

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 11: 23-31

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Hebrews chapter 11. We will read verses 23–31 today.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the forefathers of the people of Israel and the source of God's blessings upon them. Their experiences and growth in faith are also the path that every grace-receiving and saved saint must walk: being called by God the Father of faith, receiving the gospel of God the Son in faith, and being worked on by the Holy Spirit in faith, ultimately becoming a saint who understands God's will, is willing to follow Him, and is fully united with Him.

The account in Genesis illustrates the learning and growth that every individual who follows God must undergo to become a person who pleases Him. However, God's will is not merely to gain individual spiritual giants; He desires to obtain a corporate new man, which is the New Testament church, prefigured in the Old Testament by the people of Israel. When Jacob brought his household of seventy to Egypt to seek refuge with Joseph, God intended to raise a nation from this family and make them His chosen people in the Old Testament. God used the land of Goshen in Egypt as the place to nurture His people.

Joseph was the prime minister of Egypt and governed the land during the great famine. He distributed stored grain to the entire world, causing all peoples to submit and making Egypt the wealthiest and most powerful nation of that time. As a result, Joseph received great honor, and Jacob's household was highly favored. Moreover, with God's blessing, the Israelites multiplied and flourished exceedingly, becoming a mighty nation.

After four generations, a new king arose who did not know Joseph. He feared the strength of the Israelites and began to oppress them, treating them as slaves and restricting their growth. It was in this time that Moses was born. The Pharaoh had

decreed that every male child born to the Israelites must be thrown into the river, while only the daughters were allowed to live.

Verse 23: “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.”

Moses was a vessel specially chosen by God to deliver the enslaved Israelites and to establish the law and the tabernacle through him. The law defined the identity of the Israelites, and the tabernacle brought God's presence among them. In this way, God obtained His chosen people in the Old Testament: He would be their God, and they would be His people.

Moses was the most revered leader of the Israelites. He was born in a dark time when, according to the decree of the king of this world, he was not supposed to survive. However, his parents saw that he was a beautiful child. Any parent who has had a child knows that newborns generally look similar, yet every parent sees their own child as beautiful. Therefore, what the author highlights here is not outward beauty but that Moses' parents, in faith, saw a bright future for their child. In faith, they hid him for three months, clearly defying the king’s command. God’s people are to obey God’s commands, and when God's command conflicts with the decree of the ruler of this world, God's command must take precedence.

It is the same today. Every saint can understand God's will in their conscience, and when this will conflict with the trends of the world or does not align with earthly authorities, saints must stand firm in upholding God's will. At the same time, they must also have the capacity to respect other saints in their conscience-driven choices. The most dangerous situation is when one falsely claims to follow God's will while actually compromising and aligning with the ruler of this world—this brings great disaster upon God's people. History is filled with such tragedies. A living example is the Holocaust during World War II, when Hitler carried out the mass slaughter of the Jewish people.

Moses had devout parents who, in faith, hid him for three months. The details of this story are found in Exodus 2:1-4, where Moses' father, Amram, is not mentioned. However, the author of Hebrews specifically includes him. Moses' mother was Jochebed—this was a remarkable couple. Though they lived in a dark time, they raised three outstanding children in faith. Moses was sent by God to deliver the Israelites, Aaron became the future high priest, and Miriam was a prophetess—a truly extraordinary family with three exceptional figures.

In this faith-filled family, they devised a bold plan to save their youngest son, Moses. They placed him in a waterproof papyrus basket and set it among the reeds along the riverbank before Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe, ensuring that she would find him. Through Miriam's recommendation, Jochebed was even appointed as Moses' nurse. Even Moses' name was given by Pharaoh's daughter, meaning "drawn out of the water." According to historical scholars, this Pharaoh's daughter is believed to be Hatshepsut. You can search her name on Google—she was one of the greatest queens in Egyptian history, a woman of exceptional vision and ambition from a young age. Since she had no son of her own, she adopted Moses with the intention of raising him to become the next Pharaoh. Saints who are interested in further details are encouraged to revisit the daily readings in Exodus.

Verse 24: "By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,"

Moses grew up under the care of his mother and was likely around six years old when he was sent to the Egyptian palace to receive the training of a royal prince. Here, we see the greatness of Jochebed and Amram—in faith, they instilled the faith and values of the Israelites in their child before he could fully understand them. Of course, it was also by God's special preservation that Moses was able to make choices in faith that aligned with God's will.

Dear brothers and sisters, do not take this choice of faith lightly. On one side was the identity of an Israelite slave, and on the other was the status of an Egyptian prince. Which would you choose? By faith, Moses refused to be called the son of

Pharaoh's daughter. The royal honor, the abundance of the palace, and the power and glory of being a prince—these are the things the world longs for, yet Moses regarded them as nothing.

Verse 25: “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,”

He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God—the word "chose" shows that Moses had an option. When he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he not only gave up his royal status and privileges, but he also chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. At that time, the Israelites were slaves under Pharaoh in Egypt. This decision would bring a drastic change to his life. On one side were power, glory, and enjoyment; on the other were slavery and suffering.

