

## THE MOLDING OF MOSES BY HIS MOTHER

With **last** Sunday being Mother's Day—and **next** Sunday being Memorial Day weekend—I opted to hold off getting back to our series in II Peter until after Memorial Day. Instead, I felt led to pick up where we left off last week regarding the childhood of Moses.

**What happened** after Pharaoh's daughter "hired" Moses' mother, Jochebed, to take care of him for her? **How long** did Jochebed get to keep Moses before she had to "turn him over" to Pharaoh's daughter? **And what** did Jochebed **teach Moses** in the time she had with him?

Much like the childhood **of Jesus**, we know very little about the childhood **of Moses**. Hebrews 11, though—the chapter we fondly call "the Hall of Faith"—does tell us about **Moses' faith** and some of the **decisions he made** based on his faith. And since Pharaoh's daughter **did not teach** Moses about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it's pretty safe to say that **Moses' mother did!**

Please take your Bibles and turn to Hebrews 11 and follow along as I read verses 23-29. In vs 23—a verse we touched on briefly last week—we see the faith of Moses' **parents**. **They** were the ones who had faith—and **they** were the ones who hid Moses because he obviously could not "hide himself."

But in verses 24-29, we do see the **faith of Moses**. Rather than look at all six of those verses, though, we are going to focus on verses 24 through 26.

**Two disclaimers** as we get started here this morning.

**1) First, how long** did Jochebed get to keep Moses before giving him up to be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter?

**Answer?** We **don't know** because the Bible doesn't say! Exodus 2:9-10 "And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and **nurse it** for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the women took the child, and **nursed it**.<sup>10</sup> And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."

--At **what age** would he have been done nursing? Some commentators suggest between 2 and 3 years of age. --Others suggest Moses may have stayed in his own home until he was 5 or 6.

--Still others suggest he may have been 10 to 12 years old before he was taken to Pharaoh's daughter! I lean toward 5/6 because he would have been weaned...and potty-trained...and been able to learn a lot from his mother Jochebed, but still young enough to be partly raised by Pharaoh's daughter.

**2) Second**, did Moses **get to visit his family** while being raised by Pharaoh's daughter?

**Answer?** Again, we don't know because the Bible doesn't say! But...based on what we are told **he believed** in Hebrews 11...he either stayed with his family more than 3 years—or got to visit frequently. Why do I say that? Because—human speaking—anything learned in the home prior to 4 years of age probably would have been "unlearned" by his Egyptian education and upbringing!

### 1. When Moses made his choices

Vs 24 "By faith Moses, **when** he was come to years..." When was that? We aren't given his age **here in Hebrews 11**—and all it says in Exodus 2:11 is "when **Moses was grown**, that he went out unto his brethren..." We do know his age, however, from a sermon that Stephen preached in Acts 7! Notice **Acts 7:23-24** "And when he **was full forty years old**, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. <sup>24</sup> And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:"

**Why** did Moses wait until he was 40 to make these choices and identify with his own people? I hate to say it again for fear of sounding like the proverbial "broken record," but—we don't know because we aren't told! Not only that, I really didn't find any commentaries that touched on it, either!

I will say this, though—God wants us to identify with Him and His people **way before we reach** 40 years of age—if we aren't 40 yet! Stated another way, it is **not okay** for you to say: "I'm going to wait until I'm 40 to start living for God because that's what Moses did!"

## 2. What Moses gave up

J.C. Ryle, in his book entitled Holiness, has a very insightful—and convicting—chapter on the example of Moses taken from Hebrews 11:24-26. He suggests that what Moses gives up is “three of the greatest sacrifices that man’s heart can possibly make” (pg 136). Although he labeled them differently, they are basically the same as what I’m giving you here.

### First, A. Moses gave up position

We see that in vs 24 where it says he “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter...” Moses had a lofty position as Pharaoh’s daughter. He had rank...he had power...he had prestige. **Steven Cole** put it like this: “As Pharaoh’s daughter, he knew **everybody** that was **anybody**.” (Bible.org; Lesson 40: Faith’s Choice)

--I imagine that wherever he went, people would greet him. Parents would point him out to their children as they walked down the street.

