

The Seven Types of Faith

by A.B. Simpson

The sermon explores the seven types of faith, highlighting the importance of faith in our individual choices, separation from the world, and appropriating the blood of Christ.

Scripture: Exodus 12:13, Exodus 14:21-22, Joshua 6:20, Acts 16:31, Hebrews 11:23-31

Topics: "Faith in Action", "Types of Faith"

Description

A.B. Simpson explores 'The Seven Types of Faith,' emphasizing the profound impact of faith in the lives of biblical figures from Moses to Joshua. He illustrates how faith manifests in various forms, such as faith for family, individual choice, separation from the world, and the appropriation of Christ's sacrifice. Simpson highlights that true faith requires action, as seen in Moses' choices and the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea, culminating in the victory at Jericho. He concludes by affirming that faith not only transforms individuals but also empowers them to reach out to the lost, exemplified by Rahab's story.

Transcript

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment" (Heb. 11:23).

This passage (Heb. 11: 23-31) contains a separate cluster of stars in the firmament of faith. The last group was taken from the book of Genesis. This includes seven types of faith selected from the next period of Bible history, from Moses to Joshua. This also forms a complete group and, like the other, reaches a climax. It covers a period of trial and conflict as the story of faith ever does. The night is necessary for the stars, and it is out of the darkness of trial that the brightest examples of divine grace and human trust shine forth in every age. Just as it is true that the golden age of a nation's literature is often an age characterized by stirring and trying events, so in Christian experience and Bible story the most illustrious examples of holy character, high achievement, and lofty faith are wrung from the bosom of anguish and forged in the flames of affliction.

I. FAITH FOR THE FAMILY

Here we see the germ of Moses' future life and Israel's history in the breast of a humble mother and a godly father. They were two slaves in the brickfields of Egypt, and all that has come down to us from them is their name and the record of this mother's faith. But there was a spark of celestial fire in those lowly breasts, which kindled all the flames of faith and power that afterwards consumed the hosts of Pharaoh

and lighted the torches of Israel's marvelous revelation. Eternity alone will reveal how often the life-story of some illustrious man started in a mother's bosom, and grew out of a little germ of maternal trust even as the mighty oak out of the little acorn.

The cruel law had gone forth that every baby boy should die; but as this mother looked on her little one she saw he was a beautiful child. What mother ever saw anything else in her babe? But her faith saw deeper than even a mother's love, and although it might be death to her as well as to her babe to conceal it, yet she dared to defy the king's commandment, and when she could no longer conceal her treasure God led her to devise the little ark of bulrushes, and then to wait beside the stream until she was called to exchange the place of mother for that of nurse, and bring up the little life that she had committed in faith to the hands of God. Blessed privilege indeed to have the strength of a father's faith and a mother's prayers behind us. Blessed resource for a parent's heart to have the same God still to whom we may confide the lives that are dearer than our own, and the tasks that are too hard for us. Beloved, have you covered the heads of your precious ones with the sheltering wing of a covenant God?

Once, it is said, Audubon, the great naturalist, while collecting specimens in South America, saw a little bird fluttering in great excitement over its nest. He soon discovered the cause. A huge black snake was slowly climbing up the tree to devour the little birdlings and the mother was vainly struggling to beat him off. Suddenly she shot into the forest and soon afterwards returned with a trailing vine in her beak which she softly spread over the nest, and then went back for more, until she had securely covered the little ones and tucked them in beneath the leaves of this strange plant. Then she sat over on a branch and watched the issue. The snake still crawled steadily up, but when he reached the vine there was something in it that evidently distressed and repelled him. He shrank from it as from a poisonous breath. Again and again he tried to crawl around the tree and approach the nest without touching this thing. But it was all in vain, and at last, disgusted and angry, he dropped from the tree and coiled himself up in despair upon the ground, while the little bird chattered out its joy and praise and seemed to thank the heavenly powers for their protection. So God has given to us not only our salvation, but for the protection of our homes and our loved ones, the leaves of the tree of life which we place about their defenseless heads and defy the serpent's sting. There is a promise in the New Testament which many of us read only half way through: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But there is another clause: "and thy house." Why should this be true only of our salvation? You have taken that promise for yourself; take it for your child; take it for your brother; take it for every unsaved member of your household. Claim it and hold fast to it until, a reunited family above, you thank Him that His word is just as true for you as for the little family of old in Egypt's bondage and on the shores of the Nile.

II. FAITH FOR OUR INDIVIDUAL CHOICE

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." There comes a time when even the mother's prayers cannot be a substitute for our personal responsibility. Then we must act and choose for ourselves. Moses had the benefit of a mother's teachings as well as a mother's faith, and when the crisis hour came he was true to the convictions that she had instilled into his youthful mind, and he stepped out and assumed for himself the full responsibility of faith.

