

## By Faith... Հաւատքով...

### Hebrews 11:23-31

108 years of years passed since the Armenian Genocide. Every Armenian family has a story of family members who perished and a survival story of those who were miraculously rescued. Indeed our national history has had ups and downs. We all carry the pain of the Armenian Genocide, and we need to be healed, and the denial of Turkey adds more pain to our suffering.

I would like to look at these tragic events from another perspective. **God was with us. He was with us even though they intended to erase us. He was with us when we were suffering,**

He was with us when we passed the Euphrates,

He was with us in the deserts of Deir Zor and

He was with us on the Mountain of Mousa Dagh.

**By faith** we survived, **by faith** we live, **by faith** we will continue to stand and worship, praise, sing, pray, share the gospel, and be ambassadors of Christ all over the world.

I will quote the words of the famous poet Barouyr Sevag:

**We Are, Shall Be and Become Many.**

Why? Why we need to become many?

I will say, we shall remain to tell the story, to be witnesses, to be martyrs for Jesus, **“108 years of the Miracles of God continue.”**

Yes, even in this toughest time when our enemies keep attacking us. **By faith** we will remain faithful to Jesus Christ. Nothing will stop us...

[My faith remains to be faithful to Him.](#)

Our passage is from Hebrews.

**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. <sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he left**

**Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup> By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.**

**<sup>29</sup> By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. <sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. <sup>31</sup> By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. (Hebrews 11:23-31 ESV)**

This chapter is describing different characters who lived by faith.

I will concentrate on **Moses**. The prophet who received God's Law and passed it to his people. We see that Moses's faith develops in different situations.

How?

**1. Moses chose to identify with God's people rather than with the godless (11:24–26).** Moses chose his biological family over his adoptive family at great personal cost: loss of wealth, loss of position, and intense mistreatment, rejection, like Christ who was rejected.

**2. By faith Moses left Egypt and persevered in the mission given him by God (11:27).** God kept Moses safe in the desert and prepared him to be the leader. "The author notes that Moses persevered because he paid attention to the unseen God rather than to a visible king."

**3. By faith Moses led the Israelites in the observance of the Passover ordinance (11:28).** The mention of "the sprinkling of blood" calls to mind the author's earlier references to Christ's sacrifice as paralleling the old covenant sacrificial rituals (9:12–14, 18–22). Here, however, he specifically has in mind the smearing of blood on the Israelites' door posts to avoid the death angel's work. **This act was an act of faith since Moses led the Israelites in obedience to God's command** with regard to an as-yet-unseen event. <sup>1</sup>

Ok, in your mind you say those are extraordinary people in the Bible. Not necessarily.

If you read chapter 11 carefully you will find names that had many issues.

Noah, for example, got drunk and lay naked in his tent;

Abraham lied about Sarah;

Isaac lied about Rebekah;

Jacob was a deceiver;

Moses committed murder;  
the people of Israel were a bunch of ungrateful grumblers,  
Gideon a doubter,  
and David an adulterer.

**These are “heroes” not because they are perfect, but because they worked with God in his perfect work. Thus, we too are eligible for enlistment in the life of faith.** <sup>2</sup>

What can I learn from Moses’s faithful journey. What is the lesson that I can learn from these ordinary people?

### **1. God is with us in the river.**

Moses was born during a genocide. When Pharaoh decided to kill all male babies less than two years of age by throwing them in the Nile River, Moses’ mother decided to rescue her child.

I don’t know how you feel about placing your child in a basket and putting it in a river.

BY FAITH Moses’ mother left her child to the fate of the river... She did not know God had an amazing plan for little baby Moses.

**How many children were rescued during the Armenian Genocide?** Yes, we lost many, but God did not leave us or forsake us. **I worked with German and Swiss missionaries.** If you read the rescue stories of how children were rescued and orphanages were opened for kids, you can see in those tragic stories the resurrection of a nation that was supposed to be exterminated.

Near East Relief...

From 1915 to 1930, Near East Relief saved the lives of over a million refugees, including 132,000 orphans who were cared for and educated in Near East Relief orphanages. Near East Relief mobilized the American people to raise over \$116 million for direct relief.

How difficult it is for us to see how in the world God was with us in the Deir Zor desert of Syria. How do we find life in the desert?

