

Demonstrating Faith through Godly Decisions

Hebrews 11:23-29

We all understand the importance of the decisions that we make. Sometimes there are serious decisions to be made and other times the matters are lighter in nature. We make tons of choices every single day – what we will wear, what we will eat, where we will go, who we will talk to, what we will make time for, etc. The list could go on. We all face these normal, everyday choices. However, when Jesus is the Lord of our life we find that His rule in our hearts and lives affects every aspect of our life, including our choices. If we are truly living by faith it will affect the decisions that we make. ****ILL: Young man overcoming temptation. **ILL: Man committed to giving more to bless others.** The point is that living by faith affects our everyday life, especially the decisions that we make.

Sadly, sometimes we find it difficult to make the right choices. Culturally, we have come to accept, and sometimes even expect, that we will have a great variety of options in our choices. In the average grocery store we have hundreds of options of cereals, sodas, cookies, and everything else to choose from. When we turn on the television we have hundreds of channels to select from. When we go to the department store or the car lot, again we are overwhelmed with options. While this can make decision-making a challenge, the spiritual decisions of life aren't quite so complicated. We aren't overwhelmed with a million options. We don't pick and choose what we want. When it comes to the spiritual decisions of life it is really quite simple. We simply need to ask a few primary questions: "Am I going to honor God or not? Am I going to live for God or not? Am I going to trust God or not?" The answer to these questions will determine the other decisions that we make. We see that clearly in the passage that we read today as we study the life of Moses. Moses determined clearly Who God was and what place God had in his life. And from that decision, we see how it impacted every other decision he made.

Read Text

For us to fully grasp the importance of this passage, we must first consider the background. Over the past few weeks we have been continually reminded of the importance of passing on our faith. It is important that our faith not be kept private. We must share it with others. We have seen how Abraham shared it with Isaac, who shared it with Jacob, who shared it with Joseph. Joseph, of course, shared his faith in God with his own children. If you can recall from last week, we learned about the life of Joseph. We learned how God took Joseph to Egypt and raised him up to a high position so that His chosen people would be spared during a time of severe famine on earth. During Joseph's life, God blessed Egypt on his account and, as a result, Joseph was greatly respected. However, shortly after Joseph's death things turned bad for the Hebrew people. In Exodus 1 we are told that a new king, Pharaoh, became the ruler in Egypt. This king didn't know Joseph, didn't respect Joseph's God, or care for Joseph's people. One day he looked out over the land of Egypt and saw that these Jewish people were a large number of people. In fact, their number was growing so rapidly that he felt threatened and said, "If there is a time of war, they are so many in number that they will surely destroy us." So, he appointed Egyptian midwives to pretend to help the Jewish ladies who were with child, but Pharaoh had a deceitful plan. He commanded the midwives to help

with the birthing process, but if they discovered that the child was a boy, he commanded them to kill the baby. This action, of course, would get rid of the men, and without the men there would be fewer and fewer warriors among the Israelite people. Also, without the Jewish boys, there would be fewer to marry the Jewish girls, so the girls seeking marriage would be forced to marry Egyptians and, over time, the Jewish race would be weakened, if not extinct. It was a clever plan, but the midwives didn't obey. The Bible says that the midwives feared God, and they refused to do this evil thing. They deliberately disobeyed direct orders from Pharaoh. Well, this sent him into a rage. He was so outrageous in his response that Pharaoh issued a decree that every Israeli male child born was to be thrown into the Nile River and drowned. He was clearly a harsh man who wanted his way, even if his way was absolute evil and foolishness. This was the culture of the day.

