

HEBREWS 11:23-29

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Hebrews chapter 11 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

We are spending several weeks in Hebrews chapter 11 as we are looking at the men and women of faith. Not perfect people, but people who walked by faith and not by sight and here in Hebrews chapter 11 God sees the faithfulness of these men and women, not their failures!

We are currently in the last division of this letter – ***THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS OVER THE PRINCIPLE OF FAITH*** and we are specifically looking at here in Hebrews chapter 11 – ***EXAMPLES OF FAITH!***

Now some of you may be wondering why we are spending so much time in this section of Scripture that has been called ***THE HALL OF FAITH!***

Keep in mind that Paul was writing to Jewish Christians, in Jerusalem, who were being drawn back to Judaism, back to the rituals because of persecution and seeing the magnificence of the Temple every day; all these were drawing them back to the Law!

Again, what in the world does that have to do with why we are spending so much time here in Hebrews chapter 11?

Because we are living in a day when the pressures of the world, of family, of friends may be drawing you back to the old ways, moving you away from Christ.

And Paul wants us to understand, through the Holy Spirit, that we need to anchor our life in Christ, there is no one or nothing that will save us except Jesus and thus, where else are you going to go when Jesus has the words of eternal life!

And keep in mind that this section is born out of what Paul said in Hebrews 10:39, “**But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.**”

And the point Paul is making is that he is trying to encourage these Jewish believers not to fall back into the rituals of Judaism but to consider Jesus, to take hold of the substance and not the type or the picture.

To encourage them he gives them examples of faith, what the Old Testament saints endured for their faith and thus, they should do no less since Jesus has come, the Messiah!

You see, they looked forward to the coming Messiah, all they had were the promises of God. We can look back and see that the Messiah has come, the finished work was completed by Jesus and thus, we should walk by faith, trusting in the promises of God just as these dear saints did, awaiting for the Messiah to come!

In our studies so far, we have looked at the obedient faith of Abel who still speaks to us from the grave.

We saw the faith of Enoch and how he walked with God.

We saw the faith of Noah and how he built an ark for 120 years based only on the promise of God that there is coming a judgment upon man by a flood.

We saw the faith of Abraham and saw how it grew as he matured.

And we concluded last time looking at the faith of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

Tonight, we will look at the faith of a family, of a man and of a nation, but mostly our focus will be on the man named Moses.

You see, to the Jews, this was their deliverer, the one who brought them out of their bondage in Egypt. Moses was their lawgiver.

Thus, this was obviously an important person in the minds of these Jewish believers, important for them to look at and see that this lawgiver walked by faith, lived by faith and not by the Law.

Yes, he was obedient to the Law, but his faith was accounted to him for righteousness, not the keeping of the Law.

You see, God's way has always been the way of faith and we will see that tonight with Moses the lawgiver.

Let me share this with you to show you what the Bible says of this man and I think you will clearly see why the Jewish people saw Moses as one of the greatest men of all time in regard to their faith.

We are told,

The book of Deuteronomy ends with Moses' unparalleled epitaph:

Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt – to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel. (34:10-12)

To all Jews, Moses was the greatest of all men. According to one early tradition, Moses had higher rank and privilege than the ministering angels.

He was Israel's greatest *prophet*. God communicated directly to him and testified regarding their relationship.

When a prophet of the Lord is among you,

I reveal myself to him in visions,

I speak to him in dreams.

But this is not true of my servant Moses;

he is faithful in all my house.

With him I speak face to face,

clearly and not in riddles;

he sees the form of the Lord.

(Numbers 12:6-8)

This is why his face was luminous when he descended Mt. Sinai with the Ten Commandments.

He was Israel's greatest *lawgiver*. Virtually everything in their religion recalled his name.

He was Israel's great *historian*. Moses authored everything from Genesis to Deuteronomy.

He was considered Israel's greatest *saint*, for Scripture says he was "more humble than any one else on the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). This is perhaps most amazing of all because often those who have accomplished great things are anything but humble. But Moses was the humblest of the entire human race!

