

Text: Heb. 11:23-29

Title: "By faith Moses grew up to serve the Lord"

Time: 5/22/2016 am

Place: NBBC

Intro - Have you ever stopped to consider how God has worked in your life from the earliest days of your childhood to today to bring you to a church service like the one we are enjoying this morning? I am thankful for many providences of God as I consider how my life has been touched by His hand in this way.

My story begins with a visit my mom made to a Baptist children's camp in Wisconsin, which her Uncle Harry paid for her to attend. Mom trusted Christ as Savior at that camp as a young girl. She later married my dad in the Lutheran Church, and I was christened as a baby in that denomination. One day a life-insurance salesman visited my dad and led him to the Lord. I always wished that conversation were on a recording somewhere.

My dad followed a new job opportunity that brought our family to Northeastern Ohio, where we purchased a home whose yard was adjacent to the newly constructed building of Bible Community Church of Mentor. Mom heard the hymns while gardening one Sunday morning and suggested to Dad that we stop attending the Lutheran Church and start going to Bible Community. The hymns reminded Mom of the Baptist camp songs from her childhood.

I heard the gospel at that church faithfully proclaimed, and after years of resistance and procrastination, I trusted Christ as my Savior walking home from an evangelistic service one evening. God had brought me under especially severe conviction that evening. By the time I arrived home,

my burden was lifted, my sins were forgiven, and I knew the Lord had saved me.

As a child I had many opportunities to go to the kind of camp my mom went to once as a girl. I can remember testimony times around the campfire, and one in particular in which I gave a testimony about the song, "I have decided to follow Jesus; no turning back, no turning back." I had faced some temptation to turn back, and that week at camp I decided not to turn back.

Our passage tells us that Moses had a childhood that was touched by the providences of the Lord, and that the day came when he grew up to decide to serve the Lord (v. 24). By faith, Moses grew up to serve the Lord.

This is a passage especially important for our young people this morning. There comes a time when a young person comes of age, and that is a time for choosing. I want us to notice three things from the passage about Moses's choice.

I. Moses grew up to serve the Lord because of the faithful choices of others (v. 23).

III: During World War 2, Winston Churchill was honored by the University of Rochester with an honorary doctorate. In response he gave a radio address on June 16, 1941, from London to America. The day before the British troops in North Africa had lost half of their tanks on the first day of Operation Battleaxe, in the hopes of freeing Tobruk from Rommel. The operation ultimately would be unsuccessful.

Here is part of what Churchill said in that radio address: "The destiny of mankind is not decided by material computation. When great causes are on the move in the world,

stirring all men's souls, drawing them from their firesides, casting aside comfort, wealth and the pursuit of happiness in response to impulses at once awe-striking and irresistible, we learn that we are spirits, not animals, and that something is going on in space and time, and beyond space and time, which, whether we like it or not, spells duty."

Appl: Egypt's Pharaoh had issued a command that the male babies of Israelite families were to be treated like animals. They were to be cast into the Nile River and drowned (Exod. 1:22). When Moses's mom and dad saw the son God had blessed them with, something happened to them – they saw that he was not an animal, but a precious child, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

In the words of Churchill, "In response to impulses at once awe-striking and irresistible, [they] learn[ed] that [they were] spirits, not animals, and that something [was] going on in space and time, and beyond space and time, which, whether [they] lik[ed] it or not, spell[ed] duty." These parents felt it was their duty to give Moses a chance to grow up to serve the Lord. They made this choice by faith. Moms and dads, have we made a choice by faith to fulfill that duty, to believe that our children are spirits and not animals, and that they need to know and serve the Lord of heaven?

Appl2: The text of Exodus 2 tells us that Moses's mother, Jochebed, was especially heroic in hiding Moses for three months against the orders of Pharaoh (vv. 1-3). Miriam, Moses's older sister, is also commended in a special way (vv. 4-10). But our author has a different emphasis in his recounting of what happened. The word *parents* in v. 23 is actually the plural of the word *father* (*fathers*). There is another word for *parents* in the Greek language (*γονεῖς*), but

this word (πατήρ) is translated 372 times as *father* by our KJV translators. Only here do they translate *parents*.

I point this out because I believe that our author wants us to understand that Moses's mother's faith had help. There was an entire community of believers that rallied to see that Moses had a chance to grow up to serve the Lord. They were Moses's spiritual fathers. I believe that the choices we make as adults in this local church have an impact, to encourage or to discourage, the children of this church when it comes to serving the Lord. Together, we should want to pass our faith as a church on to the next generation. We should see our responsibility as that of spiritual fathers of a coming generation of the faithful. Moses grew up to serve the Lord because of the choice of others. Who will serve the Lord because of the choices we have made?

II. Moses grew up to serve the Lord because of the faithful choice he made (vv. 24-27).

Appl: I want to pause to think about four choices Moses made to serve the Lord.

