

Parental Faith in Action (Baptism Service)

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[0 : 00] If you turn with me now please in the New Testament to the letter to the Hebrews, the epistle to the Hebrews on chapter 11.

So that's Hebrews chapter 11 and we're going to look for a short time at verse 23 in this chapter. Hebrews 11 verse 23. By faith Moses when he was born was hidden for three months by his parents because they saw that the child was beautiful and they were not afraid of the king's edict. Now obviously that refers back to the time that we read about in Exodus chapter 1 and into chapter 2 and the situation then prevailing in Egypt at the time of Moses' birth and in the formative years of his life.

And what we read here is that his parents by faith, the faith that's mentioned here, is the faith of his parents, not the faith of Moses himself. That comes to the fore in verses 24 through to verse 28.

[1 : 19] It's the faith of his parents here that led to him being hidden by them for three months because they saw that the child was beautiful and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

Edict that all male children should be put to death. Our society is rapidly becoming one from which a determined effort is made to eradicate all traces of the Christian gospel from public life.

It's becoming more and more a Christless society. And that's why it's important for us to realize the Bible's teaching about family life in terms of how God would have us set it out and live family life for him.

Because that trend towards secularizing all aspects of public life is also coming in a sense to invade private and family life as well.

You find it not only in such things as entertainment, of course you might expect it more so in those areas of life than others, but you also find it in education, in government policy, in other aspects of public life and society life where you find the secularist, humanist agenda more and more coming to be formative in people's thinking.

[2 : 55] Even in cases where children in primary school are encouraged to think about their gender and whether in fact their gender is as it is biologically determined or not.

And their teens are encouraged to choose which gender they belong to. These are things that are currently very much part of the society and its thinking that you and I are placed in.

And as Christians we have to see that we are in a state of crisis. The world will not say that. Those who are advocating such changes will not say that.

But removing the kind of distinctions that the Bible itself sets out clearly for us is a sign of a degenerate society. And as a degenerate society we, in the midst of that society as Christians, have a duty.

Have a duty to God to maintain the standards that God himself expects of his people. We can't withdraw from that society.

[4 : 04] We cannot actually say, well that's the world and that's what you expect of the world. Let's just leave the world as it is. That's not the mandate that God has given us. We're placed in that society to be salt and light.

To call that society back to the standards of the gospel. To get that society we trust to see by God blessing our work and by God blessing our witness.

That actually all of the changes that humanism and secularism advocates in the eradication of the gospel and its influence and its history if it were possible.

Are not for the good of human society at all. All that God has given us, whether it's in command or promise, is designed for our good as human beings.

And there's no point in looking from outside of this commitment to God and thinking we have to change this because it's harmful. When you look at it from inside as you're doing as Christian

people, you realize that actually that's where our security is.

[5 : 13] Within God's boundaries. Within God's provision. Within God's standards. And it means, for one thing, that the Christian home is as important as it has ever been.

And more important than it's been for generations. Because that's where our children as Christian children are to be reared so that they themselves will come to live.

As we would want us to live and want them to live. As people who are faithful to God, whatever happens in the trends or developments of society.

Now Moses' parents were in that sort of crisis. Different in some respects, but nevertheless a crisis where the eradication of those Hebrew people was the intention of the Pharaoh and his government.

In other words, the eradication of their distinctiveness. Of their race. Of their religion. Because if the male children were all killed, then it stands to reason and it's logical and it's clear that that race would not survive for very long.

[6 : 26] And their religion would disappear with them. Everything here is calculated in the Bible's presentation of it as a great movement against God.

Against the God of these people. That's really ultimately what it's about. And as we read here in verse 23, By faith in those circumstances, Moses' parents hid their child for three months.

Because they saw that the child was beautiful. So there are two things from that that we want to just briefly look at this morning. And do so in relation to baptism and to Christian family life as well.

Now, first of all, we're told here what they did. In other words, we're looking into the action of Moses' parents. And it's interesting that while they're mentioned in Scripture, they're hardly mentioned.

Maybe if we ask the question today, how many of us know the names of Moses' parents? Maybe not everybody here would be able to say instantly what their names were.

[7 : 29] They were Amram and Yochabed. But they're not very distinctive in Scripture for their names. They're hardly mentioned. And that's important too. Because it's not our prominence publicly that really stands in God's sight to be important.