He was Israel's greatest *deliverer*. His feats are wonderfully chronicled throughout the book of Exodus.

Significantly, in regard to Moses' deliverance of Israel from Egypt, his liberating work was a huge act of faith from beginning to end. And this is what the author of Hebrews focuses on in verses 23-29 in the great Hall of Faith.

Here we have the anatomy of a faith that delivers others and sets them free. This insightful teaching had special relevance to the ancient church suffering in its own inhospitable "exile" in the Roman Empire.

Certainly, this section has direct relevance for every believing soul who senses any dissonance [conflict] with the unbelieving world.

Moses' faith is conveniently explained under five brief sections, each successively introduced with "By faith."

- R. Kent Hughes, Hebrews – An Anchor for the Soul, Vol. 2, pp. 115-116

So with that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Hebrews chapter 11, beginning in verse 23 and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study His Word and we look at the faith of Moses.

HEBREWS 11

VERSE 23

Look at how this chapter begins, with the words, "**By faith . . .**" And we see that some eighteen times here in Hebrews chapter 11 because it was by faith and not their works. They looked forward to the promise of the Messiah, even though they did not see this come to pass in their lifetime. It was all "**By faith . . .**"

And before we look at Moses Paul wants us to see the faith of Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed. (Exodus 6:20)

Now it has been a few years, actually some twelve years since we studied the book of Exodus and thus, let me give you some of the details of what is going on here so we don't miss the faith that Amram and Jochebed had.

At this point the Jews have been in Egypt now for over 300 years and their numbers have grown, maybe in the 1 to 2 million range or more.

And as new Kings came into power, Kings that did not know Joseph, they were afraid of the Jews turning against them, especially in war!

Listen to what we are told in Exodus 1:7-14, **“But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, ‘Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.’ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage - in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.”**

Obviously, things were not going well for the Jews down in Egypt. And yet, God was blessing them, their numbers kept growing, and finally, to try to stop the growth of the numbers of Jews, the King of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives; Shiphra and Puah, **“and he said, When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.’ But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.”** Exodus 1:16-17.

Pharaoh thought his plan of having them serve with rigor would put a stop to their numbers growing and it did not work. And, now this second plan was not working either and thus, as he saw his plan failing, he asked these Hebrew midwives what was going wrong, why they weren't killing the male Hebrew children when they were born.

And they responded that these Hebrew women gave birth very quickly, before they arrived and thus, there was nothing that they could do.

In other words, they lied to Pharaoh. That does not justify lying for Jesus tells us that Satan is the father of lies.

They did what they thought was right based on what they knew. Yes, the murder of these children was wrong, and it was good that they did not do that. But so too was the lying. Their faith was immature at this point! And the children of Israel continued to grow, **“So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, ‘Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.’”** Exodus 1:22.

It was a great plan and I'm sure if the King found out that a family negated his command, all their children, their daughters and sons that were born before this command was given, would be in jeopardy of being killed as well!

And that brings us to this Levite family. We see that Amram was a godly husband and so too was his wife, Jochebed, she too loved the Lord.

Prior to all this turmoil, they had a daughter named Miriam and they had a son named Aaron. Again, this was all before Moses was born. According to Exodus 7:7, Aaron was 3 years older than Moses and within those 3 years, this edict from Pharaoh was established!

And it was into all of this that Moses was born. Think about that. Pharaoh said that every son who is born, of Jewish descent, was to be thrown into the river and drowned!

But this family refused to do that!

Why?

It says that it was “**because they saw he was a beautiful child.**”

Now we read that, and we think, “*So what. What parent is going to say that their child is ugly!*”

But there is more to that than just him being a beautiful child.

I believe that God spoke to this Levite family and told them that this child was going to be special and thus, they saved him by faith in what God had said to them, by the Words of God they obeyed!

Somehow, and we are not told, the parents of Moses knew that God had chosen this child for a special purpose, to deliver the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt!

What is the point?

