

Lord, Grant Us Such a Faith

In the name of Jesus, dear friends in Christ.

Have you heard that phrase, “A moment on the lips... a lifetime on the hips.” I did a little digging and found an article by group of Swedish research scientists who did a study on this concept in 2010. One group ate junk food for two weeks, while the others maintained their regular diet and exercise routines. Naturally the first group gained weight, but checking in with them 2 years later, those of that first group were heavier and most of the added weight was in their hips. So, perhaps turning to ice cream to help mend a broken heart... or junk food to ease stress... may very well have long-term consequences.¹

The parents of Moses weren't so concerned with eating right... they were concerned with life – physical, but more so – spiritual. The words of the Old Testament Lesson from Exodus 7 take us back to the time of Moses when the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt. Earlier Pharaoh had decreed death to all male children born of the Israelites. Moses' parents feared God above all and did not do it; instead kept him alive, putting him in a basket where Pharaoh's own daughter found baby Moses. After he was weened by his own mother, Pharaoh's daughter raised Moses as her own until he was 40 years. It was during these formative years with his own mother that Moses learned who the true God was. She taught him well, knowing that he would be raised in Pharaoh's court.

The faith God nurtured in his heart at a young age served him well. The Holy Spirit worked a godly wisdom and faith in his heart that saw through the short-lived joys of sin with their long-term consequences. His faith looked ahead, and confidently relied upon God's eternal promises. As we consider these words this morning, may the Holy Spirit work in our heart such a faith... that sees through the short-lived lies of sin and Satan... that always confidently trusts in the Lord.

I. That sees through the short-lived joys sin

Most of the life of Moses that we know about focuses on his last 40 years, from age 80 on. The first 40, is the least known, other than being in a basket in the Nile, raised for a few years by his mother. For some 35 years he lived as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. He would have grown up with every privilege and advantage... educated and trained by the best teachers, enjoyed the finest foods and clothing... really the best that life in 1500 BC would have had to offer. From a strictly worldly stand point, he had it all - on a silver platter, especially compared to his true family, the Israelites, who were suffering under the cruel edicts of Pharaoh.

Thankfully Moses didn't see things with worldly eyes. His vision and eyesight were clear and true. The writer to the Hebrews says in our text, that later in his life, Moses refused to be known as... that he looked with disdain upon the idea of... that he completely denied his association with being the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He denied it all - wanting nothing to do with it because his faith was in the true God. By faith, he was able to distinguish between what was truly desirable and what was vain, transitory and empty.

As we meet Moses now, he's 80 years old; he's fresh off the burning-bush call to full time ministry. The Lord, who led him into this new calling, continued to strengthen his faith so that he could boldly lead the Israelites out of captivity and to the Promised Land. For this to happen, things were going to be a bit challenging. But our text says this of faithful Moses, *“²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. ²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”* A moment of discomfort – for an eternity of comfort.

POINT: On the surface, SIN always appears ENJOYABLE and PLEASURABLE to the sinful human flesh with all its self-centered desires. The devil always sugar-coats sin so that it seems like pure fun with absolutely NO consequences. Everyone's doing it... revealing in it... boasting and bragging about all the fun they had doing _____ whatever sinful activity it was. And, if you're not sure if something is sinful, then we need to go back to the Scriptures, to the 10 Commandments, to the black and white Words of God himself. The best that sin can offer is fleeting, short-lived, transitory excitement, that results in guilt and, in the end, leads to death.

¹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1305853/Scientists-prove-moment-lips-does-mean-lifetime-hips-weight-gain.html>

Sin always results in separation from being one of God's people... and that's something Moses did not want to risk! He had already lived some 35 years separate from God's people, his associates were the people of Pharaoh and the life of privilege. He was done with that... because it would only lead to death – physical and eternal! By faith he shouted, “No way!” to sin.

II. That confidently relies upon God's eternal promises

What about the times you and I have forsaken God's way and enjoyed the pleasures of sin? What about when we dove head long into the pleasures of sin and experienced their temporary pleasures... when we chose to disassociate with the people of God and said, “Yes” to the ways of this world? What about that guilt that ensued, the guilt that still haunts... now what?

Friends, Moses had blood on his hands too, literally. He murdered an Egyptian when he was 40. Later when God told him to lead the people out of Egypt, he came up with every excuse in the book not to. It's here that we see the grace and love of God patiently, lovingly, persistently working with Moses and his weaknesses, building him up by pointing to the promise of the coming Messiah, Jesus. The last verse of the text says, ²⁸ *By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.*

By Faith... he kept the Passover because he trusted in God's forgiveness and promise of deliverance. He painted blood of unblemished lamb on the doorpost of his house. He knew that one day His Savior would come and deliver him completely from sin, death and Satan. It's no different for you and for me with our guilt-ridden consciences.

By Faith... we confidently trust in the perfect Blood of the Lamb of God shed for us on the cross. His blood covers us with his Righteousness. His blood has washed away all our sin. Through his blood, the fear of death passes over. Through his blood we are delivered *from* captivity to sin, death and the devil... *to* the free gift of eternal peace and life which belongs to those who are of the House of God. The blood of Jesus doesn't just protect our first born... it protects all who put their faith in Jesus!

By Faith... like Moses, we also learn to run from sin. ²⁶ *He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.* ²⁷ *By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.*

The world would have said Moses had it all... *the treasures of Egypt...* but by Faith he knew Egypt had nothing to offer. Some 1500 years later, Jesus said this, *“But seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness... And all these things will be given to you as well.”* Matt 6:33 Interestingly enough... this is exactly what happened for Moses and all Israel as they left Egypt.

The world would have called him a fool – to go against the most powerful man in the world and his wrath... but **by Faith** he knew who was to be feared above all – the one he loved above all. The Apostle John penned these words: *“But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.”* 1 John 4:18. Moses so feared and loved the true God that he could face Pharaoh... knowing he wasn't alone, knowing the true God was on his side... knowing that even if/when Satan's men might mimic God's power, they would lose, just as we heard in our first lesson as God's snake ate the others. The devil will never be able to outmatch God! That's the faith that we pray the Holy Spirit to instill in our hearts... a faith that sees the invisible... a Faith sees the true God... a Faith that runs from sin, a faith that has no fear of this world. What can the world do to me? It's our prayer today that God would grant to each of us a Faith that leads us to stand up before others, that confesses the true God, that is not ashamed to be associated with Christians... that boldly joins in the mission to which God has called his people... a faith that “keeps the Passover” that celebrates the true festivals of God not just once a year, but every day, rejoicing in the message of Jesus' blood shed for my sin and the sin of the world. Lord, Grant us such a faith. Amen.