



Exodus (Part 12) – Signs and Wonders

Anthony Moore – November 13, 2016

[Video]

From darkness to light, this is the story we all share as the people of God. He draws us out to draw us in. From the birth of Israel to the church today, God delivers and dwells with his people. He draws us out of our sin, our Egypt, and draws us into his presence into relationship with him.

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Good morning to you all. My name is Anthony Moore. I'm the campus pastor at The Village – Fort Worth where a vibrant group of faithful and beautiful people gather to hear the Word preached with you every week. It's good to be with you guys.

I want to continue our trek through the book of Exodus, so I want to invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to Exodus, chapter 7. As is our custom in Fort Worth, I want to invite you to stand with me as I read the Word. Exodus, chapter 7, verses 1 through 13.

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you.

Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.'

Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them. Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh. Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 'When Pharaoh says to you, "Prove yourselves by working a miracle," then you shall say to Aaron, "Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent."

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said."

As you're going to your seat, let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Now Father, we your people confess that you sit enthroned in the heavens. You didn't run for that office. It's yours, Lord. It always has been, always will be. All institutions of government are fully subordinate to you, our true sovereign of the universe. There's one, true sovereign of this world, and you're not up for election, Lord.

Whatever happens, your purposes are good. We confess this as a people that your judgments are right. You accomplish all you have set out to do. This was Moses' hope, and this is our confidence. We pray to that end. Make much of yourself through the preaching of your Word. In the name of Christ and the power of your Spirit, amen.

Jan Hus was a Czech priest who was burned at the stake for heresy against the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Particularly he fought against the Roman Catholic Church's understanding of the nature of the church and the Lord's Supper. Hus was martyred on July 6, 1415. He died believing the Scriptures were the Word of God, clear, sufficient and, therefore, authoritative and worthy of his trust and his life.

William Tyndale, most known for his translation of the Bible into English, was a reformer who stood against many teachings of the Catholic Church. Tyndale was choked to death while tied to the stake, and then his body was burned. He died believing the Scriptures were the Word of God, clear, sufficient and, therefore, authoritative and worthy of his trust and his life.

Michael Sattler, in his battle with the Roman Catholic Church, eventually had red-hot tongs placed to his body seven times on his way to execution. He prayed for his executioners, so they cut out parts of his tongue. Then he refused to put the bag of gunpowder around his neck that would quicken his death as he burned alive. Instead, he held up two fingers as he died, slowly giving the sign to the other brethren that a martyr's death was bearable. He died believing the Scriptures were the Word of God, clear, sufficient and, therefore, worthy of his trust and his life.

On August 24, 1572, St. Bartholomew's Day, several days thereafter, Frenchmen slaughtered 100,000 of the Huguenot countrymen throughout France (10,000 in Paris alone) all because they envisioned a Christianity where they could read the Scriptures themselves and meditate upon their meaning and live out their faith. They all died believing the Scriptures were the Word of God, clear, sufficient and, therefore, authoritative and worthy of their trust and their life.

All of these people died believing these words in the Bible that you have in front of you, these words you have on your little phone, were the words of a good and glorious God to them and so, therefore, clear, sufficient, and worthy of their life. I just want us to take a moment. Would you take a moment, look over the course of your life, and answer this question: "Do you believe the words in this book, on your phone, are the words from a good and glorious God to you?"

I want you to think about it. Do you believe that? What I'm talking about is not what you would mark out on a piece of paper and check by way of doctrine, "Yes, I believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. The Scripture doesn't have error. It's clear and sufficient on paper." What I want you to do is to look back over the course of your week this week and consider. I want to know if the time and attention you gave to God's Word this week actually demonstrates that you trust that this is a good and glorious God speaking to you.

If you think about it, if these are the actual words of a good and glorious God speaking to you, don't they demand your time? Don't they demand your trust? Don't they demand your life? We come to a story in the Bible where a man by the name of Moses is faced with similar questions around the Word of God that I hope you're feeling right now. That is, "What does God require of us with regard to his Word?"

