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Life's Choices Demonstrate
The Quality of Personal Faith

(HEBREWS 11:24-26)



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INTRODUCTION

Among all the illustrious Old Testament saints, Moses occupies the most dignified and promising place. His whole life is one of signal and illustrious events. According to the 'Coptic texts,' (the language of the people of Egypt), the name Moses means '*saved from the water*,' the legislator of the Jewish people, and in a certain sense the founder of the Jewish religion. In every direction he was great and good.

As a Prophet – He spoke as one who speaks and acts under the direction of God, the medium through which God reveals his will to men.

As a Saint – His goodness shines as brightly as his greatness. He was unselfish. He devoted himself at every cost to the good of his people. He encountered every danger for their sakes.

About his Imperfection – two or three times some fault is attributed to Moses, as every saint has failed in some point at some point.

As a Statesman – Comprehensiveness, grasp, force and sagacity were the predominant characteristics of his mind. Magnanimity, an enthusiastic devotion to liberty, and an ardent, but rational piety were the leading qualities of his heart.

The history of Moses as given in the Pentateuch [the first five books of the Bible], naturally divides itself into three periods of 40 years each. Moses was born at Goshen, in Egypt, B.C. – [Before Christ] in 1571 according to some data on the Exodus.

The impression that he made at his birth was his captivating beauty, so that his parents resolved to save him, not fearing the wrath of the King. His amazing preservation, when floating in the fragile ark, his favorable reception into the palace of Pharaoh, under the auspices of the king's daughter and his amazing privilege of obtaining learning and influence in the court of royalty, were the most astonishing and astounding story of a life of authentic faith.

But now in our text before us, we no longer watch the workings of providence for Moses, but we see him also operating with that providence, and taking his stand with his afflicted

countrymen. If we recall, the Israelites entered Egypt during the time of Joseph. Later they were cruelly treated and oppressed by their taskmasters. Their increase was attacked by the destruction of the male children and now the crisis of deliverance is drawing near. Moses is to be the instrument in God's hand.

Study Outline:

- I. His Choice Displayed Spiritual Development.
- II. His Choice Resulted in Ill-treatment.
- III. His Choice an illustration of Wisdom.
- IV. His Choice Exemplified Heavenly-Mindedness.
- V. His Obedience, the Fullest Proof of Faith in God.

I. His Choice Displayed Spiritual Development.

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (V. 24).

Men generally aspire to the society and circle of those above them; they generally choose the society of the affluent and influential, or of the intellectual and cultivated. His countrymen were poor slaves, treated as the refuse of the nation. They were not the exalted clan, in keeping with the world's reckoning nor rich. They were not walking in the paths of honor, literature, or science. Yet he chose them and became one with them, as he could not once raised them to earthly dignity, he descended step by step, and became their friend, and companion, and brother.

A. Called to Discipleship (Luke 5:27-28)

If we hoped to be useful instruments in the hand of the Lord, we must begin by leaving all – renouncing all things of this world for him. This means we are call to discipleship. In Luke chapter 5, after the manifestation of the power of God by Jesus in the raising of the paralytic man from his stretcher, in vv. 27-28, we read:

*"And after that He went out, and noticed a tax-gatherer named Levi, (Matthew), sitting in the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow Me."
And he left everything behind, and rose and began to follow."
Matthew leaving behind his business, went with Jesus.*

There is no heart too hard for the Spirit and grace of God to work on, nor any difficulties in the way of a sinner's conversion, that cannot be overcome by His power. Jesus came to give

life – not merely to preserve but to impart LIFE, and to communicate it in rich and unfailing fervor. During the times of Jesus, the tax man was a shady individual, dubious, dishonest and suspicious. Matthew chose to leave it all, completely abandoning his office, and everything connected with it. He who wishes to proclaim the gospel, like the disciples of Christ, must have no earthly entanglements.

B. Called to Prioritized (Luke 14:33)

In Luke 14, we note the self-test Jesus gave the great multitudes that were going along with Him – in v.33:

“No one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” NASB
And in the NKJV, it reads - *“Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”*

There are two kinds of *‘forsaking all that we have.’* One is the forsaking by which we become disciples [from condemnation - *‘the flesh’* to spiritual liberty in Christ Jesus] Rom. 8:21; and the other, by which we continue as true disciples. The meaning of the phrase *‘forsaking all that we have,’* in the Greek, is translated *‘does not give up.’* It does not mean reckless abandonment of one’s belongings, but the *proper categorization* of them to accomplish their intended purpose. In other words, the believer who is worthy of Christ must know how to properly categorize and place material things away from himself, to keep things in their right perspective.

