

*The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 27 March 2022. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.*

## **The Molding of a Man of Faith**

### **Hebrews 11:23**

In our study of the “Hall of Faith,” we’ve examined the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Now we come to one of the most amazing men in the Bible: **Moses**.

Now, Moses is not someone whom we should revere or worship. He was a sinner, with like passions as you and I have. Yet, he was a uniquely blessed man--a man who was profoundly used by God. It is no exaggeration to say that Moses is the representative of the entire Old Testament era--and especially of the dispensation of the Law. In fact, when we think of the Law, we immediately think of Moses. The words “Law” and “Moses” are practically inseparable. Moses was appointed by God to be the earthly mediator of the Law. He wrote it all down, and delivered it to Israel. Unlike most other prophets, Moses spoke directly to God, in conversational style. God frequently appeared to Moses in human form, and spoke with him face-to-face. Moses also performed more *miracles* than anyone else in history ever did (except, of course, for the Lord Jesus Christ). With the incredible signs and miracles that God did through Moses, a whole new dispensation of history was ushered in. Furthermore, Moses was a man of incredible humility, mercy, and longsuffering. At one point, Moses pleaded with God to blot *his own* name out of the Book of Life, and to spare the rebellious children of Israel instead! (And he really meant it!) No other sinful man (except, perhaps, for the Apostle Paul) ever had that kind of selfless love.

Moses’ desire to be a substitute for Israel makes him a type of Christ unlike any other. Of course, Moses’ name could *not* have been blotted out of the Book of Life, because no sinner can make atonement for another sinner. Only the sinless Son of God was qualified to take the curse of the house of Israel, and of the whole world, upon Himself. However, Moses was filled with the sacrificial love of Christ to an extent that few other men have ever been.

What made Moses such a tremendous man of God? Can just *any* believer have the kind of faith that he had? Yes, it is possible. Few believers in history have been called to such a position of *authority* as Moses had; but every believer can, through Christ, have the same *quality of faith* that Moses had.

In the next few messages, we will be examining Moses’ faith. However, in today’s message, we will examine the faith of the two people who molded his life more than anyone else: namely, his parents. The title of this message is ***The Molding of a Man of Faith***.

#### **Read Hebrews 11:23.**

We don’t know very much about the lives of Jochebed and Amram; but we do know that they were the ones who cast the “mold” in which Moses’ faith was formed! There is much that we can learn from their faith. In this passage, Paul gives us two specific reasons why Amram and Jochebed hid their child, in spite of the king’s commandment: and as we examine these two reasons, we will find two insights into the kind of faith that they had. The first reason Amram and Jochebed hid their son is that...

#### **I. They understood that God had a special purpose for their son’s life.**

##### **Read Exodus 6:20 and 2:1-10.**

Try to put yourself into this situation. Imagine that a ruthless dictator has commanded you to kill your own child as soon as he is born. Would you obey that command? Of course not.

Not many parents would (unless, of course, they have a very seared conscience). The desire to hide your child from people who want to harm them is certainly not, of itself, a mark of faith. Christians and non-Christians alike have a natural, God-given drive to protect their children. Why, then, does Paul say that it was “*by faith*” that Moses’ parents hid their child?

The answer is this: Amram and Jochebed hid their son *according to the plan that God revealed to them*. There were many ways that they *could* have dealt with this situation; but the way they chose was God’s plan, and not theirs. By faith in *God’s* leading, they hid Moses in their own home for three months; and when it became clear that something else had to be done, they allowed God to show them exactly what to do next. As it turned out, God had a plan that they couldn’t have possibly imagined!

God always guides the steps of His people when they seek His direction. This truth applies to every believer, whether they are married with children, or not! Christian, do you seek God’s leading in your life? Or do you lean on your own understanding? The Bible says, “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil*” (Proverbs 3:5-7). The Scripture also says, “*The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way*” (Psalm 37:23).

The way in which Amram and Jochebed hid their son shows that they lived their lives by faith. As we look at this situation, we can clearly see that they were acting according to *God’s* wisdom, and not according to their own. However, there is something else about their faith that we can see in this passage. Paul points out that their faith enabled them to see that God had a *purpose* for Moses’ life. They were driven by the conviction that God wanted to use Moses’ life in a special way, for His glory.

Now, where, in **Hebrews 11:23**, does it say that Moses’ parents understood that God had a purpose for their son? We see it in this statement: “*because they saw he was a proper child.*”

That word “*proper*” is very important. The Greek word for “proper” is *asteion*: and there are two ways it can be interpreted. It can be understood as “urbane, polite, refined, elegant, stately, or proper.” However, it can also mean “handsome,” “beautiful,” or “fair.” In fact, that is exactly how the word *asteion* is translated in **Acts 7:20**. And guess whom that *verse* describes? Moses! Let’s take a look at it.