This is the question. What does God require of Moses with regard to his Word? What we're going to see is the Lord requires of Moses faithfulness with regard to his Word. The context (chapter 6, verse

10) is the Lord has just said to Moses, **"Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land."** Moses responds. Chapter 6, verse 12: **"But Moses said to the LORD, 'Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me...?'"**

You can see Moses' heart here. It's as if he is saying, "Lord, listen. Your own people, Israel, did not listen to me. Why should I suppose that Pharaoh is going to hear me?" You can almost feel the question from Moses. The question is, "Lord, what do you require of me with regard to your Word if even your own people are not listening to it? What do you want from me? Not only that, Lord," Moses says, "but I'm a man of unclean, of filthy, lips. I can't do this."

The Lord responds with a genealogy. He responds to Moses' pressback by giving him the genealogy, as if to say, meaning, "I know you're a man of unclean lips and you're filthy, because I know where you come from and because I know the depths of who you are, Moses. I made you." That's what he is saying to him in the genealogy.

When I see the way the Lord responds to Moses with the genealogy, I think about how my mother responds to me when I press her about how she pronounces my name. If my mother listens to this recording later, I'm sorry, Mom. I mean this well. I would appreciate it if you wouldn't disown me or anything. My mother named me Anthony, but she calls me "Antony."

I'm always saying to my mother, "Ma, listen. You put the 'th' in there, not me. You put the 'th' in there, not me! Don't call me *Antony*. My name is *Anthony*." She will always say to me, "Boy, I made you. I'll call you what I want!" Everybody in this room 30 and up knows the statement she makes to me next. "I brought you into this world..." Yeah, yeah, yeah.

With the genealogy, the Lord is declaring, "I know your family tree because I planted it and watched it grow. I know your roots because I made you. I knew the sound of your first cry before your grandmammy and your grandpappy ever got together and took a long, romantic walk down the beach. I know you, Moses."

He says to him, "I am the Lord." Verse 29: **"I am the LORD; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."** In this sad moment, Moses yet still responds (verse 30), **"Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips. How will Pharaoh listen to me?"** If you think about the significance of what's going on here at this point in light of the book of Genesis... You see, in the book of Genesis we get the clearest

picture of what worship of God actually is. It's where God speaks and creation responds to who he is and what he has done for them. That's a clear portrait of worship.

Over and over again in the book of Genesis, you get this pattern where the Lord speaks, and creation responds. The Lord tells the darkness and the light to separate, and it says, "Yes, sir." It does what is asked of it. The Lord tells the plants to grow before the sun, and the plants say, "Yes, sir" with no excuses. He tells the sun to get into its spot. The sun says, "Yes, sir." He tells the stars to get into their spots. They say, "Yes, sir." He tells the oceans to run a certain way. They say, "Yes, sir."

He tells all of creation, and creation responds over and over again with, "Yes, sir." Then it gets to man (in particular, Moses), and man says, "Yeah, but wait." It's treason. It's rebellion. It's treason of the highest sorts. What I'm not saying here is that somehow Moses is setting himself up against God's Word purposefully, but man, if you understand at all who God is, if you get any inkling for just how sovereign God is, even the mere thought of, "Yeah, but I don't know if I want to do it this way. I don't know if I like it" is rebellion.

It's treason against God, and yet our God is so great. He is so long-suffering, so gracious and merciful, so aware of his own sovereignty and not threatened that he invites Moses to enter into this line of questioning of him. He is gracious and merciful with Moses, so we know, beloved, he will be gracious to us. He'll be kind to us.

What does God require of Moses with regard to his Word? God requires Moses to be faithful to his Word. Look at verses 1 and 2. **"And the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh...'"** What the Lord is getting at here is that he has made Moses to speak on his behalf, to represent him before Pharaoh. Now if you think about this, the fact that all mankind has God's image put on them means we are representatives of God to one another, to all of mankind.

The question is whether or not we are a *right* representation of God. Verse 2: **"You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land."** Then the question arises here, "Why does God emphasize Moses proclaiming his Word to Pharaoh if he intends to harden Pharaoh's heart?" We see that in verse 3.

"But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The

Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.' Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them."

It's interesting that we always try to make sense of just in what way the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. We want to know *how*. Was it the Lord who hardened Pharaoh's heart, or did Pharaoh harden his own heart? Which is it? Well, this narrative, this story, doesn't really try to answer the question. On multiple occasions, we read of Pharaoh hardening his heart against the Lord, and then we also read of the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart.