The point is this. Biblical faith is always tied to a promise of God!

Our faith must be tied to the promises of God or we will do things we are not supposed to be doing.

And that is what we see here with Amram and Jochebed. They had this promise from God, Biblical faith, that caused them to walk by faith, to do those things that Pharaoh didn't want them to do, but God wanted them to do!

Does that mean they would have killed Moses if God didn't speak to them?

I can't imagine how they could kill their child, but also understand they had two other children who could have been put to death if the King found out that they disobeyed his command. So there was a lot of pressure to go through with this evil command.

But they acted in faith and for three months they hid him until it was just too dangerous, maybe he was getting too noisy at this point and Jochebed made an ark of bulrushes and sealed it with asphalt and pitch making it water tight.

She then placed Moses in this little ark and floated him down the river where Pharaoh's daughter would bathe.

And Miriam, Moses sister watched to make sure he would be safe and see what was going to happen.

As she watched, Pharaoh's daughter had her maid go and get this little ark and bring it to her and as she looked in, she saw this beautiful child.

We are told in Exodus 2:6, "**And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.'**"

I don't know how she knew, maybe because he was circumcised, but she knew this little baby was a Hebrew child.

Listen to what transpires in Exodus 2:7-10, **“Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?’ And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Go.’ So the maiden went and called the child’s mother. Then Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.’ So the woman took the child and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, ‘Because I drew him out of the water.’”**

Isn’t God amazing. We see here that maybe for some five years or so Jochebed, the mother of Moses cared for her son with the approval of Pharaoh’s daughter.

Not only that, she was paid to nurse and care for Moses!

God is so good!

And during those five years or so Jochebed instilled in Moses the things of God, how God had a plan for his life.

But then she had to let go, to give her child to the daughter of Pharaoh, to be raised in an ungodly society, filled with all the luxuries you could imagine, all the enticements you could imagine.

He had the education, the wealth, he had it all, even being next in line to the throne being the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, he was part of Pharaoh’s family now!

Now let’s think about this for a minute. Pharaoh was worried that the children of Israel would grow in numbers and finally rebel against them. Thus, he gives an order to have all the baby Jewish boys killed. And now, in his own house, he is raising the very boy that God was going to use to deliver them from their bondage in Egypt! God has a good sense of humor.

Now let’s think about this for a minute because there is a lot to digest.

What we are seeing is that the parents of Moses accept God's plan. They don't try to circumvent it or change it. They trusted that God knows what He is doing and to walk by faith.

But when you think about this plan, it is crazy. How in the world would this work out? What is going to happen?

I want you to understand that Amram and Jochebed are not told how this would all play out, they were just told, I believe, in what they were to do, that their son was special and would deliver the children of Israel, but how this all played out, they had to walk by faith and trust in the promises of God!

I think for each of us, it is hard as God calls us to do something and He does not tell us how it is going to work out, He just wants us to walk by faith and do it.

And for us, many times, we think we can do it a better way, but that is just foolishness. God knows what is best.

Think of it like this. Imagine if I was going to get a paintbrush and try to improve on some masterpiece, make it better by painting over it. That would be foolish.

So too is it foolish to try to improve on God's plan. God desires us to be obedient as we saw in the life of Moses' parents. He wants us to walk by faith, not by sight!

I think as we read these stories, I think it is easy to lose sight of what these people did. The faith that they had!

We have a hard time letting our children go when they are 18, maybe not!

But here Moses was given to the daughter of Pharaoh at the age of around 5, and all Amram and Jochebed could do is trust in the promise of God, to let go and let God do His work!

Now Hebrews 11:23 covers the first forty years of Moses' life and as we read on, in Hebrews 11:24-29, that will cover the next forty years of Moses' life!

So let's read on and see what happens to this child who was destined to be the next King or Pharaoh in Egypt.

VERSES 24-26

And we start out with once again, "**By faith . . .**" and this time it is Moses, who by faith took a stand for God.

And keep in mind that it is at the age of 40 Moses is ready to take a stand, to separate himself from all the wealth of Egypt, all that the world could offer him, and do God's will, join himself with his people.

