

The Rock: 08-16-2020

Series: By Faith

First reading: Exodus 14:10-16

Title: The basket case

Scripture: Hebrews 11:23-29

Theme:

The basket case of a boy launched out into the Nile by the faith of his parents, steps out and then back again "in his faith" to bring about the deliverance of God's people.

Introduction:

It's one of the saddest and most frightening verses in all the Bible; Moses records for us:

"Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph."

-Exodus 1:8 ESV

The journey of Joseph and his lifetime of faithfulness had set his family up in the best of the land -Goshen, as we remember from our time with him these past months.

It's been hundreds of years since then and his people have flourished.

Multiplying and becoming as numerous as the stars -just as God promised.

"But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them."

-Exodus 1:7 ESV

God's story continues on, not as some fragmented story book, but rather in a way that continues to show us His sovereignty over mankind, and His providential care of His people.

Most especially when persecution comes. You see, we tend to always ask when things go sideways: "Where is God in all of this?"

Well the story of Moses shows us a few things: Most importantly that God is always right in the middle of it all.

The Story:

I want to take a look at three things specifically this morning by way of Moses's faith. Because it doesn't start there. So-

#1 -The faith of his parents

#2 -The faith of the man

#3 -The fear of the LORD / The faith of His people

Because his journey actually begins in his parent's faith, not his own:

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict."

-Hebrews 11:23 ESV

The new pharaoh seemed to be more concerned with how many Hebrews were now in his country and decided to slow that growth rate down by ordering the mass killing of all new born boys.

Nothing new under the sun here, as one leader after another throughout history will always execute judgment all too often on the innocent, in order to protect themselves.

Herod the Great comes to mind as well when he felt threatened by a little boy and ordered the killing of all the boys in Bethlehem. The more things change, the more the tyrants stay the same.

We find this in Exodus 1, and just as always, the foolishness of this type of leader is seen. The very workforce building Egypt up, and keeping the

economy growing, is the very people he is trying to eliminate.

In his foolish effort "to save his country", he is going to end up destroying it. Pride and arrogance causes the rat to eat his own tail, wondering all the while: "Why does this hurt?"

But that's for another time, as I digress. So, what about

#1 -The faith of his parents

Because the parents of this unborn "savior-child" have their own set of issues and choices to make. Unnamed until later on in the story, we are simply told:

"Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months."

-Exodus 2:1-2 ESV

A Levite and his wife make the choice to have their baby, discovering it's a boy, they decide to hide him. They do so because they know that he is somehow special, and in the plans and purposes of God, this boy was going to be somebody.

Exodus 2 tells us he was a fine child. The writer of Hebrews tells us he was beautiful.

Now with all respect, let's be honest here. No parent, who takes the first look at their newborn baby ever says: "Boy, he's kinda ugly, I'm not sure he's gonna amount to much. I mean really, look at how short he is."

Nobody says that! If you do, perhaps we should talk.

No, these parents somehow knew though, that God was going to use this boy, their third child, in a way that would bring Him glory and honor.

What they did as parents here, was nothing anyone of us wouldn't do when they risked themselves to hide their boy.

But by faith, Moses was hidden by his parents. That is the key -His parent's faith. They believed and trusted God.

Praying parents, united and believing God for the promises he has made to them, live in faith and simply do the next right thing to help their child grow and believe.

Faith is caught by our kids, as much as it is taught to our kids. My dad used to always say; "Do as I say not as I do."

That is failure to understand this principle. Action speaks volumes!

As kids grow, they are living on our faith, but it is not designed to be that way forever. Our kids, at some point will step out and exercise their own faith, their own belief.

That is helped along and made easier when they see it lived out in front of them. Not just spoken of and told to them, but lived out by Mom and Dad.

James makes this clear when he wrestles faith and works out for us:

"So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

-James 2:17-18 ESV

How you are exercising your faith, Mom and Dad, will help determine how your kids exercise theirs. That never ends, as even older kids keep watch as to how we continue to exercise and live out what we believe, as we age.

To know his parents defied the orders of the King in order to keep him safe for God's purposes stuck with Moses.

The greatest gift you can give your kids is not all the things. It's not all the sports, the big vacations, all the best toys. No, it's a healthy, vibrant, faith-filled relationship with each other.

A healthy faith-filled Mom and Dad, walking that life out is the gift your children need more than anything.

In a world of the unsettled and the unknown, where a parent's greatest fear is: "Will my kids follow Jesus and succeed in life?", seeing you live out your faith will be caught by them, as much as it is taught by you.

John Owen again this week, because it's too good not to use:

"Where there is an agreement between husband and wife, in faith and fear of the LORD, it makes way unto a blessed success in all their duties: when it is otherwise, nothing succeeds unto their comfort."

-John Owen: Hebrews Vol. 7 Pg. 137

The faith of a parent leads to:

#2 The faith of the man

Growing up in the palace as royalty, when the time comes, Moses chooses his people

over the pleasure of a life of ease and leisure.

Some, if not most, would say he's crazy:

"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin."