The thing I want to suggest to us is we want to be careful not to try to answer questions the text itself doesn't answer. Yet I'm not going to let myself off the hook here. I'm going to try to deal with the difficulty of this text. When we come to a difficult text, here's one of the first principles you have to take in mind: don't jump to philosophical categories. Don't jump to trying to understand the Bible outside of the Bible.

One of the first things you want to do is to think, "Are there any other clear, more straightforward texts that would help me understand?" Are there any more straightforward texts that would help us understand what's going on with Pharaoh's heart? Yes, there are many! I think of Jeremiah 17, verse 9. **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"** I think of Colossians 1:21. **"And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds..."** He is talking about the person pre-conversion.

How does that help? How does that help us with understanding what's going on with Pharaoh's heart? Well, it's so interesting that oftentimes we get shocked. We ooh and ahh as if the Lord goes and finds Pharaoh's heart not hard but neutral and soft (some of you even think *innocent*), and then the Lord makes it hard. But that's not what we know in terms of Jeremiah and Colossians and several other texts. We know Pharaoh's heart is wicked, depraved and, apart from God and his grace, he cannot and, indeed, he will not submit to God's Word.

Hear me. God uses hardened sinners, and it's the only...*only*...type of people he can use, because that's all he has the choice of. The question is not, "Do you have a wicked heart?" The question is, "Is God going to use your heart to glorify himself through redemption or through judgment?" It matters to us which one.

If that's the case, what this means is that Pharaoh's heart is not just a paradigm for only the really evil and wicked people out there. What this means is Pharaoh's heart is a paradigm for all of mankind, for everyone, even God's people.

If we were to continue to read and keep reading the story of God's people throughout this Book, we would find deep down in the crevices and the secret places of God's people's hearts is a desire to not be like God but to be like the world, is a desire to be stubborn toward God's Word, just like that of Pharaoh, which means the biggest and greatest enemy against God's people is not Pharaoh but their own sin against God's Word.

How do I know that? How do I get there? Well, I think about other texts we could lay on top of this to understand, maybe perhaps like the parable Jesus tells in Luke 16, verses 19 through 31. There Jesus tells us a parable about a rich man and Lazarus. In particular, he says both men die. Both men die!

The rich man, however, goes to hell, whereas Lazarus goes beside Abraham. The rich man is in torment, and he is suffering in hell. He lifts his eyes, and he cries out to Abraham. He says, "Hey, let me go back and evangelize my five brothers. I don't want them here with me. Let me go to them and evangelize them and tell them about this place." In Luke, chapter 16, verse 29, then we read...

"But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

Unbeliever, look at me. The most important thing you could hear for your life...look at me...is if you won't believe Moses and the Prophets, if you won't believe the Word of God, you won't believe even if someone rises from the dead, which means, unbeliever, the reason why you don't trust in and you don't believe in the sufficiency of God's Word is not that there's not sufficient evidence. The reason why you don't believe in God's Word is an ethical one: you don't want to.

You have set your heart opposed to God's Word, and we all in here...*all* of us, all mankind...have little Pharaoh hearts that don't want to believe or to submit to God's Word. We would rather have the pleasures of this world than have Christ. It's not just that we sin. We teach this over and over again to our children here at The Village. The biggest problem is not just that we sin (although that's

a big problem) before a holy and just God. The biggest problem is we *want* to sin. We have hearts that are sick with sin. We would prefer sin over God's Word.

I know that to be true of you, unbeliever, because I know it to be true of me. There's no pretense here. The word *pastor* doesn't make me above sin. You know my struggle with sin. You know the struggle in thought life, the battle to put away sin. By the way, unbeliever, all the people who are sitting around you, I know they're dressed up, and they look pretty and nice, but they are wicked, depraved, and evil people. If you give them a chance, they'll kill you if they get an opportunity.

All of us are wicked and depraved apart from the grace of God. Apart from the grace of God! The only difference between you and us, unbeliever, is God's grace, his mercy. What should you do then, unbeliever? Hebrews 3 says (referring to this, the people of Israel in the desert) he said to them, "Don't harden your hearts. Don't harden your hearts like they did in the desert! Rather, cry out in faith. Cry out that God would give you an appetite for his Word."

