

Riverview Baptist Church  
Sunday School Teaching Plan  
May 18, 2014  
Hebrews 11:23-29  
“The Faith of Moses”

**Memory Verse**

“By faith Moses left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.” Heb 11:27, NIV

**The Big Idea:**

Sermon Topic: *Learning to Trust Jesus: Part 4 – Examples of the Faith: Moses*

Sunday School Scripture: Hebrews 11:23-29

Sunday School Title: “The Faith of Moses”

ESS: Through Moses’ faith, we learn that true faith is: unafraid, committed to God; focused on God; and willing to trust in the midst of trouble.

**REVIEW:** Last week, we studied the faith of the Old Testament patriarchs – Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Review what we learned from their lives and faith. You may even want to use some of the background info we learned last week to play a review game. Ask basic questions about Isaac, Jacob, or Joseph’s life and give prizes for correct answers. (EX: *Who was Isaac’s father? Abraham; Who were Jacob’s wives? Leah & Rachel; etc. Lessons Learned: Faith doesn’t have to be perfect; Faith in the face of death glorifies God; Faith passed down to others leaves a Godly legacy*)

This week, we’ll talk about another hero of the Old Testament: Moses. When you hear the name *Moses*, what comes to mind?

Moses is a hero of our faith, no doubt. But for the Jews, Moses was bigger than life. Most Jews associated Moses with the law and righteousness. Even the 10 commandments are called the Mosaic Law. And since the readers of the original book of Hebrews had a Jewish background, it’s important to realize that the author of Hebrews uses Moses’ faith as an important example. Here in Hebrews chapter 11 in the Faith Hall of Fame, the characters mentioned and applauded for their faith are purposefully handpicked to show this Jewish audience the importance of faith – not the law. In Hebrews 11:23-29, the original readers of Hebrews see the phrase “*by faith*” associated with Moses’ name at least 5 times in 7 short verses. Even Moses, the man who received God’s law, was considered righteous because of his FAITH. So what can we learn from Moses’ faith?

***READ Hebrews 11:23-29***

**THE FAITH OF MOSES TEACHES US:**

**1. Faith is not Afraid**

***READ Exodus 1:22-2:2***

Just a little background: the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. They were used by Pharaoh as slave labor to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses. The Bible said Pharaoh worked them “ruthlessly.” But a funny thing happened. The more they were oppressed and abused, the more the Israelites seemed to flourish. They were healthy and hard-working. And the harder and harsher the slave labor, the more the Israelites seemed to multiply! God was surely blessing His people in the midst of their enslavement. And this concerned Pharaoh. So in an effort to decrease the growing number of Israelites, Pharaoh ordered the midwives to kill all the male babies born in Israelite families. When this plan failed, Pharaoh ordered all parents to throw every newborn baby boy into the Nile River. Hebrews 11:23 gives us a glimpse of Moses’ parents. It was during this time of slavery and under the Pharaoh’s violent edict that Moses was born. The Bible says his parents hid and protected baby Moses for three months because they were “not afraid of the king’s edict.” Wow. Moses’ parents were slaves. They owned nothing and had no personal rights. Pharaoh himself had ordered them to throw their newborn baby boy into the river. And they refused. They disobeyed Pharaoh because they were unafraid. Their trust for God

outweighed their fear of future consequences. That's big. How many times in our own lives do we fail to step out in faith because we fear the unknown or worry about the consequences? At the most, fear can be paralyzing. At the least, fear can bear hesitation and doubt. But the great news is that we serve a God that is bigger than anything we fear. He knows the future, (in fact, He created it) and He's able to see us through any challenges we may face as we walk with Him in faith.

