

Moses: Faith that Keeps God's Ordinances

Hebrews 11:28

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Introduction:

In our sermon series from Hebrews, we are in chapter 11 where we have a whole array of examples of people who had faith.

- These are very helpful.
- Hebrews presents the excellence of Christ and His saving work to us in the first ten chapters, and then in chapter 11 we have these examples that show us how faith works in our lives.

Lately, we have been looking at the section about the faith of Moses.

- We saw that his faith began with his parents hiding him when they had been ordered to kill him.
- Then, when he grew up, he continued in faith. Uniquely, he had the option of living as a prince in Egypt in Pharaoh's household, or identifying with God's people who were in servile bondage, but who had the promise of eternal salvation. By faith, he chose God's people because he believed the promise.
- After that, when he was called to command Pharaoh in God's name to let Israel go, he met opposition not only from Pharaoh, but also from Israel. Nevertheless, he courageously endured because he believed what God had promised.

Today, we come to Hebrews 11:28 where, by faith, he leads the whole nation of Israel to keep the Passover and the sprinkling of blood associated with it.

- In Hebrews chapter 3, we were told that Moses was faithful as a minister in God's house. He declared to them what God required.
 - That was his job and he did it faithfully.

For our scripture reading, I will begin with Hebrews 11:23 and conclude with the verse that we are looking at today—verse 28.

- This is God's holy and infallible word:

Hebrews 11:23-28: By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of

sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

Thanks be to God for His precious word.

The Passover was an ordinance that God gave to His people when He brought them out of Egypt.

- Today as we consider Hebrews 11:28, we are going to look at how God uses ordinances.
- So we will begin with:

I. A word about ordinances.

A. All through the ages, God has given His people ordinances.

1. An ordinance is simply something that God ordered His people to do—or those who would be His people.
2. In the Old Testament, before Jesus came, two of His ordinances were circumcision and the Passover.
 - a. Circumcision was given to the males because it was through Adam that we fell.
 - The fall made us all guilty and corrupt so that we could only bring forth children who were guilty and sinful like us.
 - Circumcision was given with the promise that by God’s special grace, He would enable His people to bring forth children who would be redeemed to love and serve God—and bring forth the Son who would redeem them.
 - b. The Passover was given when God brought His people out of Egypt to establish them as a nation under His law in the land of Canaan.
 - We read about it in Exodus 12, and I will have a lot more to say about it later in this sermon.
 - But in short, it was an ordinance God appointed after He announced that He was going to bring the sentence of death upon the firstborn male in every family dwelling in Egypt.
 - The firstborn represented the family as a priest to offer sacrifices for sin and lead them to God after the fall.
 - By killing the firstborn, God showed that He rejected all the families in Egypt.
 - At the Passover, God told His people to offer a lamb as a sacrifice in place of their firstborn males and to sprinkle the blood from the sacrifice on the doorposts and lintels of their houses.
 - If they did this, He told them that He would pass over their houses when He sent the death angel to kill the firstborn males in Egypt.
3. In the New Testament, after Jesus came, we have the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
 - There are of course many other ordinances such as prayer, reading God’s word, benedictions, confessions of faith, and such, but the ones we are focusing on in particular are baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
 - a. With baptism, ministers are commanded to sprinkle clean water on those who profess Christ together with their children.
 - This is to be done to show that Jesus washes away their sin so they can enter God’s kingdom and live for Him.

- They are forgiven (cleansed from the guilt) by Jesus' death and resurrection; and they are cleansed from their corruption to love God and serve Him by the Holy Spirit
- b. With the Lord's Supper, ministers are commanded to take bread and wine, set it apart to represent Christ's body and blood by God's word of institution, and then give it to the congregation of those who profess Christ to eat and drink in remembrance of Him who offered His body and blood on the cross to take away our sin.
- This is done to refresh them in what God has done for them and to nourish their faith and life as they look to feed spiritually on Jesus.
- B. God gave His people these ordinances to associate us with Him in His saving work.
1. We are outwardly associated with Him as His people when we receive them.
 - We are marked out from the rest of the world as those who belong to Him.
 - And we retain this identification unless we are removed by church discipline for not continuing in our profession as His people.