How about us, believer? I don't know what you do with this notion of the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart. I'm not quite sure what you do with it, but I just want to set a text before you. Consider this for why we should be faithful to proclaim God's Word. You don't have to turn there. I'll tell you what it says, but in Isaiah 19:16 through 25, Egypt is numbered among the redeemed. Are y'all listening to me? Egypt is numbered! They're named among the redeemed!

The ones who oppressed God's people and drove them out are now the object of God's mercy and grace. That is, the glory of the Lord is made known to Egypt and is available to them. There are some who will come to faith if they respond to God's Word in faith. If Egypt is not too far gone to be recipients of God's grace, then neither is Donald Trump and neither is Hillary Clinton. We keep preaching the gospel. The Lord is never deterred by wicked and evil hearts. That's the only thing he can use and turn.

It's God's mercy and grace. What does God require of Moses with regard to his Word? The same thing he requires of us, believer, and the same thing he demands of you, unbeliever: faithfulness to his Word. It's faithfulness to God's Word that is required of Moses and Aaron when they finally go before Pharaoh. We're told Moses is 80, and Aaron is 83 years old when they go before Pharaoh. I think we get their age to emphasize here the sufficiency of God's Word. It doesn't matter the agent. What matters is the power of God's Word.

Look how often the sufficiency of God's Word is emphasized here. In this story, the central actors in this drama are the Lord and Pharaoh. Each are supported by their servants, but watch this. Where God instructs his servants with his Word, Pharaoh is depicted, he is pictured, only as summoning his magicians. Pharaoh remains speechless. He doesn't say anything.

I think what Moses is doing here is when he sits down by means of the Holy Spirit and he gets ready to recount this story to us, what he wants us to understand is that our God is not silent. What a weak God if he can't communicate himself! The moment you grant me the concept of a good and glorious God who has created the heavens and the earth, at that moment this God is powerful enough, capable enough, to communicate himself clearly so, therefore sufficiently so, therefore, authoritatively, for his people.

Our God does that. He communicates himself with words that are sufficient for Moses. Verse 8. God tells him by his Word just how it will happen. Guess what? It happens in that way. Then watch. Verse 10. The emphasis is on God's Word and how Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded according to his Word.

Then this so-called epic duel that's been building for chapters and chapters between Moses and Aaron and the magicians and Pharaoh ends rather anticlimactically because it happens just as the Lord said it would. Verse 13 concludes this particular story for us. It says, "**Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them...**" Then note the phrase, "**...as the LORD had said.**"

He is sovereign not only over all of creation but even over man's heart. His Word is sufficient. Why would I interpret this passage this way? Out of all the things we could pull out of this text to apply, why am I pointing us toward the sufficiency of God's Word? Well, it's because of 2 Timothy, chapter 3. In 2 Timothy, chapter 3, Paul is instructing Timothy, and he is warning Timothy of these wicked and evil men, these men who claim to be teachers, claim to be believers, but they're false prophets. He says to them...

"But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud..." Then verse 7. "**...always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.**"

Now watch this. We get the names of the magicians in Exodus, chapter 7, because Paul tells us. In particular, what Paul is doing is he is contrasting Timothy with these fake and false teachers and magicians. He says of Timothy, "You, however, are different than these phonies. The reason why you're different, Timothy, is you, however, have followed my teachings, my word."

The crux of the issue for Paul as to whether or not you're a true believer or not here in Timothy is whether or not you're faithful to God's Word. Can you think about that? How can you claim to enjoy God? How can you claim to enjoy God and not enjoy his Word? You will never know and taste of Jesus apart from his Word. You will never know him!

Hear me. There's always a tendency to separate God's character from his Word, but you can't have God without his Word, and you can't have his Word without his character. They come together. When I think about the tendency we have to kind of separate God and his Word from his character, I think about my boys and the way they respond to my instructions to them oftentimes. Sometimes right before we're putting them to bed, it usually happens that they come with some type of outlandish request.