### **Read Acts 7:17-20.**

In **verse 20**, the word *asteion* is translated as “*exceeding fair*”—in other words, “exceptionally handsome.” Yet, *asteion* can also mean “proper, refined, elegant,” or “stately.” Which of these two meanings, then, pertains to Moses here in **Hebrews 11:23**? *Both*, it seems! Apparently, Moses was strikingly, unusually handsome, *and* possessed of a natural refinement and statesman-like intelligence, which was recognizable even at three months of age!

Now, this raises a question: Why does Paul say that Moses’ parents hid him “*because*” he was a “*proper*” child? Is he implying that if Moses had been not-so-handsome, or of average intelligence, they wouldn’t have been so zealous about saving his life? Not at all! These were godly people. They loved their child, and they would have tried to save his life, no matter what kind of child God gave them. Yet, Paul and Stephen *did* go out of their way to mention that Moses was “*proper*” and “*exceeding fair.*” And, remember—their words were given by inspiration of God. Clearly, there is something about Baby Moses’ beauty and elegance that God considered important enough to point out to us. His beauty and properness *did* have an important bearing in this situation. But what is it? Well, here is what Paul is telling us:

**Moses' parents sensed that Moses' exceptional beauty and natural elegance were signs**—signs that God had very special plans for their son.

From the very start, God used Moses' exceptional qualities to set His plans in motion for the deliverance of Israel. If Moses had not been such an exceptionally beautiful child, the pagan princess (whose heart probably wasn't much softer than her papa's) probably wouldn't have been inclined to save his life! Yet, another question still remains: Why were Moses' parents looking for such God-given signs in the first place? The Bible doesn't tell us why; but there was an ancient prophecy, which God gave to Abraham, which might give us some insight.

**Read Genesis 15:13-14.**

About 340 years before Moses' birth, God had given this prophecy to Abraham. Every godly Hebrew would have known this prophecy well. *Moses' parents* certainly would have known this prophecy; and they would have taken it very seriously. The clock was ticking; and you may be sure that they were counting the years meticulously. It had been 350 years since Abraham had left Haran, and entered Canaan; and ever since that time, the "sojourn" of the children of Israel had been in progress. They knew that the 400 years of sojourning and affliction of the children of Israel was only about a generation from completion. They realised that God was about to raise up a deliverer for Israel. They were thoroughly expecting such a deliverer: and apparently, they sensed that *Moses* might be that deliverer (or, at least, that he might have a significant role in their deliverance). Furthermore, it seems that they passed on this belief to their son. How do we know this? Here's how.

**Read Acts 7:22-25.**

Did you catch what Paul said in **verse 25**? Forty years before God called Moses to deliver Israel, Moses was operating on the assumption that somehow, some way, God had plans for him to deliver Israel. He simply *assumed* that his Hebrew brethren would understand this. Where did Moses get this notion? *God* hadn't revealed this thing to Moses (at least, not up to this point in his life). Obviously, this notion came from his godly parents, who knew the times they were living in, and had instructed their son that he just might be the one whom God would use to deliver them from bondage. They knew God's promise of deliverance, because they knew God's Word; and knowing all this, they were able, by faith, to recognize God's hand on Moses' life, and to instruct him accordingly.

This is the kind of parenting that we need today! We need Christian parents who will humble themselves before God, acknowledge their own inadequacy, and seek God's will and direction in their decisions—just as Moses' parents sought God's will as to how to protect their child. We need Christian parents who are watching intently for indications of how God might be preparing to use their children's lives. There can be only one Moses in history; but God's plans for *your* child's life are no less important to Him than His plans for Moses were. We need Christian parents who are seeking to know how their children's talents might be used to serve the *Lord*, and not merely to make money, and to be "successful" according to the world's standard. We need parents who encourage their children to be open to the possibility that the Lord might call them to be a pastor, missionary, or full-time Christian worker. We need parents who will proactively prepare their children for that possibility.

We need Christian parents who are aware of the times they are living in, just as Moses' parents knew the times that they were living in. In **Matthew 16:1-3**, Jesus rebuked the unbelieving Pharisees for not discerning the "*signs of the times.*" They should have known, from Old Testament Scriptures, that they were living in the days of the Messiah; but in their blindness and self-absorption, they refused to see it.