--And I’m quite certain that he was invited to all the parties that all the “mucky-mucks” went to!

--When Moses spoke, people would listen. And it is possible that he was in line to sit on the throne of Egypt and some day hold the title of Pharaoh himself!

--In our day and age, he would have a huge following on social media—and everyone would want his autograph or to take a “selfie” with him when he was “out and about.”

And let’s not miss this important truth: Moses was not giving up on ***pursuing a lofty position—he already had it!*** He ***possessed*** a high position—it was ***already his***—and he was giving it up! He was rejecting it...and refusing it...and turning his back on it!

### Second, B. Moses gave up pleasure

We see that in verse 25 “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the **pleasures of sin** for a season:” Is God ***against*** pleasure? No; He’s not! How do we know? Because He says! **I Tim 6:17** “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who **giveth us richly all things to enjoy;**” God gives us—richly—things to enjoy! **Psalms 16:11** “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; **at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.**” In the presence of God is fulness of joy—and ***pleasures*** for ever!

But...there is pleasure that God ***approves of***—and there is pleasure that God ***does not approve of!*** And—as stated in this verse—there is ***the pleasure of sin***—aka, sinful pleasure—that lasts for a season (meaning a short time). Moses—based on his high position—had available to him most anything he wanted!

--If he liked art, he could have had his own art gallery

--If he liked books, he could have had a library full

--If he liked chariots and horses, he could have had a barn full—or two or three!

And—without getting too specific—“fame” can lead to ***favours***, right? I don’t think I’m going out on a limb to suggest that Moses could have had all the pleasure he wanted, to include “wine, women, and song.”

But he refused them; he chose to reject them and chose something else instead.

### Third, C. Moses gave up plenty

I’m thinking of “plenty” in terms of riches and wealth. We see in vs 26 that Moses had access to “the treasures in Egypt.” I’m not sure that we can really fathom the riches that were available to Moses as the daughter of Pharaoh. Moses lived around 1450 BC; the famous King Tutankhamun—more commonly referred to as King Tut—lived about 100 years ***after*** that. King Tut died young—he was only 18 or 19—and he was mummified in a coffin of solid gold, worth roughly \$1.2 million. His well-known funeral mask—also made of solid gold—weighed between 22-1/2 pounds and 26 pounds. Its value in gold would be approximately \$605,000. But—with how famous it is—some people suggest it would cost you \$100 million—if it can even be bought, that is!

On top of that, around 5000 artifacts were found in his tomb—beds, chariots, clothing, cups, daggers, golden sandals, jars, jewelry, trumpets—and a couple of thrones! Needless to say, there was a lot of wealth in Egypt! Please know that I’m not suggesting Moses had access to ***the same wealth*** as King Tut. What I am saying, though, is this—as Pharaoh’s daughter, Moses could have bought ***whatever*** he wanted—***whenever*** he wanted it!

The best clothes...the biggest house...the most comfortable furniture... the finest food... the most expensive jewelry... the fastest horse—you name it, he could have **bought** it or “got” it!

To recap, Moses gave up a high position...and pleasure...and plenty—meaning riches—and left it all behind. It was his—it belonged to him—but he “sent it back,” so to speak! Why? Was he crazy?

No; not at all! We will talk about **why** he wasn’t crazy—and why he **gave it all up** in a little bit—but I believe this quote from **Jim Elliot** captures well the mind-set of Moses: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

### **3. What Moses chose instead**

**What** did Moses choose instead of the things that he gave up? In one sense, you could say he **chose the opposite** of what he gave up. --He gave up a **high position** and chose to identify as a lowly slave.

--He gave up a **life of pleasure** and instead chose a life of difficulties and hardships and trials.

--And he gave up **the plenty**—the riches and treasures of Egypt—in exchange for the clothes on his back and a walking stick in his hand! But the writer of Hebrews specifically mentions two so let’s look at them.

#### A. Chose to suffer affliction

We see that in the beginning of vs 25 “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God...” The Greek word that “choose” comes from means “to lay hold of by a personal choice.” In other words, it **was a willful decision** that he made for himself—not one that was thrust upon him.