In Acts 7:22 Stephen tells us of Moses, "**And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.**"

Also, many of you have heard of King Tut or King Tutankhamen, the boy king of Egypt. Years ago, they had on display in one of the museums in Chicago the riches of this boy king, what was found in his tomb, buried with him.

I could not believe the gold, the precious stones, all the riches that was entombed with this king and this boy king only lived 100 years or so after the time of Moses.

So Moses had it all.

And understand that Pharaoh's daughter had no other children than Moses, whom she adopted.

Thus, Moses was next in line to the throne.

From a worldly perspective he was losing everything to gain nothing by leaving Egypt. But, from a spiritual perspective, he gave up nothing to gain everything! What a great perspective to have as we serve the Lord, that we don't lose anything when compared to what we gain in Him!

But think about what he is doing and then place yourself in his shoes or sandals. Imagine all that you could have, all the riches, all the power, anything and everything you wanted were at your fingertips. What would you do? Would you leave it all behind to follow the Lord?

Now we are not in that situation, so it is easy to say, ***“Of course I will follow the Lord!”***

But what about smaller issues, being obedient to the Lord, and yet, in what He wants you to do is not what you want. And if you obey the Lord, maybe going to hurt you in the position at work you were looking for. You see, now it begins to be tougher and we can make all kinds of excuses why we did what we did instead of obeying the Lord. In fact, we can even say that the Lord is okay with it, but if what you are doing is wrong, He is not okay with it.

For Moses, it was living the life of a king and then giving it all away to live a life of a slave!

Now, here we are some 3,500 years or so down the road from when Moses made this decision. If you were to ask him today what he thinks about the decision he had made, what do you think he would say?

He would say that he made the right decision today and he will continue to say that throughout eternity.

And think about it. Moses could have had it all and that was the best it would have been for him.

But he followed the Lord and all that he went through, that was the worst that it would be for him.

And we have to keep that in mind as we live out our faith. We are never going to lose when we follow Jesus!

Let's spend a few minutes and look at what transpires here for Moses.

As Moses separates himself from the Egyptians, as he saw the heavy burdens being placed upon his people, he went into a phone booth, changed his clothes and came out with a big "**D**" on his chest for "**DELIVERER!**"

Well, not exactly, but that is probably how he felt at this point.

As he was walking among his brethren, he saw an Egyptian beating up a fellow Jew. So Moses stepped in, killed the Egyptian, and buried him in the sand.

Maybe he thought, "***It has begun! One Egyptian down, only a few million to go!***" And if you think about it, how many little mounds of dead bodies buried in the sand is he going to get away with before someone recognizes what he is doing?

And it didn't take long. You see, as he came out the second day, maybe thinking he would get a few more Egyptians this second day, he saw two of his brethren fighting amongst themselves and tried to break it up.

Moses realized that a people or kingdom divided will not stand and he, being the deliverer, can surely stop this fight!

The response of the people was not exactly warm towards Moses and what he was doing.

In Exodus 2:14 we are told what one of the men said, "**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, fearing that once Pharaoh found out that he killed an Egyptian, he would then kill Moses and he exits stage left and goes into the wilderness of Midian for 40 years!

Wait a minute, wasn't that God's will for Moses – to be the deliverer of His people?

Yes, it was!

Then what was the problem?

It wasn't the right time; Moses needed to learn some lessons of faith before he delivered his people. Moses had to come to the end of himself, his strength so he could depend upon God.

Now, Moses did step out in faith, he forsook everything of this world and focused on that which he couldn't see, that which he could not possess with his earthly senses, but he could with his eyes of faith, the coming Messiah!

So 40 years go by, Moses is 80 years old now, and God called Moses to deliver His people from bondage down in Egypt.

And for a few chapters' things are not going too well, Pharaoh is hardening his heart, putting more burdens on the Jewish people.