*What could have been some potential consequences if the disobedience of Moses' parents had been discovered? In our own lives, what are some future consequences we worry about when given a chance to step out in faith?*

## **2. Faith Declares Its Allegiance**

**READ Exodus 2:3-15**

As we can imagine, it became difficult for Moses' parents to hide him much longer. When baby Moses was about 3 months old, his mother placed him in a floating basket in the Nile River. Eventually the Pharaoh's daughter found him, kept him, and raised him. When Moses was 40 years old, Moses did something interesting. The Bible doesn't tell us how and when Moses realized he was truly an Israelite raised in the Pharaoh's family, but at some point this became significant to Moses. One day he decided to cut ties with Pharaoh's royal household and cast in his lot with his Israelite people. Hebrews 11:24-25 tells us that Moses "refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter and chose to be mistreated along with the people." Think about that. By aligning with the Israelites, Moses chose to defend slaves and point a finger at Pharaoh's family. Moses quickly went from rich to poor; from royalty to slave; from recognized and respected to wanted and chased. I'm sure it wasn't easy to walk away from the wealth, comfort, and security Pharaoh's house afforded him. But Moses chose to pursue justice and righteousness. He cared more about defending his own ancestors and God's chosen people than living in ease. Moses realized that he had to make a choice: either continue to live a comfortable life in Pharaoh's household or step out in faith and align himself with the Israelites. He couldn't do both. Limb sitting or fence riding was not an option. It was either one or the other. He had to declare His allegiance... worship Pharaoh or God. And the same should be true for us. At some point in our lives, we must decide whom we will serve. Will we serve the world, or God? We can't do both. Moses chose to follow God, and in so doing he walked away from wealth, comfort, and security. Following God doesn't always mean you'll live in poverty, be in constant danger, or forsake all comforts for the rest of your life. But, following God DOES require a willingness to forsake anything for Christ if asked to. I fear that many Christians have become so comfortable that we align more with the world around us than with God. We spend more time thinking about and pursuing material things than we do learning about God. The majority of our time, money, and efforts are spent on worldly things, not Godly things. Maybe we're fence-riders. And maybe this pleases God.... but maybe it doesn't. Could it be time to declare your true allegiance?

*In your life, do you align more with God or the world? If you've declared your allegiance to Christ, what makes it difficult to live for Him 100%? How can we, as Christians, look different from the world around us to declare our allegiance to Christ?*

## **3. Faith Focuses on God**

**READ Exodus 12:33- 39**

After 430 years of slavery, repeated negotiation attempts from Moses, and multiple plagues from God, the Israelites were finally set free. Scripture tells us the night they left there were 600,000 men on foot. This doesn't even count the women and children or livestock. They carried only what they could pack in a last minute departure. They had no map. They weren't sure of their destination. Their supplies were limited and the challenges plentiful. The desert was harsh and the dangers were many. But on they went. Hebrews 11:27 tells us that it was Moses' faith that drove him to leave. It says, "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible." Despite all the obstacles that were ahead, Moses walked on because He focused on God. Instead of thinking about the unknowns or dwelling on the challenges that would inevitably come, Moses focused on God. I'm sure this must have been challenging for Moses. He was the leader for hundreds of thousands of people – people who depended on Him for everything! But He focused on God – not the path, or the problems, or the challenges. Moses focused on God. And by focusing on God, Moses was setting an example for the Israelite people, showing them by his faith that God was in control and was more than able to handle anything and everything that came their way. This is a good reminder for you and me. We can't

always control what happens in our lives, but we can choose how we respond. And faith responds by keeping the focus on God.

*Think about the New Testament account of Peter walking on the water toward Jesus. What happened when Peter took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the waves swirling beneath him? In our own lives, what can happen if we take our eyes off Jesus and instead focus on our problems? What are some practical ways we can help keep our focus on God, even in tough times?*