His religious life began as every life really does, in a true purpose, in a right choice. It is the will that is the helm of life. It is our choice that determines our destiny. Two lives opened before the young Hebrew standing out in clear relief and separated as far from each other as pole from pole. One was a life of

honor, luxury, and power; in fact, all that the world at its best could offer, for he was the heir to Egypt's throne, and there was nothing within the scope of human ambition which he might not have claimed. The other was a life of danger, affliction, sacrifice, possible violent death through the vengeance of those whose kindness he refused, and yet withal the blessing of God and the fellowship in suffering, and reward of God's people. But the prospects and the recompenses were all in the distance. The allurements were all at hand, and only the eye of faith could make real the overbalancing value of the things of God and eternity. But Moses had that higher vision which makes the distant and the unseen more real than the present. He had respect unto the recompense of the reward, and without a moment's hesitation he made his choice. He said one eternal 'No' to the world, and one everlasting 'Yes' to God. He gave up a throne and a crown, and he chose his lot among the afflicted people of God, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." This is the very essence of faith. This is the first principle of consecration. This is the root of piety. This is the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. This is the crisis of every soul. This was the great temptation in the wilderness when the Master refused the devil's splendid bribe and chose instead the will of God alone. There are two sides to this great decision. There is a choosing; there is a refusing. There is a 'Yes', there is a 'No'. Beloved, have you spoken the decisive word? Have you said 'Yes' to God without reserve? Have you said 'No' to the world, and self, and sin?

III. FAITH SEPARATING FROM THE WORLD AND MAKING GOOD ITS CHOICE?

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." The time came when the will must become the deed, and the choice must be translated into action. That time came when the preparations were complete for the departure of the children of Israel from the house of bondage. It was a step of the most serious danger. Pharaoh had bitterly refused and opposed it, and his reluctant consent had been slowly wrung from him; but Moses knew at the last that consent would be withdrawn and that all the power of Pharaoh's armies would be used to draw them back, but "by faith he forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king," and bravely marched forth until he found himself with Pharaoh's chariots behind him and the rolling flood before. And so, beloved, your decision must be proved. God will take you at your word. He will put you to the test and He will help you, like Moses, to persevere "as seeing him who is invisible."

And yet it is just this that renders many a decision abortive. There are thousands of souls in heathen lands who believe the Gospel and have lost all faith in their old traditions, but they dare not step out and confess their faith and risk the sacrifices that are sure to be involved; the grief and anger of their heathen friends, the loss of influence, reputation, employment, family, and sometimes of life itself. And there are thousands in the homeland whose decision for God is rendered comparatively impotent by the compromises they make with the world, and their failure to be out and out for God, to forsake Egypt like Moses, and stand unequivocally on the side of Christ. Unless you dare to confess your Lord and let your former associates know just where you stand, you will be sure to be entangled once more and drawn back perhaps to a life of sin.

It is interesting to notice how Pharaoh tried to keep them back from leaving Egypt. He was willing for anything but this. First, he said they might sacrifice to the Lord, but they must do it in the land. And so the devil is willing that we should have all the religion we want, but we must not leave the world. Next, when beaten from this position he said they might go out of the country, but they must not go very far away. And so the enemy tries to compromise again and lead us to give up the evil things of the world but hold the harmless idols. Baffled in this, he made a third compromise. He was willing that they should go, but they

must leave their children. And so the devil's next move, if he cannot get us to the theater and dance, is to take our children, and we begin to lower the standard of Christian life for the young and consent to a license that we would not claim for ourselves. Finally, Pharaoh fought his last compromise battle on the ground that they and their children might go, but they must leave their property. If the devil cannot have us, he wants our business, our investments, our money. We can have the Sunday, but he must have the six days of the week, the bank book and the safe, the stock exchange and the spirit of mammon. And so millions today have made the compromise, and the result is that every year in this so-called Christian country many millions of dollars are spent for whiskey and tobacco and a relatively small amount is given for the spread of the Gospel. What the Church of Christ needs today is what Dr. Chalmers used to call an "oo and oo" religion, that is the broad Scotch for "out and out."

IV. FAITH APPROPRIATING THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

"Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." All our choices, separations, and sacrifices are vain until we come to Calvary and reach the sprinkled blood. "What would Jesus do?" is not the question until first we have understood what Jesus has done, and accepted it for our salvation. It is this alone that gives us acceptance with God. It is this alone that takes away the paralyzing blight of guilt and sin. It is this that puts us to death in His dying and brings us the new life of His resurrection. It is this that not only atones for the past but, by feeding on the flesh of the Lamb of God, gives us divine strength for the future. Never let us get away from the blood. Never let us cease to feel the heart-throb which those precious words should bring to every ransomed soul,

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood

Shall never lose its power.

A silly minister sitting beside a dying saint forgot himself enough to say to her that it must be a great comfort to her in her dying hour to be able to reflect on a well-spent life. "Yes," she said, "it is." And then with a little twinkle even in her dying eye she looked hard at him and said: "But, my dear pastor, the well-spent life on which I am reflecting is not mine, but that of Jesus Christ, my Savior, and I am occupied in putting my good works in one bundle and my bad works in another, and turning from both to Christ."