To “suffer affliction” means to **be ill-treated** along with them. Moses was not ignorant as to how God’s people were being treated. He obviously knew about their hard labor...and harsh treatment...and horrible conditions, yet he was **willing to join them**—and be treated the same way that they were being treated!

#### B. Chose the reproach of Christ

We see that in vs 26 “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt...” According to Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, the Greek word that “esteeming” comes from means “a belief resting not on one’s inner feeling or sentiment, but on the due consideration of external grounds, the weighing and comparing of facts . . . deliberate and careful judgment.”

Simply put, this was **not an emotional decision** that Moses made on a whim and at “the spur of the moment.” It was something he **weighed out carefully** by comparing the “pros and cons,” so to speak.

What does “the reproach of Christ” refer to? Most commentators suggest that it means that Moses **suffered the same kind** of reviling—the same kind of insults and mockery—that Christ suffered on earth.

Does anyone **enjoy** being made fun of? Does anyone **like to be laughed at**...to be made a joke of... to be mocked...and ridiculed...and shamed? No one—that I know of—**volunteers** to do that! And yet...that is the choice that Moses made!

Imagine what would have been said **about** Moses—and **to** Moses!

‘Have you lost your mind, Moses! Are you **really** giving up your position as a son of Pharaoh’s daughter—to be treated like a slave? Are you **really** giving up a pleasure-filled lifestyle for one that is filled with pain? Are you **really** giving up a life of plenty—for a life of poverty? What is the matter with you?’

That certainly makes Moses a lot like Jesus, doesn’t it?

II Corinthians 8:9 “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

We’ve looked at the “**when**” of Moses’ choices...and the “**what**”—both what he **gave up** and what **he chose** instead. Let’s consider now the “**why**” of Moses’ choices. **Why** did he choose what he chose—and **why** did he do what he did? In other words, what was... **4. The motivation of Moses?**

In a word...**faith!**

Vs 24 “By faith Moses...”

Vs 27 “By faith he forsook Egypt”

Vs 28 “Through faith he kept the Passover”

Vs 29 “By faith they passed through the Red Sea...”

What is faith **based on**? What is its **foundation**? What does it **rest upon**? The **Word of God**, right?

Last year during our VBS, I taught the young people a catchy little tune that I got from Brenda called “Faith is Just Believing.” I appreciated the song because it taught a very important truth—faith is **based on the Word of God!** It is not based on a hope, whim, or wish—it is based on what **God says**. “Faith is just believing what God said He would do; He will never fail us, His promises are true.”

God had Paul write this about Abraham’s faith in **Romans 4:21** “And being fully persuaded that, what **He [God] had promised, He [God] was able also to perform.**” And in the same book, God had Paul write about where faith comes from. **Romans 10:17** “So then faith cometh by **hearing**, and hearing by the **word of God.**”

So...Moses’ mother Jochebed—for however long she had him—sat down and taught Moses the Bible, right? **Wrong! Why?** Because there **was no written Bible** to read to him or teach him! In fact, Moses—**the baby she was teaching**—was going to **be the writer** of the first five books of the Bible—to include recording his own rescue by Pharaoh’s daughter that we looked at last week!

So how was it that Moses—**40 years before** he heard directly from God at the burning bush—was led to give up the pleasures and treasures of Egypt and take a stand against Pharaoh—and with the people of God? It was **by faith** that was brought about by... **5. The molding of Moses by his mother**

First off, **where did** Jochebed get what she taught Moses? It was either **written and passed down** by Adam and Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob—or it was passed down by **word of mouth**.

#### A. What she would have taught him

Probably a lot more than we would imagine! My guess is that she would have taught him much of what we know from the **book of Genesis**: God as the Creator...the sin of Adam and Eve...Noah and the flood...the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and so on.

But let’s think about some things we know **from the book of Genesis** that would be the **foundation of Moses’ faith** and motivate him to say “no” to Egypt—and “yes” to God and God’s ways.