It's how we live. And it's the kind of life that we live. It's what we pass on to our children. It's the values that we hold. It's the principles that we actually apply to ourselves and to the world in which we live.

Whether we're remembered or not. Whether our names are known or not. That's our responsibility. And these parents of Moses, they're not mentioned in the text. But they're mentioned as being faithful to God because they did this.

They hid the child for these three months. Now you can see that their faith is obviously prominent.

This chapter, as you know, is dealing with faith and the way faith is seen in the lives of all the people who are mentioned.

It's by faith that this was done. In other words, this was a faith that actually attended to the parenting of their child. It's a parenting faith.

[8 : 37] It's mentioned as a faith that was proper and belonged to them as parents. It's specific in the text. By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents.

And that really is an important principle in itself. That parenting requires faith in God. That parenting to be the parenting that scripture advocates is a parenting that needs to pay respect to God's ways, to God's precepts, to God's promises, to God's boundaries, as we mentioned to the children.

It's us as parents that they exercised faith. And they exercised faith in order that this child would be looked after by them for the Lord. That's what our Christian parenting is about.

They faced this crisis together as Christian parents have always done. And that's why today we have parents bringing their child.

So that by that they are saying together we want to look after this child and rear this child for the Lord. We want to bring our child into the church visibly by baptism, as God himself has set out for us as a sacrament of his word and his word.

[9 : 58] And by doing so we are saying as parents that by faith we are today giving ourselves to rear this child for the Lord.

They trusted in his promises. They did not fear the king's edict because they had a better king than Pharaoh. They had a higher authority than Pharaoh's to look to as they sought to bring their child up within their family.

That's why they were not afraid of the king's edict. That doesn't mean that Moses' parents didn't feel any pangs of fear.

Ordinarily it would be very, very strange if they didn't have any pangs of fear at all knowing what was going on around them. But ultimately they didn't actually fear the king's edict because they put another edict first.

They put God's ways first, God's laws first, God's reputation first. And that's how they hid the child without being afraid of the king's edict.

[11 : 04] They trusted in God and they trusted in his promises. And that's as parents what we're seeking today for our children and for our grandchildren as well because our responsibilities don't cease once our children have moved on in life and become adults and settled for themselves, whether married or single or whatever.

We still have, those of us who have grandchildren, have responsibilities that we must pass on to them as well. And so we have that responsibility from God. This is what they did.

They hid this child for three months. They were going against the commandments of the king, Pharaoh, because they valued more than that the commandments, the ways of their king, their God, the one who was in fact the governor of the universe.

And their faith, of course, was seen from this action. It specifically mentions he was hidden for three months by his parents. By faith they did this, but this is what they did.

They hid the child for three months. And the point to that is that with our lips we confess faith. We confess our faith by saying this is what we believe.

[12 : 22] We have a certain set of truths which we assent to and which we believe and which we confess with our lips to be. Truths which we accept, which we build our lives upon, which we commit our children to.

They are truths which we believe and we confess that that is our creed. That is our belief. That's the gospel, the foundation of our salvation through the gospel. Those fundamental things of our Christian faith.

These are the things we confess with our lips. But that's not all there is to it. Because faith throughout this whole chapter is seen not simply with a confession of our lips.

These people are not said to have confessed what they believed and this then is what they believed. Their faith was seen by their actions. That's where our faith comes to be noticed.

Both to ourselves indeed and to others especially. Our lips confess what we believe. Our acts show what we believe. Our lifestyle shows what we believe.

[13 : 25] How we take the actions we take and how we go about them. That's what tells people what our values are and what we stand for and who our master is. And who we are.

What kind of people we are. And so they hid this child for three months. That was their action. It wasn't an easy action.

It was a dangerous action. If they had been found out they could have been themselves. Put to death. They knew that. But they hid this child.

By faith this was their action. And that essentially is what we are doing for our children as well. We are rearing children for God.

Those of us who are privileged to have children are rearing our children as Christian parents. And in Christian families we are rearing these children from God. Just as Moses was hidden for three months.

[14 : 23] In a sense that's really an illustration for you. Of how we hide our children for God. In the midst of all that's going on around us. That attacks the gospel.

That attacks what we stand for. That attacks our family values as Christian values. We hide our children for God. What do I mean by that? It means that we actually show them the meaning of why they were baptized.