When these two proper categorizations are accomplished, our relatives will be positioned where they should be – below Jesus Christ, and our belongings are separated from us. Then our plans will be completed, we will achieve our goals (vv. 28-30) and the war against the spiritual forces against us will be won (vv. 31-32). Wise Christians prioritize; they know how to arrange the (items of their lives) in order of importance.

C. Called to Friendship with Christ (Colossians 3:1-2)

The Colossae Congregation heresy.

The Church at Colossae was in distress; she was struggling due to unorthodoxy and secularism teachings in the church. Philosophical speculations, astral powers, reverence to angelic intermediaries, food taboos, and ascetic practices with Judaism had grip proceedings. So, the apostle Paul had to exhort them to be heavenly minded. Refuse carnality, but strive to be Christ-like. *‘Put on the new self,’* he admonished, Colossians 3:1-2.

*"If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."*

What are these '*things above*' which we should set our affection upon? I ask you now to lift your eyes above the distant clouds, and this lower firmament which is the residence of God. What do we see there? First, there is *God himself*. Make Him the subject of your thoughts, your desires, your emotions, and your love. David said, "*Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*" (Ps. 37:4) and in Psalm 62:5: "*My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him.*"

Let nothing come between you and your heavenly Father. What is the entire world if you have not God, and when you have God, what does it matter if all the world riches are gone? God is all things, and when you say, '*God is mine,*' you are richer than you could ever be with the material abundance.

Oh, to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with our entire mind, and with all our strength; that is what the Scripture states; it is what the gospel enables us to render.

What next do we observe in the words '*things above*?' I see Jesus, who is God, but yet truly man. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that pleasing to know although he is seated at His Father right hand pleading on our behalf, He is also with us in person, in spirit?

D. Called to Decision of Cross-bearing (Mark 10:21-22)

Every disciple of Jesus ought to practice wisdom in attitude; one cannot be a hostage to possessions. This was the problem of the Rich Young Ruler who Jesus counselled in Mark 10:21. There was nothing wrong with him having much wealth, but his trouble was that the money had him.

Moses had the right attitude about life; he chose the difficult state of his people.

One could argue, if the children of Israel had obeyed God, He would not have allowed them to be brought down to Egypt to be afflicted. But before you censure Moses, before we criticize or judge, because he helped the Jews, do not forget they were the people of God; the object of God's smile, and love, and care and were destined to act a more remarkable part in the drama of the world's history than any other nation under heaven.

II. His Choice Resulted in ill-treatment (v. 25a).

*Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the
People of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin (v. 25).*

A. Careful choice (Psalm 119: 30, 173)

One of the reasons why some believers find themselves in dreadful, terrible situations, is because they have made reckless decisions in the past. Their choices were not in line with the will of God for their lives. David said, *"I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments I have laid before me."* V. 173 - *"Let Your hand become my help, For I have chosen Your precepts."*

B. Choice to suffer for God's Glory (1 Peter 4:15 -16)

"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evil doer, or as a busybody in other people's matters." "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter."

Moses' choice involved him identifying himself with a nation of wretched slaves, who were oppressed by a grinding tyranny. It brought him into close contact and companionship with hordes of ignorant bondmen. It called him to undergo persecution as the leader of the movement for their emancipation. Moses made his choice at the risk of his life; for when he had declared it in act, by killing the Egyptian slave-driver, *"Pharaoh sought to slay"* him (Exod. 2:15).

III. His Choice an illustration of wisdom. (v. 25b)

(It was marked by intellectual depth; deeply felt)

Another reason why some believers find themselves in dreadful, terrible situations, is because they have selected a misguided course of action at a crucial, decisive and critical juncture in their lives. Their judgement was deprived of wisdom. But brothers and sisters we must remember that there is much security in God's wisdom.

It was Solomon who said in Proverbs 4: 7 –

"Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore, get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding."

