might lose your job?
 - Are you afraid of what people might say if you tell them that you cannot do something because it is Lord's Day or because you love God and do not want to sin against Him?
 - Are you ashamed to tell people that God created us and that we fell into sin and that unless we repent, we will all perish?
 - You need to endure—seeing Him who is invisible.
- C. Third, you need to endure by seeing God when things do not seem to be working out.
1. When Moses first told his people that God had remembered His promise and was at hand to deliver them, they took heart.
- But after he spoke to Pharaoh, Pharaoh was angry and intensified their labours.
 - The temptation would have been to pack up and go home and to say it didn't work.
2. What kind of opposition do you face when you try to serve the Lord?

- Do you make resolutions to be faithful—and then something happens to throw you off—sickness, failure—
 - That is not the time to give up.
 - That is the time to look upon Him who is invisible—to look to Him who promised.
- D. Fourth, you need to endure by seeing God when no one stands with you.
1. When Pharaoh increased the bondage after Moses' first request to release the people, they were not only discouraged, but also rejected Moses.
 - They said that he was a deceiver and they refused to stand with him.
 - They did not believe God's promise.
 2. Jesus had this when He told 5000 people who wanted to follow Him that He had come to save them from their sins. They rejected Him because they wanted Him to free them from the Romans.
 - But Jesus endured. He saw Him who is invisible and continued His work to save His people from their sins.
 3. Do you sometimes feel lonely in the Lord's service?
 - Perhaps you have family members who reject Him.
 - But the truth is not decided by poll.
 - Even if you are alone in your service, you and God make a majority!
 - You can endure only by faith—you must see the smile of the invisible God.
- E. You need to endure by seeing God when you are asked to make inappropriate compromises.
1. Pharaoh told Moses that he would let the people go if only the men went.
 - When Moses refused, he then said they could go but could not take their livestock.
 - After a relentless battle such as Moses had had with Pharaoh, it would be natural to compromise and take what he could get.
 - But Moses saw Him who is invisible and He is Lord.
 - No compromise could be made.
 2. As those who are seeking to fully obey Christ, there is always pressure on us to compromise.
 - It would be much easier for us if we did not hold to biblical distinctions in gender roles, if we embellish our worship with things that God did not command, if we are more accepting of gay marriage.
- F. You need to endure by seeing God when you are in the heat of a crisis.
1. After Moses brings Israel out of Egypt, Pharaoh decides to send out his forces to pursue them.
 - The people see the Egyptians coming and become frantic because they are hemmed in by mountains on one side and by the Red Sea on the other.

- But Moses calmly declares: **Ex 14:13: “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.”**
2. It is easy to lose composure when terror strikes,
 - But when we see Him who is invisible, we can endure—we can go on in faith.
 - We can rest in the LORD and recognise that we are in His hands.
 - He is much greater than Pharaoh or any crisis that may come our way.
 - We have no need to panic when our eyes are on Him.

TRANS> These are six occasions when you need to see Him who is invisible so that you might endure—the way Moses did.

- What a model he is of one who trusted in the Lord!

Conclusion:

In closing, let me show you how you can cultivate that kind of trust.

1. First of all, to have faith in God you must spend time in His word.
 - You need to commune with God in His word—give yourself to diligent study and meditation. Don’t just make excuses. You cannot know Him and His promises if you do not receive His word.
2. And don’t just hear it—take it in as His word.
 - Apply it. Meditate on it. Speak to Him about it.
 - Pray to Him and ask Him to keep your eyes on Him so that you will not lose heart—so that you might endure, seeing Him who is invisible.
 - It is by trusting in Him that you can endure.
3. And obey Him as your Lord.
 - He is Lord! You don’t know Him as a great and mighty Lord who must not be crossed if you take and pick what you want to obey—
 - If you take His commandment to observe the Sabbath but sometimes do and sometimes don’t; or His commandment not to gossip, but you still take pleasure in it; or His commandment to abstain from fleshly lusts but give in to them.
 - If you do that, you treat Him with dishonour as one who carries no weight.
 - Of course you won’t be able to trust Him when your faith is tested if He is a featherweight!
 - It is only when you see Him who is invisible as the God of all glory that you will be able to endure.