- 1) In vs 25, we see that Moses chose to identify **with the people of God**. That means **some people are the people of God**—and some people are not! His mother most certainly would have taught him that God had **called Abraham** and had promised to bless him and make a great nation out of him. She also would have taught him that they would **not stay in Egypt forever** because God had promised them the land of Canaan!
- 2) She also would have taught him that the **pleasures of sin only last for a season**, meaning a short time. She would have taught him that sin **doesn’t satisfy for long**—and brings horrible, **often irreversible consequences** if you dabble in it. **Adam and Eve** were driven out of the garden of Eden because of sin...**Cain** killed Abel because of sin...**God destroyed the world by a flood** because of sin—and someday **God would punish Egypt** for their sin!
- 3) She also would have taught Moses—from the life of Joseph—that **sometimes God’s people suffer wrongfully**—even at the hands **of their own people!** Did the life of Joseph “hit home” with Moses? It is interesting that **one quarter of the book** of Genesis is about Joseph! Did knowing the life of Joseph prepare Moses for the murmuring and complaining that God’s people directed **against him** in the wilderness? Did the fact that Joseph was **blessed by God**—after a long time of difficulty and mistreatment—motivate Moses to believe that there would be **blessing in the future** for him if he remained faithful?

Interesting things to think about—in my opinion, anyway!

What about us? Aren’t these Biblical truths **good for us** to have settled in our hearts and minds?

--Not everyone is a child of God—and we need to be **unashamed to identify** as a child of God!

--We need to be convinced that the pleasure of sin is **temporary**—and is not worth dabbling in!

--And we need to accept the fact that sometimes God’s people **suffer wrongfully**—even when they are doing right! We need to know these things ourselves—and teach them to our children and grandchildren.

#### B. How she would have taught him

How would Jochebed have taught Moses? We don’t know, of course, but we can make some educated guesses based on her circumstances. I was hoping to put these in an acrostic to help us remember better but was unable to come up with one.

**1) By example.** For her to teach Moses, she had to know for herself. She had to be a learner herself. She had to be a woman of faith herself. As mentioned last week, “Our talk talks and our walk talks, but our walk talks louder than our talk talks.”

**What about us?** Are we examples to our children...and grandchildren...and other believers and the unsaved? Do we pray? Do we read God’s Word? Do we memorize it? Do we talk about it?

**2) Urgently.** Jochebed had a deadline; the clock was ticking. Although ***we aren’t told*** in the Bible when she had to give Moses up, she probably knew. And because she knew she had only a certain amount of time, she was urgent about teaching him.

**What about us?** We don’t know how much time we have, do we? Based on that, shouldn’t we be urgent, too?

**3) Intentionally.** Along with urgency, Jochebed would have been looking for—and creating—opportunities to bring God and His character and His Word into everyday living.

What about us? Shouldn’t we be doing the same?

**4) Consistently.** I’m sure Jochebed didn’t take “days off,” so to speak. She was consistent. Every day mattered; every teaching moment was one more that would help her son in his faith.

What about us? We get “inspired”—motivated—to do things, then lose our energy and quit. If that’s you, don’t stay in the “quit mode.” Start again—and keep at it. And if you fail again—start again!

Even though the Bible doesn’t give us a lot of details about Jochebed, we know that she was a godly, faith-filled woman that God used to mold Moses—and motivate him to serve God in a way that very few people in the Bible did. Let’s ask God to be like her and be faithful in passing on our faith.

So what would God have us do in light of His Word this morning?

1. First, be honest about your priorities...and your direction in life...and the choices you make. Are you living for God—or are you living for you? Are you willing to give up the pursuit of position...and pleasure...and plenty and pursue the will of God.

That’s what Moses did. Are ***you*** willing to do that? ***Am I*** willing to do that?

Jim Elliot: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

2. Second, “Moms” aren’t the only ones who should be passing on our faith! We all have a sphere of influence; we all have a circle of friends or family members that we can be influencing for God. Are we doing that?

3. Third, are you saved...are you born again...are you heaven bound?

Giving up things doesn’t get us into heaven—and yet there is one thing we must give up to get into heaven. What is that? Our pride!

If you think you are good...and that your goodness will get you to heaven—you will not be going there. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...” (Titus 3:5)