

SUPERHEROES OF FAITH - MOSES

Cross of Glory Evangelical Lutheran Church

What Is Your Most Valuable Possession?

Exodus 2:1-10

Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman,² and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months.³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile.⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.⁵ Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it.⁶ She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.⁷ Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"⁸ "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother.⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him.¹⁰ When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

Hebrews 11:24-26

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

One of my favorite television shows is *The Antiques Roadshow*. The premise of the show is simple. People bring in items they own that they think might be valuable. Experts evaluate these items, tell the owners what it is they have, and then give them an estimated value for their item. What makes this show enjoyable is when someone brings something in that they picked up at a rummage sale for \$5 and then find out it is worth \$50,000. What was sitting around at the back of their closet now becomes their most valued possession. What is your most valuable possession? As we think about that question this morning, we will look at today's superhero of faith: Moses. One thing that made Moses a faith superhero was the fact that he knew what was truly valuable in life and wasn't.

From our reading, we see that Moses had a very unique beginning to his existence on this earth. Moses was born at a bad time in Israel's history. It was during the period of time when God's people were enslaved in the land of Egypt. They had been slaves for approximately 400 years by the time Moses was born. During that time period, the Israelites had grown into a great nation, despite the fact that they were enslaved. They had become so powerful, in fact, that the Egyptians began to fear them. For this reason, the Pharaoh of Egypt issued a horrible decree: all male babies born to Hebrew women were to be killed by throwing them into the Nile River. It was not a good time to be a boy born to a Hebrew mother and that is exactly what Moses was.

Thankfully, God spared Moses through some amazing circumstances. His mother hid him for the first three months of his life and then trusted that the Lord would take care of him when she built a little ark for him and placed him in the Nile River. This was an act of faith on her part and it was rewarded. Moses was saved when he was discovered by the Pharaoh's daughter and she had pity on him (you'd have to be pretty heartless not to have pity on a three month old baby floating in a river).

It is because of these circumstances that Moses found himself in a very unique position as he grew older. He was born into a people that were enslaved. But he had been adopted into the royal family of Egypt. Many people would think that he was very fortunate. What would you rather be—a slave or royalty? This is a time of lavish wealth for the Egyptian people. The amount of gold and other precious gems discovered in Egypt made them the envy of all the other nations on earth. To be royalty in Egypt meant wealth and luxury beyond your wildest dreams. And so we might think that Pharaoh's daughter pulling Moses out of the Nile River meant his ticket to the sweet life. But that is not how Moses saw things. He was not interested in the wealth of Egypt as much as he was interested in the faith of his fathers and identifying with the enslaved children of Israel. We know this because this is what the Spirit inspired the author of Hebrews to write: *“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.”*²⁶ *He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”* Moses thought it was more valuable to be a part of God's family than a part of the royal family.

Do you think that you could make that same kind of decision? When you were young and you thought about what you wanted to be when you grew up, how many of you had as a part of your dream the fact that you would be unbelievably rich? How many of us even today don't daydream a bit about what it would be like to have the wealth of a Bill Gates or a Warren Buffett. It seems like life would be better, wouldn't it? You wouldn't have to worry about your finances every day. You could buy yourself all kinds of nice things. You could travel the world. Can you imagine having the choice between living a life of luxury like that and living a life of struggling to make ends meet and not choosing the life of luxury? It seems like a no brainer until you put one more thing into the equation: What if living the life of luxury meant turning your back on the family of believers and on your Lord? That is why Moses made the choice that he made. That is why he chose to be known as a Hebrew rather than an Egyptian. He thought it was more valuable to live a difficult life with God's people than to live an easy life apart from the Lord.

I think that we would all like to say that we would make the same decision. I don't think that there is anyone here that would say they are willing to turn their backs on the Lord for the sake of worldly wealth. But do our words and actions always reflect that kind of attitude? How much of our time is spent building up our faith as opposed to the time we spend trying to build our bank account? How many of our financial resources are dedicated to serving ourselves as opposed to serving the Lord? What do we truly think is more valuable: the things of God or the things of this world? I don't know about you, but questions like these expose the greed and selfishness in my own heart and call me to repent of my sin. This is a good thing. Repentance is a good thing. Repentance leads us to see again just how valuable a possession we have in our Lord and his love.

Moses knew the great value of knowing the Lord and placing his trust in him. Following the Lord earned him a life of hardship. Think of all the struggles that Moses endured as he led the children out of slavery in Egypt toward the Promised Land. He was constantly harassed, tested and tried. Some of those tests he passes. Some of them he failed. But through it all, he never abandoned his faith in the Lord. He kept marching and leading God's people because he looked forward to his eternal reward. He entered a Promised Land far greater than anything this earth could offer when he died and was gathered to his fathers. He didn't have a great pyramid built in his honor. He wasn't buried together with lavish treasures of gold and precious gems. But that didn't matter. What he possessed was far more valuable. Knowing that influenced the decisions that Moses made throughout his life.

It is only when we put things into eternal perspective that we see clearly how much greater value there is in trusting in the Lord and following him than there is in following the way of this world and trusting in earthly wealth. It doesn't matter how much stuff you have accumulated along the way. When you die, you can't take it with you. All that matters is that you know the forgiving love your Savior Jesus. That is worth more than gold. Think of it. At your death, the true value of your Lord's love becomes very clear. It means the difference between an eternity in hell and an eternity of joy. You certainly can't place a price tag on that. And the best part about this priceless possession is that it comes to you free of charge. It wasn't free for Jesus, however. He paid dearly for it. He paid for your salvation with his own blood. He gave us up the joy and glory of heaven to be abused and mistreated on this earth all for the sake of saving your soul. That is his great love to you. Can you place a price tag on that?

And the value of Christ's love and forgiveness is not only clear when you die and receive your heavenly reward. Possessing Christ's love is also something that is extremely valuable in your day to day life here on this earth. It gives you strength. It gives you encouragement. Just think of it. If you see your most valuable possession as material things, you can easily be disappointed and devastated when the economy turns sour or you lose your possessions in some other way. But when your most valuable possession is Christ and his love, you know it is something you can always rely on.

As we begin to see and appreciate just how valuable God's love is, it changes our priorities. We aren't as attached to things of this world. We find our fulfillment in following Christ and giving ourselves to him. We realize that no matter what our bank says, we are truly rich. We have true treasure. May we learn to appreciate it and seek after this treasure more and more every day.

Amen.