

After His resurrection Jesus had a conversation with two men. They didn't recognize him until he opened the Scriptures to them. We read, **Luke 24:27, "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, (Jesus) explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."**

What Jesus was teaching the men was that Moses wrote about his ministry even before his incarnation, that Moses had the Christmas-faith. We're going to talk about what that meant to him and what this kind of faith might mean for us in our day-to-day walk with God and with one another.

OPENING PRAYER

HEBREWS 11:23-28: "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 Pharaoh's edict. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them."

Remember the story about how Moses was raised in Egypt? Pharaoh had become fearful of the Jews whom he enslaved because they had become so great in number. So he ordered the slaughter of all the baby boys. But Moses' parents felt like God had another plan for their son.

The author of Hebrews summarized what Moses' parents did as an act of faith. He wrote, **Hebrews 11:23, "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 Pharaoh's edict."**

Moses' parents hid him for three months and, as we read in Exodus, they put him in a basket and floated him down the Nile River, entrusting his fate to God. Pharaoh's daughter found the baby in the river as she bathed. She named him, Moses, which means "pulled from the water," and raised him as her own son.

Moses' survival as an infant was the result of his parents' faith; he was born into the faith. What that faith looked like, we can't be sure. However, we do know that his people had the stories of Creation, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark, and the Tower of Babel. But even more importantly they also knew about God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Indeed, their ancestor, Joseph, had brought them into Egypt 400 years earlier.

This oral history which was passed down over the ages, helps to explain why Moses, even though he was raised in Pharaoh's household, was able to identify with his people. He could have had anything he wanted, materially, but he chose another path.

We read, **Hebrews 11:24-25**, "**By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.**"

The faith Moses was born into became his own. However, according to the Scriptures, his first attempts to assimilate with his people didn't go so well. He visited their labor camps, and he saw how they suffered as slaves, and he longed to help them. One day he came upon an Egyptian beating a fellow Jew, and he killed him and buried him in the sand.

Taking justice into his own hands may have seemed natural to Moses at the time. After all, he lived with Pharaoh, who thought he was god! But apparently that power was not shared. After killing the Egyptian, Moses later tried to break up two Jews who fought, but one of them said to him, "Who made you a prince and judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?"

Moses discovered that he'd been ratted out, and that Pharaoh would sentence him to death for what he'd done. Thus he fled Egypt and settled in Arabia.

We read, **Hebrews 11:26-28**, **“(Moses) considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.”²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured because he saw him who is invisible.”**

Moses was not afraid of Pharaoh, but he didn't want to die. That's how we should understand this passage. I believe Moses knew that God had other work for him to do, eventually. We read, **“he was looking to the reward.”** The reward Moses looked for was the promised savior.

Have you ever wondered how the people BEFORE Jesus' incarnation were saved? In the Old Testament, the “Angel of the Lord” came to the people and he spoke to them, as he did with Abraham. We believe the Angel of the Lord may have been the pre-incarnate Christ.

Also the Old Testament is filled with allusions to and images of the Christ, as Jesus himself said, **John 5:46**, **“If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me.”**

We don't have time to explore this subject in depth, but let me just say there are at least two dozen promises and allusions to the work of Jesus in the Books of Moses, including manna, which anticipated Jesus the Bread of Life, and water from a rock, which anticipated Jesus, Living Water. For Moses, God was not just the God of law and justice. He was also the God of forgiveness, redemption, and renewal through a savior. He didn't know the savior's name yet, but he knew, someday, he would come, and he would redeem humanity.

“(For Moses) was looking to the reward.”

Again, we read, **Hebrews 11:26a**, **“(Moses) considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt.”** This means Moses recognized the ministry of the savior included empathizing with the downtrodden, especially his own people who had been enslaved, and even suffering with them. He saw this ministry was more valuable than physical possessions. Growing up amidst wealth, Moses knew material treasures were a double-edged sword. And he turned away from them. Moses' faith was otherworldly, which is to say, the things of this world were of no consequence to him.

When Moses ran from Pharaoh and settled in Arabia, he met a woman whose name was Zipporah, and he married her. Zipporah's father's name was Jethro. For 40 years, Moses herded Jethro's sheep.

Moses was an 80 year old shepherd when the Lord called him into service from the Burning Bush. One of my favorite parts about this calling is how it reveals Moses' humanity. Four times Moses resisted God's call. He didn't feel worthy or able to do what God told him to do. Moses did not believe in himself. But God did. And the rest is history. The lesson about faith here is that because God believed in Moses, Moses began to believe in God.

And he began "looking to the reward."

We read, Hebrews 11:28, "By faith (Moses) kept the Passover and sprinkled blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch him."

This was the last plague God sent down through Moses onto Pharaoh before he finally let the people go. To escape the plague, God gave Moses and Israel an act of faith. If they marked the doorposts and lintels of their home's with the blood of an unblemished lamb, they would live. I don't think it's an accident that the marking of the two doorposts and the lintel (+) of door led one to make the sign of the cross.

Moses believed God, and God fulfilled His promise.

"He was looking to the reward."

Growing in faith is a long journey. We read about how after Israel left Egypt, the people stood on the edge of the Red Sea as Pharaoh's army came crashing down on them. And they cried out, fearing God had forsaken them. But Moses never lost faith. Moses believed in God. So he lifted his staff over the sea just as God had told him to do, and the sea parted, and the people walked across the seabed on dry ground.

At another time, the people grumbled against God because they were thirsty. But Moses believed in God, so he did what God told him to do and he struck a rock with his staff and water poured forth from it.

The Lord provided Moses and the people with everything they needed for their walk with Him. He gave them bread from heaven, water, and clothing and shoes that never wore out. He gave them a system of leadership and a program of worship. An important lesson for us from Moses' story is that every crisis Moses experienced which he addressed through faith drew him closer to God, making their relationship ever more real, more viable to him.

“He was looking to the reward.”

Moses grew in faith because he looked outside of himself. The object of Moses' faith was not himself but God. When I become self-obsessed, when my daily program becomes my god, when money and possessions become more important than peace of mind and care for my fellow human being, then I become just like Israel in the wilderness, thirsty and hungry, grumbling and complaining about how I've been dealt a poor hand in this life.

But when my eyes are **“looking to the reward,”** like Moses', everything changes.

Friends in Christ, God already believes in you. You are his children, his sons and daughters, heirs of His heavenly kingdom. Nothing can take that away from you. May the object of your faith be this God who loves you so very, very much.

This week as we consider the life and faith of Moses, may we see ourselves in him; you too are one whom God has called and equipped for service.

This week may our faith be like Moses' faith, “otherworldly,” a faith shaped by the things that matter to God not the world.

This week may we **look “to the reward,”** knowing in our heart of hearts that the ultimate reward is Jesus himself.

And this week may we have the opportunity to share this good news with another person who really needs to hear it, in the name of the Lord. Amen.