Why they belong to the church. What the gospel is. Who our God is. What he has provided for us. What it means to be a Christian. We are sheltering them in that sense.

From what they face elsewhere. By rearing them for the Lord. By bringing them up in the nurture and training and discipline of the Lord.

As Paul put it. Writing to the Ephesians. So it's not just simply a matter of our coming to have our children baptized. Or ourselves be baptized.

[15 : 24] As parents today. Sean and John. Sean and John. Are bringing their child. And saying. And bringing their child to be baptized. We want this child.

To come to know the shelter and security. Of being within the church. And being brought up for the Lord. And being brought to know. The ways of the Lord. And nurtured for him.

And I have to say to myself today. And you have to say to yourself today. As those who have been baptized. If you've been baptized already. Am I today what my baptism signifies to me?

I'll come later to an extract from the larger catechism. Which I always use. At a time of baptism. And it's very familiar. I'm sure to those here. Who have heard it many times.

When I've done baptisms before. But it really asks us to examine ourselves. As to whether we are spiritually. Inwardly.

[16 : 24] What our baptism signifies to us outwardly. We have the great advantage. Of being brought up in the church. Under the gospel. We have the great advantage.

Of having been made members of the church. By baptism. In that sense of membership. Covenant membership. Confederate membership. Membership of the visible church.

Have I. Have you. Built on that advantage. Have you taken Christ as your own. Have you placed your trust and your confidence in him.

Do you have the faith. That Moses' parents had. When they hid this child and reared him. For the Lord.

Is that true of yourself. In your own individual soul. Is this what you believe. And is this what you show. In your life.

[17 : 24] That you are the Lord's. And that you want to serve him. As best you can. In the midst of a society. That doesn't want to know him. That's the first thing then.

We're told what they did. By faith. We've looked into. Something of their action. Secondly though. We're told. Why they did it. By faith. Moses. When he was born.

Was hidden for three months. By his parents. Because they saw. That the child. Was beautiful. And they were not afraid. Of the king's eating. And that's. The main point that's mentioned.

There. Why did they do this. Well firstly. Because they saw. That child. Was beautiful. And that's an interesting. Reference. Isn't it. I'm sure. Many other. Children. In Egypt.

At the time. Belonging to. The people. That Moses. Parents. Belonged to. Were equally beautiful. But they weren't hidden. As Moses. Parents. Hid. Their child.

[18 : 20] They saw. That he was. Beautiful. Now. Turn with me. If you will. To. Acts. Chapter 7. Just for a brief moment. Acts. Chapter 7. Because that gives us a key.

Into why this is saying. That Moses. Was so beautiful. That his parents. Actually hid him. Acts. Chapter 7. Is an account of. The speech. That Stephen uttered.

Just shortly before. He was actually. Stoned. To death. And in Acts. Chapter 7. We find in Stephen's speech. That he rehearses really.

Essentially. A history. Of the people. That he belonged to. Of the Hebrew. Or Jewish people. And in Acts. Chapter 7. At verse 20. You actually see.

That at this time. He says. Where he deals there. In the previous verses. You can see. He's dealing with the situation. We read. In the first part. Of Exodus. The king.

[19 : 15] Who didn't know Joseph. He dealt shrewdly with them. Forced out fathers. To expose their infants. So that they would not. Be kept alive. And then verse 20. At this time. Moses was born. And he was beautiful.

In God's sight. He wasn't just beautiful. In physical terms. To his own parents. He was beautiful. In God's sight.

And his parents. Understood this. They understood. Something about him. Was really special. That he was special. To God. That he was destined. To do something special. For God.

Now we're not told. How they came to know this. But it's obvious. That God revealed it to them. Because when you go ahead. To a chapter. The same chapter. In verse 25.

You see. Moses then grown up. When he was 40 years old. It came to his heart. To visit his brothers. And seeing one of them. Being wronged. He defended. The oppressed man.

[20 : 10] And avenged him. By striking down the Egyptian. Then verse 25. He supposed. That his brothers. Would understand. That God was giving them. Salvation. By his hand.

But they did not understand. In other words. That's telling you. That Moses actually knew. From his youngest days. That he was going to be. The deliverer of the people. Under God.