I will try to answer those tough questions. The broader question people ask me all the time is: “Where is God when innocent people die?” What kind of a God is this who allows the evil to take the life of children?” I do not have answers to those tough questions. Evil is real, and it exists.

We live in a **defective** world where Satan has power over creation.

Yet, Satan does not have the final answer. **Christ won over Satan and sin.** The final victory over evil will be after the Second Coming of Christ. Meanwhile, we who live in this world experience God's presence and protection. **I am an Armenian pastor. My existence here this morning is a miracle.** When I read my grandfather's biography, I see God's hand in the "desert" walking with him step by step. And today, here I am declaring that whoever wanted to put us in a museum has failed. Not only me, how all of you who come from Armenian families have miraculously survived the Genocide.

How did we survive?

The answer I see in these verses:

**Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,  
for his compassions never fail.**

**<sup>23</sup> They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.** (Lamentations 3:22-23 NIV)

<sup>22</sup> Տէրոջը ողորմութեամբ չհատանք, վասնզի անոր գրութիւնը չպակսեցաւ.

<sup>23</sup> Անոնք ամէն առտու կը նորոգուին, քու ճշմարտութիւնդ մեծ է:

Back to Moses, only because God's love and mercy kept Moses going and his mission keep going...

## **2. God is with us in the desert.**

For Moses, the Nile River was a **place of rescue.** The **desert was a place of self-discovery.** What do I mean?

-First, he was rescued from the river.

-Then he was raised by pharaoh's daughter and nursed by his own mother.

-After being spoiled in the Egyptian courts and schools for 40 years thinking he was somebody, he escaped to the desert.

-God used 40 years of desert life to teach Moses that he was nobody.

Yet God used this man to become a leader and rescue his people from slavery.

The 'nobody' learned to trust God.

**And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.** (Deuteronomy 8: 2 ESV)

Armenians were forced to go to the desert. We did not have a choice. Evil has done its part to destroy us, but it has failed. Our desert life made us stronger. We are survivors of the desert, and we continue to stay alive.

**Watch out:** Moses learned to be somebody by trusting God. My prayer for us is that the “desert experience” will keep us humble and teach us to trust God in our daily life. Instead of being bitter, we learn to become better by learning from past experiences.

This message is not only for Armenians, but for all nations, all races and colors. We will all have “desert experiences.” Those tough days are awful. But as an outcome, we are stronger and ever more resilient. Christians will face trials, and those trials make us Christ-like.

### **3. God is with us on the Mountain**

For Moses, the Nile River was a place of rescue. The desert was a place of self-discovery. And the mountain was the place to hear God’s calling.

Each feature of God's creation had an intended purpose to define, refine and align. Moses was keeping the flock and on the mountain of Horeb, the mountain of God. God appeared to Moses through a burning bush.

**<sup>3</sup> And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” <sup>4</sup> When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>5</sup> Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” <sup>6</sup> And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exodus 3: 3-6 ESV)**

God can use nature to talk to us...

When I look at the life of Moses, I see God is using **nature** to shape and teach him and us as well. The Psalmist says: **The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.** (Psalm 19:1NIV). Max Lucado says: "Creation is God's first missionary."

God uses nature to talk to us.

Mountains are places where God reveals Himself in a different ways: Mount Carmel, Mount Hermon, Mount Sinai, Mount Ararat, and of course Calvary, the ultimate highest place in Jerusalem where history changed.

Moses' life was changed after this event. Moses heard his "pastoral" calling on this mountain. He became the one who led his people out of Egypt, out of slavery to freedom.

What is the mountain experience for the Armenians?

Sevan told the story of God's miracle on the mountains of Mousa Dagh, which means the mountain of Moses.

God did amazing things in our lives.

Literally by Faith Rev. Antrassian led the group to the mountain.

It is a miracle that there was a French Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea willing to help. I can only see God's hand in it, ONLY.

By Faith...By Faith...

faith had a major role in shaping Moses and his people, we also continue living in faith.

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

If Barouyr Sevag says "**We Are, Shall Be and Become Many,**"

**There is a purpose we as Armenians to continue to live.**

**Our lives should glorify God.**

**Our nation should glorify our God.**

**We kept the faith for so many years, let us continue to walk, to be on the road with Christ.**

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,  
for his compassions never fail.

<sup>23</sup> They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23 NIV)

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1. George Guthrie, *THE NIV Application Commentary, Hebrews*, P 382

2. *ibid* P 392

3. *ibid* P