One day, while the death decree was still in effect, God looked upon a Jewish couple named Amram and Jochebed and blessed them with a child. It had now been 64 years since the death of Joseph. The good old days of blessing and favor seemed long gone. By now, the Jewish people were slaves in Egypt and their newborn sons were all being killed. Can you imagine the scene? Amram and Jochebed welcomed a beautiful son into their lives. The joy and wonder of that moment was soon replaced by worry and fear as they knew that he was to be drowned in the river. What would you do? Pharaoh had given a legal decree, and nobody could defy his authority. They were at a moment of decision. They would have to choose to obey man, which would mean to murder their own son, or to obey God, which would likely mean their own death for disobedience. They determined that it was better to obey God than man. They acted in obedience to God and in amazing faith. They knew that they couldn't hide him from the authorities. People knew Jochebed was pregnant. The authorities would come looking. Knowing that the situation was urgent, Moses' parents decided that the only hope for him to live was to hide him. His mother took a wicker type of basket and covered it with tar and pitch and hid the child in it and placed it among the large reeds in the Nile River. This little basket became like a personal little ark for little Moses. She placed him in it and trusted somehow and in some way that God would spare her little boy. I imagine she prayed constantly about this. Then she had her daughter Miriam stand guard and keep watch to see what would happen. Then one day, a prominent woman came down to the river to bathe. When she went down into the river, she saw the small floating basket and had it brought to her. When she opened the basket, she saw baby Moses and he was crying. Now for more background. This prominent woman was none other than the princess of Egypt, the only daughter to the same Pharaoh who had issued the death decree. Historically, we know that for some reason she was unable to have children. So, think of this. What are the odds that, of all the people who could have discovered Moses, it was the childless princess of the Pharaoh? When she held Moses and heard his cry, her maternal, nurturing instincts overwhelmed her, and she had pity on him. Watching the scene unfold, Moses' big sister Miriam, instantly came from her hiding place and said, "Since this is a Hebrew baby, should I go find a Hebrew woman who can nurse the baby for you?" The princess knew that this baby was sentenced to death, but she couldn't bear the thought. She told Miriam to go. What did Miriam do? She went and got her own mother, the mother of Moses, to nurse him and take care of him. The princess adopted him as her own child and gave him the name "Moses", which means "drawn out" because he had been "drawn out" of the river. While she became his adoptive mother, Moses' biological mother was the one taking care of him, nursing him, and looking after him. No doubt she taught him, spoke into his life, explained the

things of God to him, and directed him as best she could in the moments that she had. So here is Moses, a Jewish boy, growing up in an Egyptian home, with Egyptian rules, ways, morals, and values. Such differences may have seemed insignificant when he was small, but the differences would one day bring him to a point of drawing a line in the sand. As we study his life, I want us to consider two primary things:

I. The Decision of Faith (vs. 23-26)

Can we grasp the scene? Moses was growing up being raised as an Egyptian, and not just any Egyptian, but a powerful, wealthy Egyptian. There is no doubt that being in Pharaoh's home afforded him the very best the world had to offer. He was offered the best education, clothes, food, luxuries, and all of the best opportunities. Legally, he was the grandson of the Pharaoh. In fact, some historians go so far to say that this Pharaoh had no sons, which mean that Moses was likely next in line for the throne. In the eyes of the world he had an easy path to success. He had position, prestige, power, and wealth. Many of us would look and say, "Moses, don't mess this up. You're set, dude." But please understand, Moses was a man of deep faith and this faith is clearly seen in the decisions that he made.

A. A Denied Calling (vs. 24)

The passage tells us that when Moses grew up, he had a decision to make. He could go on being called an Egyptian and living the Egyptian lifestyle or he could live differently. This verse tells us clearly his decision. Moses' act may seem extreme to some of us, and it certainly would have seemed that way to the people of his day. This action sounds like he was ungrateful and unappreciative of the many blessings that had been provided for him. It is hard for us to imagine how a child, sentenced to death, could be spared and given everything by being raised in the palace and then turn his back on it. Such an action would have deeply hurt the princess and surely angered Pharaoh who made sure that his grandson had the very best. Remember, Pharaoh believed that Moses deserved to die anyway, but now that Moses is acting this way, we can only imagine the hatred that Pharaoh must have felt. But please understand, this wasn't so much about the Egyptian people as much as it was about Who Moses wanted to align with. Moses knew that he wasn't an Egyptian. Yes, he grew up in the grandest palace under the most powerful Egyptian ruler. Yes, he knew their customs, their ways of worship, the many gods they believed in, and even their many superstitions. However, when he was old enough to decide for himself, he knew that this wasn't true. On the other hand, he also knew about the Jewish people. He knew that they were God's chosen people. He knew of their God, the Living God of Heaven. He knew of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and of His covenant with His people. Moses rejected his calling as an Egyptian because he desired most to be recognized as a child of God and not as an Egyptian. He could've stayed right where he was and grown in further power and influence, and may have one day sat on the throne. However, Moses refused to be called an Egyptian. He rejected all of that, and by faith determined to follow God. He wanted to be identified as an heir of the promise of God, not an heir of the evil Pharaoh. Let me ask you today, "Have you made this decision? Are you a child of God? Have you made the decision to say 'Yes' to the Lord and 'No' to world?" Moses determined that being identified with God was greater than any other thing in the world.