➤ But the association is not merely outward.
 2. We are savingly associated with Him when we receive them by faith, looking to the Lord to do what is represented by them.
 - Romans 10:10 tells us that when the outward confession is joined with inward faith, we are saved:
 - **For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**
 - The proper way to confess Christ is through these ordinances. With baptism we make our initial confession, and with the Lord's Supper our ongoing profession.
 - But if there is no faith associated with that confession, we are not truly, eternally, or savingly brought to God by it.
 - The falsity of our profession will be exposed, either by our denial of the Lord in this life or on the day of judgment when every secret thing about us is revealed.
- C. Ministers are appointed to administer the ordinances of God faithfully.
1. Moses did this.
 - Heb 3:5 says: **And Moses indeed *was* faithful in all His house as a servant...**
 - Moses' task was to reveal to the church what God requires—what He requires morally as well as, through the shadows of OT ceremonies, what He requires of sinners.
 - Moses did this with perfect faithfulness. Jesus is contrasted in that He actually did what God required to redeem the whole church.
 - Moses showed us what was required and Jesus did what was required.
 2. Ministers who do not administer God's ordinances faithfully greatly displease the LORD and will have a tremendous price to pay.

- a. One of the most egregious things they do is to give the ordinances to people who are not entitled to them—
 - In this way, they deceive people and give them false hope.
 - For example, they give the Lord’s Supper to those who do not have a credible profession of faith—who deny the essential teachings of saving faith or who live in sin without repentance.
 - In 1 Cor 6:9-10, Paul says: **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”**
- b. Another harmful thing they do is administer ordinances without explaining them properly.
 - In Hosea 4:6, the Lord speaks to the priests, saying: **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.**
 - Moses was not like that. He administered the Passover by faith.

TRANS> Let’s turn now to look at Moses’ example as a believing, faithful minister.

II. Moses shows us by his example three things that faithful ministers do when they administer God’s ordinances.

- A. First, that faithful ministers believe and proclaim God’s message of condemnation and judgment when they administer God’s ordinances.
 - Let me read Heb 11:28 again: **By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.**
1. You see that Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood to prevent the firstborn males among God’s people from being destroyed.
 - a. He believed God when He said He was going to destroy all the firstborn males in Egypt.
 - The death of all firstborn males was the tenth plague that God told Moses He was going to send upon Egypt.
 - God had already sent nine plagues upon Egypt to make Pharaoh yield to His command to let His people go out of Egypt to worship Him.
 - He told Moses that this tenth plague would be the one that make Pharaoh yield.
 - As I mentioned before, the firstborn son was the one who represented the family as the priest.
 - After our first parents fell, they and all their posterity (all people) were made unacceptable to God apart from an acceptable sacrifice for sin.
 - Until the time of Moses, God appointed firstborn sons to represent their family as priest when their father died or got too old to do so, so a strike upon them was a strike upon the priest of the family.