Sadly, many Christians, though saved, think little about the “signs of the times” that surround them. Everywhere we look, we see indications that the Blessed Hope is drawing near. The fact that Israel is back in her land after 2,000 years of wandering is an enormous indication that Christ’s coming is near! Yet, many Christians live their lives as though Jesus’ coming couldn’t possibly happen. They are too absorbed with their own affairs to give much thought of Jesus’ return. (Worse yet, they actually wish that He would *not* come, because there are things in life that they don’t want to miss out on.) Jesus said to “watch”; but too many Christians are not watching. The great apostasy that Jesus and the Apostles warned would come prior to Christ’s return is all around us; yet, many Christian parents are not preparing their children to recognise the deadly errors of apostasy, and to resist them. They are not preparing their children to be bright and shining lamps in a dark world.

It is time for Christian parents to realise that God has a purpose that He wants to accomplish in their children’s lives. It’s time for *all* Christians to realise that God has a purpose that He wants to accomplish in their *own* lives! This is an important mark of a believer who is walking by faith.

By faith, Amram and Jochebed hid their son Moses, because they understood that God had a purpose for their son’s life. Secondly, they hid their son because...

## II. They were not afraid of man.

**(Read Hebrews 11:23 again.)** Amram and Jochebed’s fearlessness is another indication of the kind of faith they had. Their hiding Moses in a basket on the river was not an act of foolish confidence: it was the result of their *faith* in God’s promises, and of their *fear* of God.

*Faith* in God and *fear* of God are inseparable. Either you fear God, and thus have no fear of man; or else you fear man, and thus have no fear of God. Moses’ parents feared God: and the fruit of this *fear* of God was *faith* in God. Their faith in God was so powerful, that it moved them to defy the command of a powerful, ruthless dictator. Not only that, but it moved them to place their baby in the most vulnerable position imaginable (other than the Pharaoh’s front doorstep). Surely they knew that the princess of Egypt came along this stretch of the river to bathe regularly. In fact, she probably had a specific spot where she bathed--a sort of “basin,” where she could easily get in and out. If so, it appears that Jochebed *purposefully* put Moses’ basket right in the middle of this area! In **Exodus 2:5**, the word “*among*” is translated from the word *bethoq*, which literally means “in the middle of.” Human reason said it was insane to hide a baby out in the open, right in the middle of the spot where the princess of Egypt could find him! Yet, God had shown them that this was exactly where he wanted their son; and they rested in that assurance. They knew that God had a plan. As it turns out, God’s plan was that the princess of Egypt would *pay them* to rear their own child up to a certain age, with the full protection of Pharaoh! The princess surely realised that Jochebed was this child’s actual mother, and that she had *purposefully* put her child in her bathing spot; yet, she paid Jochebed to raise her own child, anyway! Who would have thought such a thing? God’s Word promises that “*Whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe*”!

**Read Proverbs 29:25.**

**Read Proverbs 1:7 and 9:10.**

If the fear of the LORD be the beginning of wisdom and knowledge, then the fear of man (or of Satan, for that matter) must be the beginning of ignorance and foolishness. The record of Moses’ parents shows that they feared God: thus, they had the wisdom to make a decision that changed the course of history. Their fearless act of faith has great relevance to us today. Obedience to God may, in the near future, make it necessary to disobey the commands of earthly rulers. During the lockdown, we learned that most of our government leaders believe

that they have the right to close down church services in the event of a health crisis. We may be sure that, in the future, they will exercise this “right” for other reasons (such as combatting another health crisis, or combatting “climate change” and fuel consumption, or preventing “hate speech”). If so, will we roll over and obey, and allow our children, and ourselves, to go without the preaching of God’s Word, and without Christian fellowship? When they tell us that we may not preach certain things from the Bible that are deemed “hate speech,” will we keep our mouths shut about Jesus Christ, and allow people around us to go to hell, without ever hearing the Gospel? Or will we, like our brothers and sisters in the old Soviet Union, and in China, North Korea, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and many other countries, defy the law of the land? Will we continue to read our Bibles, lead our families in family worship, start house churches, and spread the Gospel in wise and discreet ways? Will we have faith?

Moses was a man of great faith. Yet, how did he *become* a man of great faith? To a large extent, it was because of his parents’ godly example. Of course, no one can *make* his child place his trust in God. Even the godliest of parents may have a child who, despite correction and instruction, still chooses to reject God. However, parents *can* show their children, by instruction and example, what faith in God is, and why they need to trust God with their whole heart and life, too. That is what Moses’ parents did from the day that he was born.