B. A Devoted Choice (vs. 25)

Notice that Moses' calling impacted his everyday decisions. It was one thing to reject his supposed "rights" as an Egyptian, but notice the next statement. He chose to endure "ill-treatment" with the people of God rather than enjoying the temporary pleasures of sin. This is a powerful statement. His choice shows his amazing devotion to God and what a great choice he made. The Egyptians didn't know the living God of heaven. They worshipped many false gods. In fact, they worshipped at least 2,000 different false gods. They built temples to these gods and their worship was often expressed through all sorts of immoralities and sensualities. If they could imagine it, they did it. Literally on the altars to these false gods they practiced prostitution, homosexuality, orgies, and all sorts of drunken depravity. These were the norm of the day. The depth of the sins prevalent in that day would still make us blush in 2018. Moses, being the son of the princess, being a young man, had all of these at his fingertips. All he had to do was merely express the desire and it would have been granted. The temptation that he would have faced would have been overwhelming. But, Moses lived by faith in God. Again, this impacted his everyday choices, whether he was in public or in private. He chose to live his life to honor God. He chose not to live for himself, his fleshly desires, his selfish wants, or the wants of another. He chose to live for God. He looked at the pleasures of sin, and by the way, sin is pleasurable. It has been said very well that, **"Sin gives you everything it promises, but far more than you ever counted on."** So it is in our lives today. The tempter comes with the temptation, "Look at this, say this, do this, sleep with that person, you want that person, nobody will ever know, this isn't that big of a deal, you deserve it, it's just a glance, it's just a one-time thing, God wants you to be happy and you'd be a lot happier if you go through with this, etc." The temptation comes, and we give in to it and go through with it and it is pleasurable in the moment. It feels good and we think all is well. But, when all is said and done we realize that the pleasure was only temporary. It was fleeting. It was short-lived. Once the thrill is over and the experience has come to an end, we eventually face the reality of the pain and even death that our sin has caused. **James 1:14-16** warns us clearly, "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren." Sin promises pleasure that exists for a fleeting moment, but afterwards we are left with the brokenness and destruction that it has caused. The old preachers said it well, "Sin will take you further than you wanted to go, keep you longer than you wanted to stay, and cost you more than you're willing to pay." Friend, the enemy will lie to you and say, "It's not that big of a deal. Everybody's doing it. Go ahead. It won't really affect you or your future." Isn't this what we're told when we turn on that computer when nobody else is around or when we're invited to somebody's back seat or apartment, or when we're on that long business trip? I'm sure it's what the enemy told Moses, but he lived by faith and made a choice to devote himself to God, thus rejecting the temporary pleasures of sin. Can you say the same today?

C. A Discerning Consideration (vs. 26a)

Even in that day, without many of the modern luxuries and conveniences that we have in our day, Moses certainly lived a life of great comfort and luxury. He was raised in the wealthiest home in the wealthiest land in the world at that time. Egypt was known at the time for many things, but especially for their trade. People came from all over the ancient world to get things from Egypt. The major route was the Nile River which also provided