V. FAITH STEPPING OUT AND GOING FORWARD ON THE WORD OF GOD

"By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned." This is a fine description of the act of faith; stepping out on the word of God and acting as if it were true. Their way apparently was utterly closed. Behind them was the pursuing foe, before the pathless flood. There was no way of escape, and yet the word came: "Go forward." Whither? There was no other way but into the darkness and into the depths of the sea, and it was not until they had stepped forth into the very margin of the flood that the waters rolled apart and opened a pathway for their trusting and obedient feet. So faith must not only accept, but also act. It must take its stand upon the Word of God. It must venture on it. It must count it true and simply step out as if it were an accomplished fact.

"Thank you, Captain," said a grateful general to the private soldier who had saved his life by a sudden act of heroism. He was not a captain, but his general's word was enough for him, and looking up quietly answered, "Thank you, General. Of what company?" He simply went forward and acted according to his master's word, and he found it good. So not only at the entrance, but all along the way of faith we must act upon the Word of God, put our weight upon it, risk our life upon it, face impossibilities upon it and then find

the sea divided, the stone rolled away, the mountain become a plain, and the darkness and shadow of death turned into the morning.

VI. FAITH OVERCOMING AND ENTERING INTO THE FULL INHERITANCE OF PROMISE

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." Here we pass at a bound over forty years of Hebrew history, and from the Red Sea to the other side of the river Jordan. The wilderness is passed, the Land of Promise is before them, the realization of their grandest hopes is about to begin, the inheritance of faith is awaiting their grasp. But it must be taken also by faith.

There is a formidable barrier lying across their path. There always is when God has some new and glorious experience for us, something too hard for us, some crisis hour, some midnight conflict, some towering Jericho which we cannot leave behind us. It is then, like Jacob, that we must get alone with God, and through the narrow place of trial come into a large place of exalted blessing and lifelong victory. Perhaps some reader of these lines is there today. The struggle through which you are passing is to decide your whole religious future. It is God's opportunity for your spiritual triumph. God can bring you through, but only by faith can the walls of your Jericho fall down. The first thing is to believe that it is possible, that it is for you, that it is for you today, and then to take the place of faith and stand fast through all the seven days and the sevenfold test, until the shout of victory shall ring, and prayer shall be turned to praise. Beloved, have you taken this higher step of faith? Have you not only left Egypt but entered Canaan? Will you take God for it, and will you press on until it becomes for you, as for them, a glorious realization?

You will notice that all the interval including the forty years in the wilderness is omitted in this record. There was no faith in it and it did not count. And so all your years are lost and you have only your labor for your pains until you believe God and enter into the rest of faith and the fullness of your victory and your inheritance.

VII. THE FAITH THAT LIFTS THE VILEST SINNER INTO THE HIGHEST PLACE OF BLESSING AND SENDS US FORTH FROM THE FULLNESS OF OUR BLESSING TO SAVE THE LOST

"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not." The story of Rahab is strangely interwoven with the victory of Joshua. The book that tells us of the highest Christian life quickly reminds us of the mercy of God for the vilest sinner, and bids us blend the work of salvation with the higher work of sanctification. The heart of God is as much concerned in seeking and saving the lost as in leading His people into a higher blessing. Let us, like Him, ever be found close to the publicans and sinners. The very best proof that we have reached the Land of Promise will ever be that we are found seeking to save the Rahabs all around and plant the Cities of Refuge for the manslayer and sinner. How beautiful to know that He who raised poor Rahab from the ranks of deepest sin to be the mother of our Lord in His human lineage still waits to lift the most lost and helpless to the very highest place of blessing !

"What are these . . . and whence came they?" we might ask as we look upon the radiant clouds that gather about the setting sun, and the answer would be: "These were the foul and fetid miasmas that came from the swamps and marshes, but yonder sun has transformed them into the glorious forms that wait upon the chariot of his ascension." "What are these . . . and whence came they?" we might ask about the shining pages on which the beautiful words of inspiration are printed, and the answer might be: "These were filthy rags trodden by the passing throng, reeking with uncleanness, but they have been cleansed and purified until they became the very messengers of God and leaves from the Tree of Life." "What are these . . . and

whence came they?" will be asked some day by the visitors from distant worlds as they gaze upon the faces and forms of ransomed saints around the throne, and a voice will answer: "These were Rahab the harlot, and the dying malefactor; these were vile and sinful men, but they 'have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'" Beloved, this is God's great laboratory of grace, God's living miracle of love, God's sweetest, highest, most enduring work, and in it He lets us have a part. Saved ourselves, let us live to save and serve, and let us remember that the secret of all our power to save is the same old secret by which we were saved ourselves, faith and faith alone.

Lord, give us such a faith as this,

And then whate'er may come,

We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss

Of an eternal home.

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