- It showed the rejection of the whole family.
- b. Moses also believed God when He told him that this plague would fall on Israel the same as Egypt unless they kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood.
 - By this, the LORD was making it clear the people of Israel, even though they were the people He called to be His own, were sinners too.
 - They were just as unacceptable to Him, apart from an acceptable sacrifice for their sins, as the Egyptians were.
2. This was an offensive message for Israel, but Moses did not hesitate to proclaim it.
 - a. He did not hesitate to proclaim it because he knew it was true.
 - He did not want this plague to fall on Israel.
 - He had seen the other nine plagues come, just as God had said—many of them excluding Israel—but this one would fall on them too unless they kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood.
 - b. So Moses warned them about what would happen to them and led them to keep the Passover.
 - He did not become offended with God for declaring that Israel was unacceptable to Him apart from a blood sacrifice.
 - He did not hesitate because of the way the people might receive it—that they might be offended by it and turn against him and against God.
 - This was the only remedy, and Moses led them to observe it lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.
 - c. Note the language here—the only thing the death angel had to do was touch the firstborn males and they died.
 - All the firstborn males across the entire nation of Egypt were killed at midnight.
 - Nothing could stop it except the Passover sacrifice and the sprinkling of its blood on their doorposts.
 - Moses faithfully made that known to the people and led them to keep the Passover so their firstborns would not perish.
3. The lesson for you is to never accept a minister who is unwilling to proclaim the wrath and judgment of God against every person apart from God’s remedy.
 - a. Such false ministers will baptise and administer the Lord’s Supper without proclaiming that all will perish who are not cleansed by Christ.
 - They may talk about acceptance, but they will not talk about being cut off without baptism and the Lord’s Supper—without confessing Christ as the only remedy for our sin.
 - b. There are many ministers who are like that because that is what people want.
 - They will talk about the love of Jesus and about His power to heal our broken lives and to comfort us and even to help us with our vices.

- They will talk about man's goodness and about God's acceptance of us as if it is based on our goodness—completely ignoring what His ordinances show us.
 - But they will not talk about the wrath of God that falls upon every person who does not accept His way of salvation in Christ.
- c. They will not proclaim the truth because it is offensive.
- They themselves reject any notions of the wrath of God against sinners because it offends them personally.
 - That is why they will not proclaim it. That is why people don't want them to proclaim it.
 - They will tell you that they don't want to offend people.
 - They will piously say, "I want people to love God, and talk about their sin will discourage them and turn them away."
 - After I became a believer, I heard Robert Schuller, a famous preacher of a huge church, actually say that.
 - Of course, he was right. The truth does offend people.
 - It turns away all those who do not want to come to God on His terms, just as so many were turned away by Jesus Himself when they rejected Him and demanded that He be crucified.
- d. Millions of people who are outwardly baptised and who outwardly observe the Lord's Supper and profess to be Christians are content to have ministers that will not speak about God's wrath and judgment.
- Do not ever be one of those people.
 - They do not have the true God, but idols.
- B. The second thing Moses shows us is that ministers must set forth and proclaim God's way of redemption when they administer His ordinances.
1. Moses told them that to be spared, they must take a lamb and offer it as a sacrifice in place of their firstborn sons.
 - a. Each household was to do this—
 - Keep in mind that this was not just mom and dad and a couple of children, but it was the elders who chose the lambs for their households—the grandfathers and great-grandfathers.
 - A one-year-old lamb would easily serve about sixty people, and it is unclear if the children even partook of the lamb itself.
 - In some cases, two households had to get together, but in other households, the elders would need more than one lamb!
 - These families with their multi generations were like entire churches.
 - b. The remedy that Moses proclaimed was that the lamb must be killed in the place the firstborn sons.
 - Its blood must be shed to make atonement for forgiveness.
 2. This gives us a very powerful picture of God's redemption now that it has all been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