Egypt with the most fertile soil imaginable. For up to 25 miles on either side of the Nile they boasted the greatest crops and produce of the times. The river also provided them with reeds which were used as building materials, utensils, knives, and most importantly for manufacturing papyrus, which was the paper of its day. Because of all this they were able to develop a culture and a method of commerce that was completely unrivaled in its day. This was Moses' culture. Because of his privileged position he would have been one of the wealthiest people of his day. He would have been on "The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" or would have been interviewed by MTV's "Cribs". That was his upbringing. However, when he was grown up, he made a wise decision. By the way, that's the mark of a man. Many guys have no idea when they became a man. They consider it when they graduated, lost their virginity, or won the big game. But Paul said in **1 Corinthians 13:11**, "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things." The mark of man is that he puts away childish things and childish reasonings. Moses was a man, and a man of faith. He had all the riches of the world at his disposal. He looked at it all and he discerned something important – money, affluence, and possessions could never satisfy his soul. Only God could do that. He wasn't consumed with the visible earthly and physical things that were all around him. He knew that there was much more to life. He knew that what mattered most was to know, follow, and obey God.

Can we fathom this today? He knew that the people of God had been reproached. He saw how they had been mistreated. He knew they served as slaves. He knew how harsh his adopted grandfather was. He knew how deeply they were despised. Yet, he discerned the truth. He discerned what mattered in eternity, and eternity was far more important than the temporary "here-and-now." So, he determined that it was more important to be on God's side and suffer temporarily as a result than to be on the world's side and suffer its eternal, never-changing result. He chose to bear the reproach of God's people and turned away from the comforts of Egypt. He left the palace and never went back to his old way of life. The riches of knowing the Lord and following Him were far greater than anything the world could ever offer. Let me ask you, "How about you? How important is the Lord to you? How important is your relationship to Him? Are you seeking the riches of God or the riches of the world?" Only one will ever satisfy.

D. A Deep Conviction (vs. 26b)

Those who live by faith do so with a deep conviction. What is that conviction? **Hebrews 11:6** explains, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." Moses had a deep conviction that God would reward his faith and obedience. To be clear, that doesn't mean that Moses believed that he would experience this reward while on earth. I believe that God Himself is the reward, because those who live by faith have the absolute guarantee that one day our faith will end in sight. One day we will be with the Lord and we will be with Him for all eternity. He is the reward. However, there are many occasions where He does choose to bless even on this side of heaven. When we live by faith we don't have to count the cost because we can be confident that no "cost" will ever surpass the reward of faith. Our faith always costs us something. ****ILL:** No cable and eating out when we went through our first building campaign. God honored that by enabling us to give more. ****ILL:** Missing out on hangout time with friends and much of the "college-life", but God blessed

that by providing me with scholarships and long-term relationships and partnerships that are still blessing my life today. As I look back over my life, everything that I, at some point, felt was a “cost” I now see merely as a blessing because in each case He was doing something to mold me, use me, or bless me. Friend, please understand that God doesn’t guarantee immediate, earthly blessings, but in His grace He does often choose to bless in extraordinary ways. God’s greatest rewards are eternal and surely nothing is greater than being with Him. The promise of God’s reward causes me to wonder, “What blessing might we be missing today because we are seeking the temporary pleasures of sin over the life that God has called us to? What might we be missing today because we are seeking our own desires, our own comforts, our own luxuries instead of trusting God and laying up eternal treasures in heaven? What eternal rewards might we miss because we lived for all the wrong things?”

II. The Delight of Faith (vs. 27-29)

It might seem strange to some to hear the “delight” of faith. The word “delight” suggests that something is good and enjoyable. It is something that brings happiness and joy. That part is easy to understand. But, when you consider Moses’ actions it seems strange to call them joyful, happy, good, and enjoyable. Moses could have experienced any sin that he wanted. This was his “free pass” to do anything, but he chose to honor God and live for Him. He could have worn the title of Egyptian ruler or maybe even Pharaoh, but instead he chose to be seen as a man who worshiped the God of Israel. Moses could have continued to live for his comforts, conveniences, and luxuries, acquiring more and more wealth. Instead, he chose to identify with the people of God and to suffer their mistreatment. It is such a profound thought. In the eyes of the world, he is acting a fool. He is taking a serious step back. His adoptive mother, even, is thinking, “Moses, what are you doing? You are throwing your life away.” Without faith, this makes no sense at all. But, through his faith in God, Moses had a deep conviction. Remember faith is the “conviction of things not seen.” How could Moses reject all the temptation? How could he leave his old life behind? The key is that through faith “he endured, as seeing Him Who is unseen.” He wasn’t focused on all the mess around him. He wasn’t giving in to the distractions of the world. He wasn’t concerned about the power and anger of Pharaoh. He found joy and contentment in looking to God and living for Him. What did God do? God worked in Moses’ life and rewarded him.