So in Exodus 6:1-8 we are told, **“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.’ And God spoke to Moses and said to him: ‘I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD I was not known to them. I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Therefore say to the children of Israel: “I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue**

you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.””

Notice, there are 7 “**I will**” statements made by God here.

It doesn’t say, “*Moses, you will*” but that God has made these promises, and He will also bring them to pass.

The result is given to us in Exodus 6:9, “**So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.**”

Every day their bondage was increasing more and more, all because of what Moses was doing and they were basically saying, “*Leave us alone, we were doing better without you!*”

Not too encouraging for Moses at this point!

What can we learn from this?

I think this is a powerful lesson we can learn here from Moses.

When the world, sometimes even the church is saying more is better, wealth, prosperity, possessions is where it is at, Moses says, “*No, Christ is where it is at! You see, those things are just temporary, He is eternal!*”

In Psalm 37:16-17 we are told, “**A little that a righteous man has Is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, But the LORD upholds the righteous.**”

Moses chose correctly, how about you?

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 4:16-18, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”**

You see, having the correct perspective will help you to walk by faith and not by sight!

Again, Paul said in Romans 8:18, **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”**

Perspective is everything when it comes to walking by faith!

And look at where sin ends up as Paul tells us in Hebrews 11:25 – **“the passing pleasures of sin.”**

Did you ever think about that?

First of all, there must be pleasure in sin or we would never get involved with it. But the key to all of this is that it is passing away and it will never satisfy.

Think about it. Money, how much is enough? Just a little bit more!

And you can place all kinds of sins there, like drugs. If drugs satisfy, why do you need more and higher doses? Because that pleasure passes away and you are trying to find more pleasure outside of God and you will never accomplish that. And that goes for all sin! It is never enough!

What a joy we have in the Lord, that satisfaction, the peace, the comfort, and that everlasting joy in Him!

One writer summed it up like this for us. He wrote,

It is acknowledged in this passage that sin is pleasurable. That is why people *choose* to sin. We are never forced to do right or wrong; but many times we choose to sin. We sin because we are enticed by our own lust (James 1:14-15). When we give into these desires, we sin.

While sin may be pleasurable, the pleasure of sin is temporary. That is why this passage speaks of the *“passing pleasures of sin.”* This is why people have to keep going back to sin. The pleasure that was derived from one sin does not last. So they have to go back for more. Ultimately, the pleasure will pass forever with no way to get it back. John wrote, *“The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever”* (1 John 2:17).

What should we do knowing that the pleasure of sin is passing? We should seek God and His reward regardless of the consequences. Moses gave up the *“pleasures of sin”* for *“ill-treatment with the people of God.”* Why? He was *“looking to the reward”* which was *“greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.”*

There will be hardships and difficulties in living the life of a Christian (2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:16). But in the end, the reward will be more than worth it no matter what we face in the meantime. We are admonished to *“lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”* (Hebrews 12:1).

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May we, like Moses, look to the reward, look to Jesus, or as Paul put it, instead of seeking the fleeting pleasures of sin, **“esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”** Hebrews 11:26. May we do the same!

VERSE 27

Why did Moses flee from Egypt 40 years earlier? Because he feared what the king might do to him, put him to death.

Now, 40 years later he returns to Egypt not fearing this earthly king because he knew that the heavenly King would fulfill His promises to him!

It is as Solomon said, “**The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.**”

The fear of man causes us to do things we shouldn't do. And, in the end, it truly doesn't save us.

You see, being obedient to the Lord, trusting in Him and walking accordingly causes us to be secure. Not that anything bad will never happen to us, it will! But we are secure in Christ and no one can steal the Lord from us, we will always be with Him and He will always be with us!

VERSE 28

Notice what Moses does here, “**By faith he kept the Passover . . .**”

Let me show you how this plays out because, as you will see, this is a step of faith on the part of Moses and the children of Israel.

Remember the events in Exodus as Pharaoh kept waxing and waning on letting God's people go.

Nine plagues were poured out upon his kingdom and he still rejected the request because he hardened his heart to that which he knew to be true.