1. Moses chose one people over another (vv. 24-25a). On one side stood the powerful, the popular, the numerous, the praised – the household of Pharaoh's daughter. On the other stood the weak, the despised, the oppressed, and the suffering – the people of God. The choice is clear if you are choosing only by sight – you go with the household of Pharaoh. But Moses chose the people of God in spite of their condition because he made the choice by faith.

One commentator put it this way (Westcott): "Moses was able to recognize in a host of bondsmen a divine nation. By faith he saw what they were called to be." Moses believed

what God said about Israel, not what man thought of them. That was his faith.

What do you believe about our little local church? Do you know that the Bible never uses the adjective *little* to describe any local church? Even when the Lord tells us that at times the church includes only two or three, He does so to tell us how big and important their work is as a local church – “There I am in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:17-20). The NT labels used to describe the local church are *church of the living God*, *household of God*, *pillar of the truth*, *ground of the truth*, and *the body of Christ*. How do we conclude that about us? The same way Moses concluded what he did about the people of God. You believe what God says – by faith we choose one people over another.

2. Moses chose one experience over another (v. 25-26). On the one hand were all the pleasures, comforts, and ease of sin; on the other was suffering and affliction. What would make a man choose suffering over pleasure? Moses did so by faith. He believed two things God says about this choice:

(1) the pleasures of sin and the sufferings of righteousness are only temporary (v. 25, “for a season”; 2 Cor. 4:17, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”);

(2) the sufferings of righteousness are the reproach of Christ (v. 26; Rom. 15:3, “For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me”; Christ bore the reproach our sin deserved, not pleasing Himself, in order to save us; that we can suffer for Him is an opportunity to show Him our love in return). Are we willing to believe these things about this choice between pleasure and suffering?

3. Moses chose one possession over another (v. 26). On the one hand were the treasures of the wealthiest nation in the world, Egypt; on the other was a promised reward in a life to come. How do you turn down the treasures of Egypt for a life of financial struggle? Moses did it by faith. He had faith in what God says about the things of this earth and treasures in heaven. One you cannot take with you; the other will be with you forever. He is no fool who loses what he cannot keep to keep what he cannot lose. Do we have that faith when it comes to our pursuit of possessions?

4. Moses chose one King over another (v. 27). On the one hand was the king you could see, who said that the men of Israel were born to be the slaves of Pharaoh, that they were little more than animals. On the other hand was the unseen King, who has said that the men of Israel were born to be a chosen nation of priests who were servants of Jehovah God. Moses's faith made the right choice.

Our text literally tells us that he endured because *he kept on focusing* on the One who cannot be seen. Our author will later exhort his readers to do the same, "Run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1-2).

Today we must choose between on the one hand a king who decrees that heterosexual people made so in God's image are really homosexual, and that males and females made so in God's image are really the opposite of what God made them to be, and on the other the King who made us and told us what we are in the Scripture. Will you and I have the right faith to choose the right king? Will we endure with an unwavering focus on the One who is unseen? Certainly, the choice that Moses made ended his chance for political power in Egypt. Ours may too, but still we must

not fear the Pharaohs of our day. Rather, we must fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell.

Moses grew up to serve the Lord because of the choices he made. What choices have we made when it comes to His people, His sufferings, His promised reward, and His sovereign kingship over our lives?

III. Moses grew up to serve the Lord and influence the choices of others (vv. 28-29).

Appl: Two events are remembered in these two verses, the Passover and Israel's crossing the Red Sea. What they have in common is the miraculous destruction of Egypt. What they also have in common is the salvation of Israel. When v. 28 tells us that Moses *kept* the Passover, it uses a perfect tense which emphasizes the continuing results of what he did on the generations that followed him. And notice that v. 29 tells us of the faith of *them*, not just him, in the crossing of the Red Sea. Moses, as a faithful servant of the Lord, was used of God to influence the choices of others to serve Him. Will there be a legacy written down in heaven about us someday, that we served the Lord and it influenced the choices of others to do the same? May the Lord make it so.

Conclusion: Moses chose to grow up to serve the Lord. Will you? Thomas Shepherd was an Anglican minister who faced difficult choices. Though he took Holy Orders in the Church of England, he separated from that Church over doctrinal issues and became pastor of the Castle Hill Meeting House (Independent) in Nottingham in 1694. He later moved to Bocking, where he began a parish in a barn in 1700, which was a very different experience from the cathedrals of British Anglicanism. The congregation erected a chapel in 1707, and Shepherd remained with this church

until the end of his life. He was a man who chose to serve the Lord. And we will close our service together with a hymn that he wrote about the reproach of Christ, which asks us how we shall chose, "Must Jesus Bear His Cross Alone?" .

"A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction – the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*