A. God Released the People from Egypt (vs. 27)

We don’t have the time to go through all the details, but God through a series of plagues got the attention of Pharaoh and rescued Moses and all the Israelites from the slavery and bondage of Egypt. God released them from their pain and sorrow of Egypt and began to lead them to the new Promised Land.

B. God Rescued the People from Death (vs. 28)

Exodus 11 tells us the final plague that God used to release the Israelites from Egypt. Pharaoh had hardened his heart and had made a vow to release the people, but still had not done it. God told Moses that on a specific night he was going to send the death angel to every house in Egypt and the firstborn in every house would die. There was only one exception, only one way that someone could be rescued from death. God told Moses, “Tell all the Hebrew people to offer a spotless lamb, then take the blood of the lamb and put it on the doorpost of your house. The shed blood will be a sign for you, and when I see the blood,

I will pass over you and no plague will destroy you. Where the blood is applied, I will rescue you and save you.” Sure enough, the Passover came. That night the death angel came at midnight, but every home that was covered by the blood was spared and there was no death. This, of course, was a picture of God’s plan to rescue all mankind from death. Years later God would send His very own Son as a spotless Lamb to shed His blood and give His life for us in our place so that we could live. This why Paul declared in **Romans 6:23**, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Everyone who believes in Jesus as Lord and Savior has the blood applied over their lives that when God looks at us He doesn’t see death and destruction, He sees the covering, the life, the grace, and the provision.

C. God Removed the Enemy (vs. 29)

Well, as we can imagine, Pharaoh began to hate Moses and the Israelites. God had released the Israelites from Egypt and Pharaoh began to resent that. God had also rescued the Israelites from death because they acted in faith and applied the blood of a lamb. The Egyptians weren’t spared this horrific cost. They didn’t believe in the God of Israel and didn’t apply the blood. This enraged Pharaoh. So, as Moses and the Israelites began to journey to the Promised Land, Pharaoh began in hot pursuit against them. He had had enough. He wanted to destroy them, kill them, and wipe them off the face of the earth, much like the devil today, who is the thief who comes to kill, steal, and destroy. But God intervened in a miraculous way. When the Israelites got to the Red Sea it looked like they were completely trapped. There was nowhere else to go. There was nowhere else to turn but to God. They looked to God by faith and God parted the Red Sea, causing it to stand up like two walls. The entire Israelite caravan crossed the sea on dry land. As they were about crossed, suddenly here comes Pharaoh and his mighty army. They came to kill and destroy once and for all. They, too, entered the dry land of that Red Sea, but God refused to let one hair of the Israelites be damaged. When the army got to the middle of the sea, God caused the walls of the Red Sea to collapse and instantly the entire army was engulfed and they were drowned. The enemy was conquered. The enemy was defeated. The enemy was no more. Friend, in the same way, today the Bible tells us that Satan “your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour,” **1 Peter 5:8b**. However, his days are numbered, his power is limited, and his end is certain. One day, he, too, will be thrown into a lake, the lake of fire where all who have rejected Christ will be. There is only one way that we can overcome this enemy. It is found in **1 John 5:4-5**. It says, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

Moses was rescued from Egypt because he chose to believe in God and honor God through his life. Through the shed blood of an innocent lamb, Moses had a picture of what God was going to do to rescue His people and Moses believed. Today, we don’t have merely a picture. We have the full testimony of Scripture that Jesus did come to this earth. He did live a sinless life. He did die as a substitute in our place. He does offer a way to be forgiven and be saved, but it is not automatic. Moses had to consider and then choose. We, too, must do the same. I invite you today to choose to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior and to live accordingly from this day forward.