"Hey, sons, it's time for bed." Marcus, Titus, Malachi. It's a circus getting these dudes in bed. "Hey, dudes, it's time for bed. Get in bed." There's usually some outlandish request. It's like, "Hey, can we have some pop?" See, y'all say *Coke*. It's supposed to be *pop*. "Can we have some pop?" I'm like, "No, you can't have pop! Get in bed!"

In that moment, every parent in this room knows what happens. They lose their minds. They go crazy. In that moment, I know two things. I know the Lord made them small to keep them from killing me, and I know he made them cute to keep me from killing them! In that moment, they're struggling. They think my words (what I'm saying to them) or my discipline that's about to happen is somehow separated from who I am as their father, my character.

This is true of good parenting and bad parenting. What I say and do stems forth, comes forth, from my character. The point is we can trust God at his Word because we can trust this good God's character. This process of the Lord speaking to man and by means of the Holy Spirit, him writing it down, we can trust our God because of his character.

I don't know if right now all of you (probably so) are like me. This monkey has been on my back all week long. It's been good to put it on yours. I don't know if you feel like me where it's like, "Man, I feel ashamed for not spending more time in his Word," as if shame and guilt can motivate us to get up and run to his Word.

What I want to motivate you with is not shame and guilt. What I want to motivate you with is the character of God. Man, each morning, sprint out of bed and run to his Word so you can read in that text of the mercies that are new for you each morning, of the unfailing love of this God and his words to you each morning. That's why we want to memorize it, put it on our hearts, and spend time in his Word. It's his character and who it reveals.

It's the sufficiency of God's Word that is able to shape and mold you into the image of Christ (hear me, and hear me well), not the preacher. It is God's Word that is able to take you and mold you from one degree of glory to the next, not the preacher. Don't you dare put that type of pressure on us. Don't you put that pressure on Chandler. The strength of God's people has never been the man. It's always been God's Word.

All those people who died in the beginning that I read to you, the strength was God's Word, not the man. Oh, the preacher can be used inasmuch as we are faithful to God's Word, but the ability to transform you and to sanctify you, renew you, is God's Word. Consider 2 Timothy, chapter 3. **"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."**

Here's the question. Believer, do you believe that? Do you believe in the sufficiency of Scripture in how you see your world, how you see politics? Do you believe in the sufficiency of Scripture in how you view your sexuality, in how you view your own identity and the perception of others? Do you trust in the sufficiency of God's Word? What we mean by *sufficiency* is not that the Bible tells us everything.

For example, we don't think the Bible tells us how to plunge a toilet. We'll give you that, unbeliever. We agree. The Bible doesn't tell us that, but the Bible does tell us how to glorify God. Inasmuch as someone is looking to plunge a toilet to the glory of God, it will tell us how to do that. I love the way one theologian put this. He said, "In giving us the true knowledge of God, the world, and ourselves, the Bible has something indirectly to say about everything."

Do you believe in the authority of God's Scripture and his Word to you for your worldview? I love Sinclair Ferguson and what he has to say. He says this really is the age-old pastoral problem. What he is talking about there is Adam and Eve. He says the temptation that was put before Adam and Eve is to see their worldview through their eyes and not to see through their ears. The Lord has spoken.

"Adam, I know that apple looks good. I know you want to eat that, but trust me, son. Hear my words. If you eat that apple, you will surely die." "Noah, listen. I know everybody is wicked around you, but trust me. Build a boat, and the rains will come. I know there's not a drop of water right now, but the rains will come, and I will provide for you. Trust my words."

"Abraham, I know you are up there in years, and I know your wife is old and barren. You have no children, but hear me. Hear my promises. I will make you the father of many nations." "Moses, I know. I know Pharaoh is powerful, but trust my words. The magicians are going to do this, but trust my words. I'm going to drive you out into the desert, but I will give you food from heaven. Trust my words. I know you will be in the desert, but I'm going to give you the Promised Land. Trust my words."

It's always been the case that God's people are tempted to see their world through their eyes, not with their ears, thus says the Lord, which brings us back to our initial question: "What does God require of Moses with regard to his Word?" God requires Moses to be faithful to his Word, which means Moses would embrace the promises of God's Word even if that embrace comes at a high cost to himself.