There was the plague of blood upon the water supply.

There was the plague of frogs that covered the land.

Then came the plague of lice – I don't even want to think about that one!

Then came the plague of flies and I will tell you this, I was in Montana during the fly season, and when they bite, it hurts! Now, in this fourth plague notice what we are told, **“I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.’ And the LORD did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies.”** Exodus 8:23-24. God clearly showed them He can differentiate between His people and those who were not as He poured out these plagues!

The fifth plague was pestilence upon the livestock of the Egyptians.

The sixth plague was boils on man and beast.

The seventh plague was hail and in Exodus 9:26 we are told, **“Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.”**

The eighth plague were locusts upon the land.

The ninth plague was darkness falling upon the land, it was so dark it could be felt.

Maybe this was an indictment against their god, Ra who was the god of light!

And still, in all this, Pharaoh refused to let God's people go!

The tenth plague and the last plague was the death of the firstborn in all the land, but there was an exception. If the blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts and the lintel of their house, then the angel of death would Passover that house, the firstborn would not die.

Thus, we see the beginning of the Feast of Passover here.

Now, as I have said, Moses, by faith, instructed the children of Israel to apply the blood and by faith they did and as they did, the blood would form a picture of a cross!

And in Exodus 12:29-36 we are told, **“And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, ‘Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also.’ And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, ‘We shall all be dead.’ So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.”**

You see, all those who thought that this was foolish, those who did not apply the blood, lost their firstborn and this loss was so great in the land of Egypt that they called for the Jews to get out of town and to get out now!

And as they began to leave the Egyptians gave to them their silver and gold and clothing, but why? Maybe as a payment for the work they did those 400 years or so as slaves in Egypt! Maybe God was allowing them to get back what they put in!

And make no mistake about it, it took faith to believe that the blood of a lamb on the door posts and lintel of their homes would save a household from the terror of the angel of death. But Moses had faith and led the nation in observance of the Passover.

There are many today who see the shedding of the blood of Jesus as foolishness! In doing so they are no different than the Egyptians who died by the hands of the angel of death.

You see, Isaiah 64:6 says, **“But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.”**

Thus, by our own righteousness we could never stand before a holy and righteous God, we are dead in our trespasses and sins!

But, if we apply the blood of Jesus to our lives, if we receive Him as our Lord and Savior, we will enter into eternal life with Him!

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 5:7, **“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”**

Case closed, you either accept it or reject it and they both carry with it eternal consequences!

VERSE 29

And the concluding **“By faith . . .”** for Moses here in Hebrews is related to the crossing of the Red Sea, and that should just make sense. It was a step of faith on their part, they had to walk by faith, and they did!

And think about this journey of faith. After some 430 years down in the land of Egypt, the Jews are heading home to the Promise Land, a land they never had possession of before, but it was the place that God had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

There were 600,000 men, plus women and children, maybe over 2 million people in the Exodus and Moses was their deliverer, leading them into a desert with no water, no food stops along the way, just stepping out in faith and trusting in the promises of God!

Now understand that the children of Israel were not warriors, nor did they have the implements of war. They were slaves, so as they left Egypt, they did not go the shortest route to Canaan, which would have brought them through the land of the Philistines, but by the wilderness area by the Red Sea.

Why did God take them the long way home?

Because He didn't want to discourage them by fighting against the Philistines, a very strong group of people, they were ferocious fighting men!

Now I have read this many times before, but it never clicked. You see, they didn't have to fight against the Philistines right away, but there was something even bigger in front of them. Now they had the Red Sea right in front of them and it is not easy to have over 2 million people back up and head in another direction or try to cross those waters!

Not only that, but Pharaoh was now coming after them, knowing they are trapped. You see, they had the Red Sea in front of them and a mountain range on either side of them and Pharaoh and his army coming up from the rear!

Notice what we are told in Exodus 14:3-9, **“For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, ‘They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.’ Then I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD.’ And they did so. Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, ‘Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?’ So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.”**

Now, those Hebrews, seeing the hand of God upon their lives, these men and women of faith, how did they respond to this situation?