In Egypt. That he was going to lead them. Out of Egypt. How did he come to know that? Well he came to know that. Because his parents taught him. His parents realized. His parents were taught by God. This child is special to God. This child has a beauty. In God's sight. That is quite above the beauty. Of other children at the time. It's a beauty. That's spiritual. It's a beauty. Where God himself. Is going to use him. In a mighty way. And Moses came to realize. And understand this.

[21 : 04] And he was surprised. That his fellow Hebrews. Didn't actually follow this. And didn't accept this. And didn't know this. You see. That's telling you. The kind of beauty.

That Moses had. Was a beauty. That was spiritual. First and foremost. A beauty. That God had given him. That was then. Related to his parents. Or God told his parents. And they brought him up. In that way. Knowing that he was special. In that particular manner. And undoubtedly.

He was taught by. His parents. It's an interesting. Twist isn't it. To the story. Where we read. In Exodus. And it's a wonderful part. Of the story. Actually.

I always love reading it. Where you came to Pharaoh's daughter. You come to Pharaoh's daughter. There she is. Coming down to bathe. By the riverside. She sees this basket. And she finds this child.

[22 : 01] In the basket. And realizes. As she said. This is one of the Hebrews children. And then Moses sister. Comes along. And she says. Would you like me to go. And take one of the Hebrew women.

To nurse him for you. And she says. Yes go. And what did she do? She went and got his mother. You see. God. Is in charge. Of the whole situation. And there is Pharaoh. With all his energy. And Pharaoh. With all his. The might of his government. Trying to destroy. The people of God. The covenant people of God. And here is this child. In a basket. Looking so vulnerable. And now here is Pharaoh's daughter. And she is taking this child up. Surely that is the end of this. Hebrew line. Surely that is the end of God's promises. No. Because God is wiser than Pharaoh. And God is greater than Pharaoh. And despite all the attempts. To eradicate. These people. And what they stand for. God is not going to allow it. God is going to turn it round. To his own advantage.

[22 : 57] And to the advantage of his people. And that gives us hope. And encouragement. That today. Surrounded as you are. With all that you find. Of an anti-gospel world.

And an anti-gospel. And an anti-God agenda. God is in charge. God's promises have not lapsed. God's promises to believing parents. Have not gone away. They have not become irrelevant. Or outdated. And that is why we raise our children.

For the Lord. Under his promises. That is why we hide them for him. In a sense of. Securing them. In the teaching of the gospel. So that they will themselves.

We trust. Come. To be Christians. People of beauty. Spiritual beauty. Belonging to the Lord. That is why we hide. Our children. In that sense of hide. Protecting them from.

[23 : 56] All that they are subjected to. And we are thankful. For our schools. We are thankful for. Christian teachers. We are thankful for.

We are thankful for. Christians. In our education system. In our authority. In our island. We are thankful. For all of that. And yet in that world out there. And in the world of. Internet. And television. And all that. Our children are subjected to. You always find. Constantly. The bombardment. Of this humanistic. And atheistic. And secularistic. Mindset.

And agenda. That is why we have to. Bring up our children. In the nurture. And admonition of the Lord. That is why within our homes. We have this great privilege. And this great responsibility. Of hiding them for the Lord. Of bringing them up to know. What the gospel is about. What their place is in the church. What being a Christian means. Why it is important to be a Christian.

[24 : 50] Why it is a privilege to be a Christian. Why it is an honor to be a Christian. And a Christian child. And in a Christian home. And being Christian parents.

That is. That is. Why they did it. They saw. That he was beautiful. And we look at our children.

Surely in that same light. As we seek to bring them up for the Lord. To see the potential. Spiritual beauty. That is about them. To see that by the Lord's grace.

And by the Lord's mercy. And by the Lord's blessing. Their baptism itself. Will prove to be for them. As they are taught about it. As they think about it. As they are growing up. That it will be a means of.

Reminding them constantly. That they belong to God's covenant people. And reminding them constantly. To take advantage of the privileges they have. In the gospel.

[25 : 49] And putting God's promises to the test. As it were. By bringing themselves. Ultimately to. Be dedicated to God.

Now remember. When this took place. It was a very. Dark hour. In the experience. Of the people. And as you look into their thoughts. About the child. You can see how they also. Thought about God's promises. They were not afraid of the king's edict.