Folks, Moses’ faith didn’t just spring out of a vacuum. His personal knowledge of the true God, and his concern for the deliverance of God’s people, didn’t come from nowhere. It was instilled in him by godly parents. Many Christians have never given serious thought to the role that Moses’ parents had in molding his faith. Perhaps this is because many Christians have gotten their theology from Disney, instead of from God’s Word. Hollywood movies about Moses usually portray him as a Hebrew prince in Pharaoh’s court who didn’t even *know* that he himself was a Hebrew, until he happened to stumble across his true history. They then portray him as siding with his own people, the Hebrews, in order to fulfill some inner sense of belonging. Folks, this is bogus! From childhood, Moses knew full well that he was a Hebrew. He knew the Scriptures that existed at that time (such as the portions of **Genesis** that had been passed down through the patriarchs, as well as the book of **Job**); and he personally knew the God of Israel before he went off to Pharaoh’s court. If Moses hadn’t known the true God, he wouldn’t have even *thought* of casting off a bright future, and the prospect of a lifetime of worldly pleasure, power, and fame, to identify himself with a despised people!

Now, this is an amazing thought--especially when you consider how young Moses was when he went to Pharaoh’s court. Let’s look at the Scripture again. (**Read Exodus 2:9-10 again.**) The Scripture doesn’t tell us how old Moses was when he was taken to Pharaoh’s court; but it does tell us that Jochebed was paid, by the princess, to “*nurse*” her own child. This implies that Jochebed and Amram had custody of their child until he was weaned. We know, from other Scriptures, that a Hebrew child was not weaned until about age 5. (For example, we know, by comparing genealogies, that Isaac was 5 years old when he was weaned.) This means that Moses didn’t enter Pharaoh’s court as a baby; he entered it as a boy. Nonetheless, he would have been a *young* boy. The grooming for royalty in the court of Pharaoh would have begun early. Moses’ parents had to be ready to hand their child over to pagan idolators when he was still very young!

I have often asked myself the question: “If my children were to be taken from me, and placed in a thoroughly pagan environment, would they serve the true God?” That is a haunting question. Yet, Moses did! Moses not only knew God personally before he left his parents’ house, but he was thoroughly grounded in God’s Word, and able to resist Satan’s lies. The Egyptians’ pagan theology permeated every aspect of life and society; and Moses was thoroughly educated in it. Yet, he stayed true to the God of his fathers. Let’s look at what Stephen said about this.

**Read Acts 7:22.**

Even if Moses was allowed to have continued contact with his parents after leaving for the palace, the pull of the Egyptian court would have been extremely strong. *“All the wisdom of the Egyptians”* included their pagan theology. Theology and science were thoroughly integrated. Yet, Moses was able to resist it. What enabled him to resist the belief that Pharaoh was the reincarnation of the god Osiris, when everyone around him believed it, and bowed to Pharaoh? What enabled him to continue to worship the true God, when the pagan priests in Pharaoh’s court could perform very powerful and compelling satanic magic? What enabled young Moses to stand firm for Jehovah when it seemed that no one on earth was more powerful than Pharaoh? How could he continue to believe that Jehovah is the one and only true God, when Jehovah’s people were lowly, powerless slaves, oppressed under the mighty hand of Pharaoh? Moses was able to resist all this because he had two parents who had rehearsed the mighty acts of God, and who had instructed him in Scripture, over, and over, and over again, day in and day out, for as long as he was in their custody. He was able to resist all the pomp and pleasure of the palace because his parents had introduced him to a God who gives *real* joy and contentment: and he had seen that joy and contentment in his parents’ lives.

**Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9.**

Would to God that every Christian parent taught his children God’s Word, and lived it, day in and day out—at sunrise, at breakfast, while driving in the car, while doing household tasks, while having “family time,” while eating dinner, while studying, and while preparing to go to bed! Would to God that every Christian mom and dad drilled his children in Scripture memorisation, and taught them doctrine. But, alas, multitudes of Christian parents are not doing this; and we are seeing the evil harvest of that neglect. Research by religious trends institutes plainly shows that children from Christian homes are abandoning Christianity in droves. Many children of Christian parents are “already gone” before they’ve even finished secondary school. Of those who still loosely hang on to a profession of Christianity until they enter university, a woefully large majority abandon Christianity within four years, after they have been immersed in evolution, atheism, Marxism, feminism, secular psychology, homosexual activism, “social justice,” and even the occult!