Look at Exodus 14:10-12, **“And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, ‘Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.’”**

And Moses told them, *“Don’t make me turn this camel around! I will do that! You stop the fighting right now! Now more talk about going back to Egypt, back to the world!”*

No, he didn't say that even though they were preparing for a forty-year camping event.

But what the children of Israel said was not exactly the response that Moses thought he would get from his people. Not exactly shining examples of faith. They were ready to kill Moses for getting them in a situation like this!

Now if I were Moses, I would have let them have it. *“Fine, go back and be slaves in Egypt.”*

But Moses didn't do that. We are told in Exodus 14:13-15, **“And Moses said to the people, ‘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. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.’ And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.’”**

Moses tells them to *“Chill out! Watch and see, God will deliver us!”*

What a man of faith Moses was, right? Not exactly. He may have told the people to trust in the Lord, but he is crying out to the Lord, *“Lord, did you mean it? Are you going to deliver us? It doesn't look good.”*

And the Lord tells Moses, *“Don't cry to Me Moses, start walking!”*

And as Moses stretches out his hands, lifting up his rod, you remember Charlton Heston in the movie *The Ten Commandments* doing this, and the Red Sea opens up.

There may have been a wall of water some 30 feet high on each side of them and dry land in front of them so they may cross through.

And the children of Israel did cross through, and that is faith, to walk in the midst of those waters for a long distance, trusting that God will hold those waters back for them.

And the Shekinah glory or the presence of God lighted the way for the children of Israel to pass through during the night and into the morning.

But for the Egyptians, the Lord was a dark cloud so they could not see, to hinder their advancement against the children of Israel.

And I love this, as the Egyptians enter into the Red Sea, God loosens the bolts on their chariots, so their wheels feel off. And as they started going through the Red Sea, as they were in the midst of the waters, the walls of water came down upon them and the Egyptian army was destroyed, along with Pharaoh!

The result, **“But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.”** Exodus 14:29-31.

Now I do understand that some say that they crossed at the Sea of Reeds, which only had a depth of a few inches, not the Red Sea. Thus, as a strong wind came, it blew the water apart, so they crossed on dry land, the few inches of water were pushed aside! Some commentaries that I use even state that fact.

Folks, how did the Egyptian army drown in a few inches of water? That is even a bigger miracle than them crossing on dry land through the Red Sea.

I just believe what God has said, I don't have to figure out how He did it!

Look at what we have seen this evening. We have seen the faith of Moses' parents, to trust in the promises of God.

We have seen the faith of Moses, to separate himself from the wealth of this world and to look to the future rewards.

And we have seen the faith of the children of Israel, the sprinkling of the blood on the doorposts and lintels and walking through those waters, something that was impossible to do and yet they trusted in God, that He would see them through it all, and He did!

What great faith they had, not perfect faith, but growing faith!

What does that story have to do with me today? Think about it for a minute. As the enemy seems to be closing in, as things are heating up, as there seems to be no escape, don't fear, don't become angry, but have faith in the promises of God.

It is as Moses said, **“And Moses said to the people, ‘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. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.’”** May we believe it!

Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 10:11-13, **“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”**

God is not looking to destroy us, but to stretch our faith, help it to grow as we rest upon Him.

And folks, at every junction of our lives we have a choice to make, to either fulfill God's will or disobey God's will, to be filled with His Spirit or to quench His Spirit.

And if you truly believe in God, trust in His promises then you will follow His direction.

I think God is teaching us through this that we must keep trusting Him to do what He has promised even if initially things don't work out the way we think they should.

This is how God teaches us to persevere and not quit but to *“hang in there”* and trust Him to fulfill His promises to us.

We will finish up our study of Hebrews chapter 11 next time but as I close, let me leave you this evening with these words from Paul, may we take them home with us and live them out in our lives.

He said in Hebrews 11:6, **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**

Let us walk by faith and not by sight!