#### **4. Faith Trusts in the Midst of Trouble**

**READ Exodus 14:5-28**

Hebrews 11:29 alludes to the well-known story of the crossing of the Red Sea. It says, “by faith, the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.” The Israelites were definitely in trouble. They had left Egypt and escaped bondage. But it looked like their freedom was to be short lived. Pharaoh suddenly realized that freeing the Israelites meant he no longer had a slave labor force. Pharaoh changed his mind and pursued the Israelites with his army. He caught up to them as they were camping right at the edge of the Red Sea. Surrounded by water on one side and Pharaoh’s approaching army on the other, the Israelites were terrified. Scripture tells us they “cried out to the Lord” for help. The situation looked hopeless and escaped seemed impossible. But we know that God made a way. Miraculously, God parted the waters of the Red Sea for the Israelites to walk through. But once they were safely on the other side, God allowed the waters to flow back, drowning Pharaoh and his army. Just when the end seemed near, God rescued His people. But his rescue plan wasn’t easy. He required their participation. It wouldn’t have been difficult for God to simply smite Pharaoh and his army with an illness or murderous plague as they pursued the Israelites. So why didn’t he? Why didn’t God just protect the Israelites some other way? And why did God allow the Egyptians to go after His people in the first place?

*Why didn’t God just protect the Israelites some other way? And why did God allow the Egyptians to go after His people in the first place?*

**READ Exodus 14:1-4**

*Based on Exodus 14:1-4, why did God allow the Egyptians to pursue the Israelites?*

The story of the crossing of the Red Sea is familiar to most, but few realize that God planned the encounter. God purposefully hardened Pharaoh’s heart and led him to pursue the Israelites. God purposefully allowed His people to be surrounded with water on one side and an army on the other. It wasn’t an accident or an unforeseen event from a drama movie. So why does God do this? So that their faith could be tested and He could receive glory. God gave the Israelites an opportunity to trust Him in the midst of trouble. He gave them a chance to call upon Him, admit their own weakness, and trust in His strength and deliverance. And God’s deliverance required the Israelites to walk between 2 huge walls of water. They had to put feet to their faith to get to the other side. But the end result was safety and victory for God’s people and an unforgettable, praise-worthy, reputation-forging miracle from the one true God. God allowed His people to encounter trouble and wanted them to trust Him through it. This exercised and strengthened their faith and provided them with a glimpse of God’s limitless power and faithfulness. Trusting God in the midst of trouble can be tough. But the results are worth it. Moses told the trembling Israelites, “Do not be afraid! Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Lord will fight for you; you need only be still” (Exodus 14:13-14). So when the situation seems hopeless and a solution seems impossible, have faith! Trust God through your trouble, and watch Him deliver you.

**CONCLUSION:** Through Moses’ faith, we learn that true faith is unafraid, committed to God; focused on God; and willing to trust in the midst of trouble.

**APPLY:** How will you declare your allegiance to God this week? This week, how will you focus more on God and less on the challenges around you? Encourage someone who is in the midst of trouble. Pray for that person to have faith in God and His deliverance.

## **STUDY NOTES:**

*(These are for your personal study. This is NOT the lesson.)*

*Study Guide by David Guzik, 2001. Available online: [www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik\\_david](http://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david)*

**By faith Moses ... was hidden three months by his parents:** Moses' parents showed faith when they perceived that he was specially favored by God, they took measures of faith to save his life despite danger.

**Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter:** Moses showed faith when he let God chart his destiny instead of letting Pharaoh do it.

**Choosing rather to suffer affliction:** This choice had consequences. Moses knew that to go God's way meant to **suffer affliction** rather than **to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin**. Sin does have its pleasures; but Moses properly saw them as passing, even if they should last our entire earthly lives!

**The reproach of Christ:** Moses probably didn't know it, at the time but the persecution he suffered for his choice of servanthood to God and His people put him in the company of Jesus - who suffered to set men free.

**By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king:** Moses' natural eyes could see the danger from Pharaoh, and understood the danger in remaining anywhere near Egypt. Yet his eye of faith could see **Him who is invisible**, and he understood that God was a greater fact in his situation than an angry Pharaoh was.

**By faith he kept the Passover:** It took faith to believe that the blood of a lamb on the doorpost would save a household from the terror of the angel of death. But Moses had that faith, and led the nation in observance of **the Passover**.

**By faith they passed through the Red Sea:** The difference between the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and the Egyptians who followed them was not courage, but faith. The Egyptians had as much (or more) courage than the Israelites, but not the same **faith**- and they each had different fates. The Israelites **passed through**, and the Egyptians **were drowned**.