- In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Jesus is referred to as **“our Passover”** who **“was sacrificed for us.”**
 - John the Baptist referred to Him as **“the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”**
 - In Revelation, He is seen as the only one who can move forward the advancement of God’s kingdom because of His being **“the lamb that was slain.”**
 - This is what was shown so clearly in the first ten chapters of Hebrews—right from the very first verses—that Jesus is the one who (Heb 1:3) **“by Himself purged our sins.”** Hebrews explains that He did this by offering Himself as a sacrifice for our sins when He died on the cross.
 - We are all sinners and none of us are acceptable to God apart from reliance on His sacrifice. He is the only one who can save us.
 - There are false ministers who will talk about sin to some extent, but then they will say that we can save ourselves or that the church can save us.
 - They will not point us to Christ who alone can save us because He is not only man, but God whose blood alone can cleanse us from our sin.
3. Faithful ministers today will not administer baptism or the Lord’s Supper without proclaiming that Christ is God’s only provision for sinners to be saved.
- At baptism, they speak of the cleansing that He alone can give to us—both that He washes away our guilt by the shedding of His blood and that He washes away our rebellion by the baptism of His Spirit.
 - And they will not administer the Lord’s Supper without declaring that Christ is the only one whose sacrifice on the cross continues to cleanse us and nourish us up for new obedience and fresh communion in our walk with Him.
- C. The third thing faithful ministers will do is teach the people the implications of belonging to Christ when they administer God’s ordinances.
1. Circumcision and the Passover as well as baptism and the Lord’s Supper mark us out from the rest of the world as those who belong to God.
 - Moses faithfully declared this.
 - Israel, as redeemed by the LORD, belonged not to Pharaoh, but the Lord.
 - He had redeemed them and now they were to live under His laws and with faith in His cleansing.
 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread showed that they were bringing nothing from Egypt with them—they now had a fresh start with God as their Master.
 - And He was Lord of all.
 - They were to keep on circumcising their sons and those strangers who came and wanted to join them,
 - and they were to continue to eat the Passover to remind them that God had redeemed them from His wrath that they might live for Him from now on.
 2. It is the same for us, only now that Christ has come, we have baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which more gloriously set the focus on Christ whose redemptive work is now complete.

- As those who are His, we are to obey all that He commands, to faithfully keep His ordinances of worship, especially each Lord's Day, and to rely upon Him for our provision to live for Him (as shown by eating at the Lord's Supper),
 - We are to pour out our lives for Him, looking always to please Him whether in our recreations, our labour, our family, our ministry to other people, our service around the house and in the world—all is to be by Him and for Him.
 - We are to live for Him, for we are baptised in His name as those cleansed by Him and we are nourished to eternal life by His sacrifice as our supper.
3. Christian, you are not your own. Now you belong to Jesus.
- I heard an account about King Alfred that beautifully illustrates this.
 - He conquered some Viking chieftains and took them captive.
 - He brought them to some water and declared to them that he was going to offer them to the living God who made heaven and earth.
 - They had offered his uncle and others to their gods when they had conquered them by stretching them out on the ground face down, cutting through their ribs from their backs with an axe, and pulling their lungs out as while their lungs were still gasping for air—an offering to their gods.
 - They thought something like this was coming to them.
 - But Alfred's executioner was a minister of the gospel who baptised them, proclaiming that now they were dead to what they were and belonged to the true God who gave His son as a sacrifice in their place that they might be pardoned and live for Him with no more rape and no more pillaging.
 - Alfred, as their godfather, gave them gifts and sent them back to their homeland where all but one of them built churches and served the Lord.
 - They understood that as baptised, they now belonged to God and to Jesus their Saviour. They had faith.
 - One of them did not believe. He did not serve the Lord. Some years later, he returned to wreak havoc in England.
 - Alfred, taking his role as the one who brought him to Christ outwardly, personally went after him and executed him for betraying his trust.
 - Whatever we may think of the method of converting people, this powerfully illustrates that the true God has offered His Son for our sins...to redeem us...
 - And that when He takes us as His own, He cleanses us and gives us new life by Jesus our Saviour, and that henceforth we are to live for Him.
 - The truth is that some of us will not; the ones who are devoid of faith.
 - So it was with those that Moses faithfully administered the Passover to.
 - We saw in Hebrews 3 and 4 that with many of them, God was not pleased and so their bodies fell in the wilderness.
 - Many of them fell in the wilderness because of their unbelief, but those that believed, believed to the saving of their souls.
 - They live upon God for their redemption and for their walk.
 - That, my brothers and sisters, is what you must do.

- Baptism and the Lord's Supper mark you out as those who are His, to live by His grace and for His glory.
- Do you believe? Are you living by Christ as a sinner saved by Him and sustained by Him, or apart from Him?