Let's ask the question, "How is Moses doing with that call to be faithful to God's Word?" Let's just kind of take a moment and look back over the story of Moses here and just kind of ask the question, "How is he doing? Is he being faithful?" Moses runs away from his calling. He is afraid. He is reluctant to go before Pharaoh because he has seen this man's power and his evil up close. He is kind of scared. He reluctantly goes before Pharaoh. He is looking for a way out of his call.

He questions God's Word on multiple turns. God tells him to say something at one point, and he just kind of twists it and says something completely other. Now all of that, and I want to ask you a question. Is that the picture we get of Moses and the kind of hero of faith Hebrews 11 portrait of Moses? Is that the same picture? Because there in Hebrews 11, it says...

"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible."

The text tells us Moses chose to be mistreated with God's people rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. **"He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt..."** It's like, "Now wait a minute. Hold on a minute, because Hebrews 11 puts this portrait of Moses like he is the hero of the faith, like he is just this bold warrior, but Exodus 7 presents Moses as if he is this trembling, fearful, anxiety-filled man who reluctantly walks by faith before Pharaoh. Which portrait is true? Which picture do we go with?"

The point here is they're *both* true, and that's the point the author is making with all the Old Testament stories in Hebrews 11. He is naming all of these Old Testament figures not because of their faith but because of in whom they have faith. It's not the quality of the one having faith that gives it validity and power. Our faith will waver. Why? Because we're a wavering people.

It's the object of our faith that makes our faith have validity and power. Faith in God's Word is oftentimes mixed with doubt. Amen? It's filled with anxiety. It's filled with unbelief. Our faith is only as good as the object of our faith. Here's the point. They had weak and shaky faith but trusted in the object of their faith. They did so, Hebrews 11:39 through 40 says, having not seen the object of their faith.

They did so not getting what was promised to them. Moses didn't get to see the Messiah come and bring salvation. So the last thing I want you to hear and to go away with is, "*They ran well, so you run well.*" Isn't that so close and yet so damning to us? The statement is these people ran well without seeing the object of their faith, without seeing Christ. They ran well not knowing grace wins.

I love the story of the tortoise and the hare. I love that story because every time no matter what, that little turtle wins. He always wins! It doesn't matter if you're on page one and he is way behind, you're on page two and he is before some type of difficult circumstance. No matter what, that turtle wins every time. Every time!

We run the race because we know every time...*every* time, every time...grace wins. What Moses didn't get to see was grace wins. He didn't get to see the King of Ages immortal, invisible, the only God who is due honor and glory forever and ever come down from the heavens and conquer sin and raise from the dead to win salvation for his people. He didn't get to see grace wins! Grace wins over our anxiety. Grace wins even over our unbelief at times. Grace wins despite our doubting ways and despite our weaknesses.

It's the object of our faith that will see us run this race to completion. Watch this (the subtle shift). It's because grace wins that we have full confidence and should run the race well marked out for us. Why? Why should you pick back up and climb back in that Bible? Why do you return back to the Lord each time you fall? It's because grace wins.

As we consider this and move to a close on this story, if you think about it, Pharaoh was one of the most powerful men who has ever walked the earth. Yet what the Lord was calling Moses to is to just be faithful to his Word even up next to all that power. The call to be faithful to God's Word was not just for Moses. We live in a time where rulers and kingdoms set themselves up against God's Word, and they mock it.

Here's the question for us. Will you be faithful? Will you trust in the sufficiency of God's Word, or have you given yourself over to hoping for a certain person to be elected into office? Will it be said of you like Moses, "They trusted in the sufficiency of God's Word, and so they chose to be mistreated with God's people rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin"? They chose the sufficiency of God's Word, and they believed in it. So they considered the reproach of Christ as of far greater wealth than anything else...*anything* else...that could be imagined. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, embracing the promises of your Word will always come at a high cost for your people, for you have told us that all those desiring to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Oh, but to you, Christ, we confess that we consider you far greater joy than anything this world can offer. Help our unbelief at times.

Will you give us faithfulness when this world supplies us with suffering? Will you give us faithfulness to your Word when this world will supply us with spears and torches? Lord, we pray for a people...for mothers and fathers, singles, young and old...who will rise each morning and sing

of your graces and make much of your name by feasting on your Word. We pray in the matchless name of Christ and by the power of your Spirit, amen.

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