Why is this happening? Why are so many young people from Christian homes abandoning any profession of Christianity? Well, first of all, make no mistake about it: those who abandon Christianity, and never turn back, are not genuine Christians who have stumbled a bit, and have lost their way: they are people who were never saved to begin with. **First John 2:19** says, *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”*

Yet, this begs another question: Why do so many young people from Christian homes never get saved in the first place? There is no “one size fits all” answer to that question, because every person is an individual, with a free will; and sometimes, children who grow up in godly homes, where the parents are doing everything right, still reject the Lord. Rebellion is bound in the heart of man; and some children *will* rebel, no matter what! However, I fear that this is not the biggest reason why children from Christian homes are being lost to the world. The sad reality is that many children reject the Lord because they never saw real, Spirit-filled Christian living in their home. Their parents may, early-on, have encouraged them to pray a prayer to “ask Jesus into their heart”: but salvation was not sufficiently explained to them. They prayed a prayer because they had the impression that saying words would make them a Christian; but they never truly understood that salvation is by God’s grace alone, and that Jesus Christ paid the full price for their sin on the cross. It was never really emphasised that they must *repent* of their sin; and thus, they never felt any personal conviction of sin, or a need to turn their lives over to Christ. As they went to church, they may have heard some good preaching, for one hour per week; but that one hour was no match for the other 167 hours of the week, which

were filled with a spiritual void, at best, and fleshly pursuits, at worst. Even at church, they noticed that many Christians didn't have a real passion for the Lord and His Word, or a real commitment to serve the Lord faithfully, fervently, and continually. Many of them couldn't even be counted on to *be* in church! Slowly, they came to the conclusion that God's Word must be powerless, because it didn't seem to make any real difference in the lives of the Christians around them. They saw the same bitterness, anger, dysfunction, spiritual apathy, and devotion to worldly entertainment in their Christian home as they saw in non-Christian homes. Meanwhile, in school, their teachers told them that we are all descendants of apes. They showed the children beautiful illustrations of "missing links" (built, of course, entirely from some artist's fertile imagination); but mom and dad weren't prepared to combat these lies with Scriptural apologetics. In fact, mom and dad didn't even seem to be concerned that their children might be being indoctrinated with evolution, humanism, communism, and sexual perversion. When they came home from school, there was no family altar, no reading of Scripture or prayer together, and no real talk about the Lord. There *was*, on the other hand, plenty of "screen time." As everyone sat numbly in front of the telly, or silently played with their video games, or surfed their iphone, they drank in the world's perverse ideas and philosophies. Then, finally, the day came for the children to fly away from the nest; and they flew away from church, and from anything having to do with the Lord, never to return.

The sad scenario that I've just described is one that is repeated over, and over, and over again in Christian homes throughout our affluent Western societies. However, it doesn't have to be this way. As parents, we *can* rear up godly children, with the same strength and quality of faith as Moses had--*if* we, like Moses' parents, will be aware of the times we are living in, and walk circumspectly; *if* we will watch diligently for indications of God's working in our children's lives; *if* we will practice God's instructions concerning the nurture and admonition of our children; *if* we will pour our heart and soul into teaching our children God's Word, and living it in front of them; *if* we will proactively guard our children from error, and combat Satan's lies; and *if* we will fear God, and not man. Because Moses' parents did not fear man, Moses was equipped, through the Spirit of God, to go off to the pagan, idolatrous court of Pharaoh; and he was *not* moved from his faith in Jehovah. Moses did not go off to Pharaoh's court with a *head* knowledge of Jehovah; he had a *heart* knowledge of Him.

Christian parents, are *you* molding your children to be men and women of strong faith? It doesn't just "happen." It takes a lot of diligence. Above all, it takes genuine, strong faith in your own life, coupled with real fear of God. Your children *must* see this in you!

**Read Philippians 2:12-16.**

**Conclusion:** We live in the midst of a "*crooked and perverse nation.*" Our world is exceedingly dark, and is growing darker by the day. It is "blood over the doorpost" time for God's people! We must not only *claim* the blood of Christ over our homes, but we must live our daily lives by God's sanctifying power. Just as the Israelite homes were filled with light during the plague of darkness, so our homes should be ablaze with the light of Christ; and no sin in our lives should ever cover or obscure it. Is your faith like that of Moses' parents? Whether you have small children or adult children, saved children or yet unsaved children, faith and love of God's Word should shine brightly in your life; and your children should be bathed in it.

Perhaps you are not sure that you are on your way to Heaven. If so, please realise that being born to Christian parents, or growing up in a Christian home, doesn't make you a Christian. The Bible says that every sin—even the smallest sin—separates us from God. The only way you can miss God's wrath and be accepted into God's kingdom is to place your complete faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He did for you what you could not do for yourself: He paid for your sins in full. Should you be unsure of where you stand with God, won't you please get it taken care of today? In just a moment, we will have an invitation, in which you are invited to come and find out, from God's Word, how you can be saved!