

Hebrews

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Hebrews 11:20-29



Vss. 20-22

- Of the three mentioned here, (Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph), all three were at the point of death. Isaac's blessing is in Genesis 27. Jacob's blessing is in Genesis 48. Joseph's blessing is in Genesis 50. The point the Preacher to the Hebrews wants to make is that all three died without living to see the promise God had made come into reality, that is, the forever Promised Land. Isaac was still a nomad. Jacob and Joseph were each in their own time living in Egypt. Yet, despite all they had suffered their faith never wavered. They never doubted that someday God's promise would be realized by their people. And despite not seeing this with their own eyes, they did not die in dark disappointment but in the light of hope. Faith defeated death and hope was triumphant.

- Say's William Barclay:

There is something of permanent greatness here. The thought in the mind of all these men was the same: "God's promise is true, for He never breaks a promise. I may not live to see it, death may come to me before that promise becomes a fact; but I am a link in its fulfilment. Whether or not that promise comes depends on (my faith)." Here is the great function of life. Our hopes may never be realized but we must live in such a way that we shall hasten their coming. It may not be given to every man to enter into the fullness of the promises or God, but it is given to him to live with such fidelity as to bring nearer the day when others will enter into it. To us all is given the tremendous task of helping God make his promises come true.

Vss. 23-29

- To the Hebrews, there was no one of greater faith than Moses. It was Moses who had rescued them from slavery and it was Moses who had stood face to face with God and received the Law. Here the preacher points out five different acts of faith surrounding Moses.

- First there was the faith of his parents. In Exodus 1 the Egyptian king orders that all the newborn sons of the Jews be killed. In Exodus 2 we have the story of how Moses' parents kept him hidden for three months and then devised a plan to float the baby down river and trust God for his safety.

- Second, there was the choice Moses made as a young man to identify with the Jews. It was the daughter of the king who had found him as a baby in the river that day. She raised him as her own, raising him as a prince of Egypt. But evidently Moses was aware of his heritage and one day when he saw an Egyptian beating a Jew, Moses killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. Soon, word of this got out and made its way back to the king, who sought to have Moses put to death, causing Moses to escape to the deserts of Midian. The preacher's point here is that Moses could have simply looked away and continued his life of riches and pleasure in the king's palace. Instead, the preacher argues, Moses considered "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt".
- Third, the preacher sees Moses' escape into Midian as more of tactical retreat than a lack of courage or an attempt to save his own hide. He sees Moses as one who is patiently waiting upon the Lord, enduring, seeing Him who is unseen. A quote attributed to A.S. Peake says, "The courage to abandon work on which one's heart is set and accept inaction cheerfully as the will of God is of the rarest and highest kind and can be created and sustained only by the clearest spiritual vision".
- Fourth, the story of the first Passover is in Exodus 12. The unleavened bread, the lamb's blood over the doorways, all had to be done so that the Angel of Death would literally "pass over" the house. What is key for the Preacher to the Hebrews is that again a person of faith is looking to the future. Moses in Exodus 12:24 tells the Hebrew people that they will observe this practice forever. In other words, Moses never doubted that God would ensure the success of the mission. God does not call His servants to a great task and then leave it up to them to rise or fall. The Father goes with them every step of the way.
- Fifth, the Preacher speaks to the parting and crossing of the Red Sea from Exodus 14. Here we see that faith KNOWS that even the greatest obstacle is no obstacle at all to God. By faith Moses knew that in some unimaginable way, God would make a way.
- The key to understanding the life and faith of Moses is in vs. 27: he lived his life seeing Him who is unseen. Moses' faith developed such an intimacy with God that He KNEW that God and all of His power was with him and the Hebrew people every step of the way.