-Hebrews 11:24-25 ESV

But, if we have learned anything these past three weeks, it's this: That to live a life of faith is both hard and all too often backwards in the eyes of the world.

It runs counter to "natural thinking" and common sense, at least in the eyes of the unbeliever, and sometimes in the believer's eyes too. But that's alright, God's ways aren't ours, are they?

"Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

-Isaiah 55:6-9 ESV

If we can settle into that truth, our growth in faith and our calling in life will be much more settled and easier.

Moses makes a few choices in life at this point which define him and his faith. Again, I leave that with you to read and put together with what we talk about today. (Exodus 1-2)

But there he makes the decision, in anger and premeditation, to kill an Egyptian, bury him in the sand, and hopes no one finds out.

"One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."

-Exodus 2:11-12 ESV

Any one of you think you've messed up in life, take heart -Nothing and no one is beyond the reach of God and His grace!

The next day, two of his own people are arguing and he tries to sort that whole thing out -only to find that not only do they not like his bossiness, they somehow

found out what he had done the day before.

Well, what on earth does that have to do with faith? I'm not entirely certain, but I can tell you this:

Much as with Abraham and Sarah, when you try to force God's timing and step out from underneath the umbrella of his GRACE and care -BAD THINGS happen.

In his effort to live with and be with his people, his immaturity and zeal combined together to create a big mess. And yet, that big mess drove him to a desert place of growth.

Where God set him up to develop his skills and his faith would continue to grow.

It is difficult to exercise faith when you have everything. Frankly, I get more concerned about my walk when I am in complete comfort and handling things "on my own".

Now, I'm not out there looking for train-wrecks to happen, but there is a great danger in being a "self-made and self-sufficient man."

Moses needs to leave that mess behind in order to come back. So, when he discovered that Pharaoh knew what he did

and wanted to kill him for it, he fled to Midian:

"When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well."

-Exodus 2:15 ESV

Where he ends up getting married, has his burning bush moment that solidifies his faith -and he goes back to the place of his biggest failure.

All in order to exercise that faith once again, before a pharaoh who thinks very little of this Shepherd from the desert. That's the faith we see written about in verse 27 and 28:

"By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible."

-Hebrews 11:27 ESV

Moses didn't run because he was afraid of Pharaoh, but rather it was the fear of the LORD. HE knew the assignment God had given him.

Think this through with me, there is a healthy fear one must exercise in life. By faith Moses knew he was kept by God, but that didn't mean he would

intentionally keep himself in harm's way simply because:

"God will protect me and keep me."

Yes, in a sense. But how He does that sometimes, in fact most times, is giving us a healthy fear that says: "It's probably best that I don't play in the middle of the road where there are big trucks and cars."

Too often foolishness is mistaken for faith, and we see bad choices made disguised as faith. We have to be discerning enough to sort this out in the Holy Spirit. I want to encourage you to remember that anyone who tells you that you don't have enough faith because you are taking your medicine, or seeing a doctor, or allowing science to help you, is someone to be ignored.

Moses is fully confident in his call and mission -that is why he stood so firm and left without fear, even celebrating the Passover with his people, by the command of God.

"By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them."

-Hebrews 11:28 ESV

That's not foolishness. That's the faith of a man, built on the faith of his parents, which leads to the deliverance of a nation now on the beginning of their faith walk to freedom.

#3 -Fear of the LORD -The faith of the people

And with this we close.

"By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned."

-Hebrews 11:29 ESV

Application:

A basket case, an adopted grandson of the Pharaoh, a Shepherd now leading the People of God to freedom.

His parents, by faith believed Moses to be someone special. Moses trusting the call of God on his life, instilled in part by his parent's faith, leaves it all for the hill country of Midian -only to come back in faith and the fear of the LORD, to lead his people home.

The healthy fear of the LORD leads always to the abiding faith which then gives a deep-seeded confidence, that no matter

what circumstances you find yourself in -
GOD HAS THIS.

Proper focus -upward and outward in your life will actually keep you grounded. If all you ever do is judge your circumstances by what you see directly in front of you, the wrong type of fear takes hold of you.

A healthy fear of the LORD encompasses wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and past experiences. Knowing what God has always done, growing a faith that knows if he has called you to it, He will bring you through it.

Cheesy comment once again, I know. But it is so very true. In Exodus 14 the people are led by Moses to the edge of the Red Sea, with Pharaoh's army close behind.

They are afraid because of what they SEE. Moses, on the other hand, has seen too much to be afraid of what is before him and what is coming up behind.

It's moments just like this that his faith has been waiting for. In all their grumbling -he tells the people:

"...Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The

Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

-Exodus 14: 13b-14 ESV

Then, almost as if to say, “Listen Moses, you already know what to do here, JUST DO IT. The LORD says to him:

“Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.”

-Exodus 14:15b-16 ESV

The sea parts, the people of Israel step in by faith onto dry ground and walk through the sea to freedom and a new life as the people of God in this world.

The faith of parents, led to the faith of a man, which led to a fear of the LORD and the faith of his people, and the deliverance from bondage.

What a story!