

**Faith or fortune? – Hebrews 11:23-29**  
*James Muldoon - Carey Baptist Church – 9 December 2007*

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Hebrews 11 is all about having faith in a faithful God. The original readers of Hebrews were faced with sufferings, doubts, fears and temptations. But they needed to persevere in their Christian lives. What did they need to enable them to do that? They needed faith in a faithful God. **Hebrews 11:23-29** gives us portraits of Moses and his faith.

i Faith and fear

**v23** is a family portrait of Amram and Jochebed and their children, Miriam, Aaron and Moses. It refers us to an episode from **Exodus 2:1-10**. Pharaoh had decreed that all male children born to the people of Israel had to be killed. However, when Moses was born, his parents could see that there was something special about him. **Acts 7:20** says that he was special to God. Moses' parents became convinced that their son had a part to play in God's purposes.

That meant, of course, that they were faced with a dilemma. Should they save their own lives by killing him? Or should they risk their lives by saving him? They chose the latter. Amram and Jochebed's faith confronted and overcame their fears. Their faith did not make them immune to fear or somehow remove their capacity to fear. But it confronted and overcame their fears.

**v27** explains further, referring to something which happened early in Moses' career, and which is recorded in **Exodus 2:11-25**. He sees an Egyptian mistreating a Hebrew slave, and he kills him. When the killing becomes known, Moses is scared, and he flees. There is no contradiction between Exodus and Hebrews: Moses is simply afraid that God's purposes for his life might come to a sudden end if Pharaoh killed him. Trusting that the Lord has plans for his future, he takes the best option available to him and legs it to Midian.

The second half of the verse helps us to see the connection between faith and fear. Faith does not just see us in a fearful situation. It sees us in a fearful situation with God holding us by the hand. And when God is holding us by the hand, well, massive worries become small problems! That was Moses' secret.

Don't we find it hard to remember that? There's a sudden crisis and immediately we're in a flap. Or we're facing situations which makes us nervous and so often we forget that there is someone there with us. Nevertheless, faith confronts and overcomes fear.

So, Christian, are you facing a terrifying situation? Then have faith in your faithful God. He is with you. He's holding you by the hand. He can make the most dreadful circumstance a means of the greatest blessing to you. Faith does not make us immune to fear. But it does enable us to confront it and, by God's grace, to overcome it.

## ii Faith and the future

**v24-26** refer us to events later in Moses' life. After growing up, Moses was faced with a choice. Option one: stay as an Egyptian prince; live a life of luxury; then die a hopeless death. Option two: become an Israelite slave; give up all the pleasures and treasures that could have been his; be ill-treated; then look forward to a reward in heaven. Moses chose the latter option. He chose to sacrifice now so as to gain eternity.

Now, this is an incredibly clever example, because the original readers of Hebrews were faced with the same choice. They could stay faithful as Christians. That would mean a great deal of suffering. But it would also mean eternal life. Or they could drift back into Judaism. That would be an easy life. But it would mean turning their backs on Christ to their eternal harm. And sooner or later, all of God's people are faced with the same choice too. Will you willingly give up your goods for Christ's sake? Will you willingly lose friends for Christ's sake? Will you willingly sacrifice the chance of promotion for Christ's sake?

Moses chose to sacrifice the here and now for the sake of eternity. He saw, as v25 shows, that the pleasures of sin are but for a short time. He looked forward, as v26 shows, to his eternal reward. Moses kept an eternal perspective on things. Christians must do the same. If you do, everything else will fall into its proper place.

So what will you choose? Popularity and treasure in the here and now? Or unpopularity here and treasure in the age to come? Don't let worldly things soften you up and cause you to be less willing to suffer for your Lord. Set your heart and your mind on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

## iii Faith and fate

**v28** talks about the Passover. **v29** talks about the crossing of the Red Sea. Both events required great faith of Moses and the Israelites. And both events were matters of life and death. The Israelite who had faith believed that he needed to put blood on his door frames for the Passover. Then he was saved. He lived. The Israelite who had faith believed that she could step out across the Red Sea. Then she was saved. She lived. Those who did not have faith, however, would have lost everything. Faith meant life. Unbelief meant death.

The same is true today. If you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have life. But if you have no faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are spiritually dead already, and you will suffer eternal death in hell. See **Romans 6:23**.

Two ways, then, are set before you. The way of faith is the way of life. The way of unbelief is the way of death. The way you are following will seal your fate for ever. If you've never done so, therefore, turn to Jesus Christ. He died and rose to save sinners. So why wait? Confess your sin to the Lord. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Start to live for Him. If you have faith in Him, you will be saved from death. You'll be set upon the way of life.