Moses chose to stand with the people of Israel and suffer affliction alongside them. He refused to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. Why do people continue to sin without stopping? Because there is pleasure in sin. Indulging the flesh brings temporary enjoyment, but such pleasure is fleeting and comes at the cost of violating one's conscience. After the temporary enjoyment fades, what follows is the long-lasting accusation of the conscience. Moses chose to suffer affliction with the Israelites rather than to partake in the fleeting pleasures of sin with the Egyptians.

Dear brothers and sisters, today we face the same choice: Do you choose to suffer alongside the saints in the church, or do you choose to enjoy pleasures with worldly friends? To put it more practically, every Lord's Day, do you choose to worship God together with your brothers and sisters, or do you choose to spend time eating, drinking, and having fun with your relatives and friends? Different choices will lead to completely different outcomes.

Verse 26: "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward."

This verse is an interpretation given by the author under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Moses lived around 1500 B.C., long before Christ was incarnated. However, the author of Hebrews reveals a profound truth. Hebrews 7:27 and 9:12 declare that Christ offered Himself once for all, accomplishing eternal redemption. Since Christ's redemption is eternal, it is not limited by time. Moses, by faith, looked forward and saw that Christ would come to the earth to suffer and be humiliated. He was willing to endure reproach for the sake of Christ. This reproach is tied to eternal redemption and holds everlasting value. It is more precious than the treasures of Egypt and more valuable than any pleasure wealth can provide, because he was looking forward to his heavenly reward.

Hope involves both thinking and looking forward. What filled Moses' mind was the reward to come, and what his eyes beheld was also the reward to come. Faith is inseparable from hope. To willingly endure suffering in faith is to see the future reward—it is eternal, it is glorious. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:17, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Today's suffering is momentary and light, but the coming glory is eternal and immeasurable. Moses looked forward in faith, but we are even more blessed than he was. We look back in faith, believing in the redemption Christ accomplished 2,000 years ago, and we have the indwelling Holy Spirit as the guarantee of our inheritance. However, having faith that only looks back is not enough. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Therefore, true faith looks forward. Moses looked forward and saw Christ's eternal redemption, and thus, he was willing to suffer for Christ.

Today, we must also look forward, seeing that when Christ returns, our bodies will be redeemed, and we will manifest the glory of the sons of God. Therefore, we are willing to fill up in our flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions, just as Paul said in Colossians 1:24, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church."

The suffering we endure in serving the church today is part of filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. When Christ returns, we will surely receive His reward.

Verse 27: "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

Moses, by faith, left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king. The book of Exodus records two instances of Moses leaving Egypt. The first time, as recorded in Exodus 2:11-15, Moses was 40 years old, well-versed in all the wisdom and skills of Egypt. He believed he was ready to rise and deliver the enslaved Israelites. When he saw an Egyptian oppressing an Israelite, he took matters into his own hands, striking down the Egyptian and hiding his body in the sand. He thought this was how he would work for God and save Israel. However, the Israelites did not accept him, and his actions were exposed. Fearing Pharaoh, Moses fled to Midian. There, he lived for 40 years, enduring in patience. Those years of shepherding in the wilderness completely stripped away the youthful ambition he once had.

The second time Moses left Egypt is recorded in Exodus 12:31-42. By then, Moses was 80 years old, an elderly man. It was at this time that God called him again. When Moses saw himself as having nothing, that was when God could fully use him. God gave Moses authority and power, entrusting him with the mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses was sent back to Pharaoh's palace to negotiate for Israel's freedom to serve the Lord. Through Moses, God performed miraculous signs and plagues, and it wasn't until the tenth plague, the death of every firstborn in Egypt, that Pharaoh finally allowed the Israelites to leave.

The author combines these two departures from Egypt and states that Moses, by faith, did not fear the king's anger. He directly confronted Pharaoh to fulfill God's commission. This entire process, including 40 years of patient endurance in Midian, shaped him into someone who could bear God's commission and become a faithful servant in God's house. Everything Moses said and did was entirely based on God's will, as if he were seeing the invisible Lord.

Verse 28: “By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.”

Moses, through faith, understood God's will and established the Passover for the Israelites before the tenth plague. The details are recorded in Exodus 12:1-13. The Israelites were to slaughter a lamb and apply its blood on the doorposts and lintel. When the destroying angel came to strike down all the firstborn in Egypt, seeing the blood, he would pass over their homes. This was the ceremony of sprinkling the blood, ensuring that the destroyer would not come upon the Israelites.

The Passover is a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ's redemption. Christ is the true Passover Lamb, the One who takes away the sin of the world. Under the covering of His precious blood, God's judgment has already fallen upon Christ, and through Him, we are justified before God.

Verse 29: “By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.”

Moses led the Israelites in establishing the Passover. That night, the destroying angel struck down every firstborn in Egypt, but he passed over the houses of the Israelites. A great cry arose in Egypt, and Pharaoh urgently summoned Moses, commanding him to lead the Israelites out. Moses' personal faith led to the salvation of the entire nation, delivering them from Egyptian bondage. His individual faith transformed into the collective faith of Israel, and in faith, the Israelites left Egypt. This was the first time God had a people on earth who were corporately saved by faith. Israel is a type of the church today, and just as Israel had corporate faith, the church should also possess corporate faith.