Joseph had left a commandment. That. When he died. He was not to be buried. They were to. Keep. His sarcophagus or coffin with them. Until they left. The land of Egypt. Many many years after that. Joseph himself.

[26 : 49] Had had that teaching. Passed on to him. By his parents and grandparents. As God had revealed to Abraham. That after 400 years.

They would leave that place. And they would go on to a land. That God was going to give them. That he had promised to Abraham. And to his seed after him. That's why they were not afraid. Of the king's edict. They knew what God had purposed. They knew God's promises would not fail. They knew that. When that time was up.

That God had specified for them to be in Egypt. They would actually leave. Whether it was they themselves. Or their descendants. But they would leave as a people. As a Hebrew people. When God had fulfilled as part of his promise. They had Joseph's bones to remind them. They had their circumcision.

[27 : 47] To remind them. That they were God's people. Just as we have baptism. To remind us of the same. And that's why. As our children's minds are.

Subjected so often. To that secular. Humanistic. Atheistic agenda. That is so. Obvious in the world. We are today.

Grateful to God. But that cannot eradicate. God's promises. God has his own timetable. God has his own wisdom.

God has his own ways. And it doesn't matter. What may happen. Around us. Or even to us. We are still.

Trusting in God. And his promises. As a covenant. Believing people. Now of course. This doesn't just mean. That we do. That we're thinking of.

[28 : 48] Moses' parents. And therefore. Of the parents. Of the child. Being baptized today. We also have to reckon with. A congregational faith.

As well. Because as I said earlier. Baptism. Is the means. By which. As God has himself ordained. It's the ordinance. By which we are.

We are. We are. Visibly admitted. Into the visible church. The visible church. Is all of you here. Who actually make up. This visible church. As we call it. The church.

Which gathers regularly. To worship God. Who acknowledges God. As their God. Who know. Of God's provision. In the gospel. Of salvation. In Jesus Christ.

Who have that. Available to them. By being already. Members. Churching by baptism. Of his church. And so. Your congregational faith. Is important too.

[29 : 42] In relation to this child. And to all the children. Of the congregation. As well. Because you are today. Sharing in this moment. Of baptism. It's not just relevant.

To the parents. And the child. That's being baptized. It's relevant to yourselves. As a spiritual family. If I may put it that way. Just as the child.

Will have. Her own immediate family. So by baptism. She comes to have. You. As her spiritual family. Somebody defined the church.

The visible church. With. Individual. Strugglers. Help. Fellow. Strugglers. On the way through life. That's just one aspect.

Of course. Of the life. Of the church of God. The visible church. But that's one aspect of it. That's very important. Because let's face it. Whether we're in pulpits.

[30 : 39] Or in pews. Whether we're prominent. Or not noticed. We all have struggles. And our struggles. Are of the type. That we cannot manage.

At least all of them. On our own. And we're thankful. And should be thankful today. For the various types of helps. We have with our struggles. And there is no. Or should be. No better.

No more meaningful help. Than what you find. In the family of God. You are receiving today. Willingly.

A child. Into membership. Of the visible church here. And as you do so. You are pledging. To be a family. To this child.

And to this child's parents. That you will be. That you will be an example. That you will be an encouragement. That you will be a means of teaching yourselves. To accompany. The teaching of the parents in the home.

[31 : 38] That you will see to it. That you are. Indeed. A family. In which this child is nurtured. And in which all our children find. A spiritual security.

And a sense of security. That comes from knowing that we are safe within. The provision that God makes for us in Jesus Christ. So here is.

An example of parental faith. And we are told what they did by faith. We looked briefly into their actions. Their faith as parents. Leading them to hide this child.

For three months. And to do so. Looking into their thoughts. Why they did it. Because they knew. That the child was significant. That God had revealed to them. His beauty.

Spiritually. And because they were also. Aware of the supremacy. Of God's promises. Above any edict of the king of Egypt. Important.

[32 : 37] And powerful though he might be. And so today. That's what we. Ourselves. Are pledging to be. A people of God. A covenant people.

A people who know the blessings of the gospel. Who value the blessings of the gospel. Who bring our children up. In that environment. So they will come to hold them.

These blessings. And privileges. For themselves. And we pray that that. Will increasingly be so. In a world.

Which desperately needs. The light. Of gospel truth. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.