

June 18, 2017

## ***Faith: The Choice to Believe***

***"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for...therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and protector of our faith..."***

Hebrews 11:1-12:2

If Abraham is the Father of the Faithful, then Moses will always be the Law Giver. The author of the Hebrew letter says of Moses, ***"By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict...By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time...By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered when he saw him who is invisible...By faith he kept the Passover..."*** (Hebrews 11:23-29)

The story of Moses begins in the book of Exodus. It begins many years after the time of Abraham and the Patriarch's descendants have become a mighty people growing from about seventy to more than two million. They have become a nation of slaves in the land of Egypt and at the time of Moses' birth are under an edict from Pharaoh to put their male children to death at birth.

As the Hebrew author notes, Moses' parents hid him away and refused to obey that law. Eventually, of course, he would have been impossible to hide and so his mother arranged to leave him in the Nile near where Pharaoh's daughter would come to bathe and offer sacrifices. The Princess, as Moses' mother had intended, took the child as her own, even hiring the mother to nurse him.

Moses was raised as a Prince of Egypt; trained in all of the wisdom of that advanced civilization. At forty he sought to rejoin his people, but they rejected him even after he rescued one of them by killing an Egyptian taskmaster. The killing forced Moses to flee to the area of Mount Horeb or Sinai where he would spend the next forty years herding sheep.

Finally, at age eighty, Moses was called by God to lead the people of Israel out of slavery and into the Promised Land. After completely destroying the might of Egypt through ten horrific plagues, Moses met God at Mount Sinai and there received the Ten Commandment Law, which as we have discussed before, is much more complex than just those ten laws.

For the next forty years Moses will lead the people of Israel from the Sinai through the wilderness wanderings and up to the very borders of the Promised Land, but he never gets to enter into it. Through all of those years Moses endured what God would call a ***"rebelious and stiff-necked people"***. They tried his patience more than once and on several occasions he was required to beg God not to destroy them for their sins.

Interestingly Moses reappears briefly during the life of Christ, meeting with our Lord and Elijah, the prophet, on the Mount of Transfiguration. As is true of all heroes of faith, Moses had to

choose to put his trust in *God* over and over again. Sometimes he was able to make that choice and sometimes, even the great *Law Giver*, chose to serve himself.

Moses was also a reluctant hero. When *God* initially called him from the burning bush Moses wanted him to find someone else claiming that he wasn't good enough, couldn't speak well enough, and wasn't ready. Moses learned, as we all must, that the strength to be a hero of faith does not come from within us, but it comes from *God* through us.

Like all of *God's* heroes of faith, Moses was just a man, empowered by *God* to do great things. You and I can also be heroes of faith in the same way. When we choose to put our confidence in *God* and rely on him, he can use us in powerful ways.