After the Israelites left Egypt, Pharaoh regretted letting them go and led his army in pursuit, trying to stop them. Moses and the two million Israelites found themselves trapped—the Red Sea before them and the Egyptian army behind them, facing an impossible situation. At this critical moment, God performed one of the greatest miracles in Israel's history. In Exodus 14:16-18, God commanded

Moses: "Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

This miracle was the greatest because it involved the largest number of people. Two million Israelites crossed the sea on dry ground—an extraordinary act of God's power. At the same time, the drowning of Pharaoh's army in the sea was also a great miracle, demonstrating God's righteous judgment. By faith, the Israelites crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land. The Egyptians, lacking faith, attempted to do the same but were swallowed by the waters. The crossing of the Red Sea prefigures the baptism of New Testament believers. When someone accepts Christ as their Savior and chooses to follow Him, they receive baptism in faith. Just like the Israelites who passed through the sea and emerged on the other side, the believer enters the water and comes out, symbolizing salvation through faith.

Everything in the world, like Pharaoh's army, pursued the Israelites into the sea but was completely drowned. This illustrates that baptism delivers a person from the world. As Mark 16:16 says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved."

Verse 30: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days."

The Exodus was the greatest miracle, because crossing the Red Sea was not only God's work—He parted the waters—but it also required faith from the Israelites to walk through on dry ground. The waters stood like walls on both sides, seemingly ready to collapse at any moment. Without faith, they would not have dared to cross. Later, Joshua led the second generation of Israelites across the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

The battle of Jericho was the first war Israel faced in the Promised Land. Jericho had high walls and was a fortified city, seemingly impossible to conquer. However, God gave Joshua clear instructions in Joshua 6:1-21 on how to take the city. Seven priests carrying seven rams' horns marched while blowing their trumpets, followed by the Ark of the Covenant. Armed soldiers led the procession, while the rest of the people followed behind the Ark. They marched around the city once per day for six days. On the seventh day, they circled the city seven times. At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, the people shouted loudly, and the walls collapsed. This unconventional strategy was unheard of in warfare. The Israelites had to trust God completely and follow His instructions by faith, no matter how illogical it seemed to human reasoning.

The Israelites, by faith, followed God's command, and the walls collapsed, revealing that it was God who fought for them, not their own strength. Spiritual warfare has never depended on might or power but on the Spirit of the Lord (Zechariah 4:6). Without faith, how could one rely on the Spirit of God? This victory was not achieved through individual faith but through the collective faith of the Israelites. Just as when they crossed the Red Sea, they experienced God's salvation together, so too, in the conquest of Jericho, it was through their united faith. When God's people stand together in faith, they can overcome the enemy and enter into God's promise.

Today, the same principle applies—the church must have corporate faith to overcome the enemy's schemes. When the church stands in united faith, there will be no breaches or gaps for Satan to exploit. Dear brothers and sisters, we must be vigilant before God, keeping ourselves pure and blameless, lest we become targets of Satan's attacks and create vulnerabilities within the church. May we all stand firm in faith together, guarding the unity of the body of Christ, so that the enemy finds no foothold among us.

Verse 31: “By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”

Before attacking Jericho, Joshua sent two spies into the city to gather intelligence. They entered the house of Rahab, a prostitute, as recorded in Joshua 2:1-21. Rahab had heard of Israel's great victories east of the Jordan and knew that God was with them. Though she was a Gentile woman, she believed in God. She welcomed the spies in peace and helped them evade capture by the men of Jericho. In return, Rahab asked for mercy for herself and her family, receiving the sign of the scarlet cord to hang from her window. This is a powerful parallel to the Israelites putting blood on their doorposts during the Passover. Just as the blood saved Israel from destruction, the scarlet cord became Rahab's sign of salvation. This reveals that Gentiles, too, can receive salvation through faith, as Rahab was rescued by the "cord of redemption."

Later, when Israel conquered Jericho, Rahab and her entire household were saved, unlike the rest of the city, which perished due to disobedience. Not only was she rescued, but she also married one of the two spies, Salmon, and they had a son named Boaz, who later became the kinsman-redeemer that married Ruth the Moabite. Rahab, once a Gentile and a prostitute, had no part in God's people, yet through faith, she and her family were saved. She was fully accepted into Israel and became an ancestor of Jesus Christ. Her name is recorded in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:5: "Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab." Because of her faith, Rahab is forever remembered by both men and God Himself.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. Through the deeds of Moses, we see that what You truly desire to obtain is a corporate new man, which is today's church. Not only must each of us learn and grow in faith individually, but You have also prepared a church for us, so that this church may have corporate faith, able to defeat the enemy and bear witness for You on earth. We are all like Rahab the harlot—Gentiles of low status, originally having no part or share with God. Yet, because we believe in Jesus Christ and have received His redeeming grace, we can become part of God's household and receive His commission. Today, we are called to build God's house, which is the church—what a privilege this is! May God bless the church I am in, so that it may have even stronger corporate faith and bear witness for You on earth. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.