On the other hand, James emphasized the source of wisdom in chapter 1:5 –

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

When you are tempted to make the wrong choices, when your spiritual test seems too hard, when your faith cannot hold out any longer, God is the only teacher of this wisdom that you

need. God has all good, and give all necessary good to everyone that ask earnestly. He who does not seek the wisdom of God, does not feel his need of divine teaching.

If one neglects divine consultation, one leaves the door open for demonic oppression or influence. Moses faith was rooted in the wisdom of Abraham's God. By his actions, we can determine the heroism, the patriotism and the piety of the act. He was not screened off from the condition of the Israelites, or to the ill-treatment of Christ; he had worldly glory, wealth, and pleasure in his control.

But:

A. He renounced the elevation to prince-hood.

Adopted into an esteemed dynasty, he severed the connection, and refused to be labelled the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He focused on his Jewish lineage, and to that roots, though now in privation and oppression, clung fast. Survey the contrast, a prince-royal – and a slave.

B. He relinquished the riches of sovereignty.

- Riches are fleeting – The wise man Solomon says in Proverbs 27:24,
"Riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations."
- On the other hand, the David the Psalmist said in Psalm 62:10,
"If riches increase, do not set your heart on them."

Egypt at the time was one of the oldest and wealthiest monarchies. Her chest for holding money or valuables were full of treasures. As a royal prince, they were within Moses' grasp; but he did not permit the crowns and diadems of the court to contaminate his soul.

In the first Epistle of John there are warnings against worldliness, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (1 John 2:15). The Holy Spirit saw it necessary to caution these believers through the Apostle John against the love of the world, the excessive desire of earthly things or worldliness.

Covetousness is the predominant vice of old age; an evil action or habit in adulthood. Ye *"fathers,"* John exhort, *"love not the world."* The heart of man is lacking in largeness - cramped; therefore, it cannot contain both loves - love with the *world* and love of the *Father* (God). The things which are in the world, its profits, pleasures, and honors, have the strongest attractions for youths; therefore, you *"young men, little children, and babes,"* love not the things of this world.

C. He refrained from the pleasures of a palace.

Which stimulating or appealing enjoyments were not within his reach? What could his mind devise, or heart desire, or imagination conceive, which were not at his hand? These passing pleasures of sin formed the atmosphere of his royal home; in the fear of God, he sacrificed the whole.

- Paul said – “*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you dies, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*” (Col. 3:2-3).

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IV. His Choice Exemplified Heavenly-Mindedness (V.26)

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

It was not patriotism alone that dictated it, although Moses was passionately patriotic. Neither was it mere sympathy with his distressed countrymen, although he had a tender and feeling heart. But his choice was determined by his faith in God, in the future of his people, and in the realities of the unseen and eternal world.

Moses chose to:

A. Endure misery for Christ's sake.

He was, so to speak, a Christian before Christianity. He knew about the promised Messiah, although he might not know him by name. He believed on him as the Divine Deliverer that was to come; as the ‘Prophet’ who was to be ‘*raise up*,’ as the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations were to be blessed. He was determined, through grace, to adhere to cause of Christ, however greatly it might be despised.

Moses chose to:

B. Unite with God's People.

Moses had learned from his mother-nurse of the glorious destiny of the Israeli and had become persuaded that to belonged to that nation, even in its miserable exile, was a greater honor than to stand upon the topmost step of the Egyptian throne. So, when he took God for his portion, he allied himself with the people of God, whose were ‘*the adoption*’ and ‘*promises*.’

C. Preferred the Recompense of Reward.

Moses faith looked beyond the grave. His eye searched the eternal future until it rested upon the heavenly Canaan. Realizing that ‘*better and abiding possession*,’ he felt that he could not remain a prince of the house of Pharaoh. To him, even those pleasures of the court which were in themselves innocent would be ‘*the pleasures of sin*;’ and these, such as they were, he could enjoy only for a few short-lived years. So, after comparing the best of world with the worst of religion, Moses decisively resolved to choose Jehovah as his God and heaven as his final home. This life-choice, from whatever point of view we regard it, is thus seen to have been determined by his faith.

Life's Application

V. Obedience the Fullest Proof of Faith in God (vv. 8-10)

A. Following the Call of God.

True faith has:

- ***An ear to listen to God.*** When the Lord appeared to Samuel in a vision, Eli the Priest told him to answer *"Speak, for your servant hears"* (1 Samuel 3:10). Here we have an illustration of *'spiritual receptivity.'* In the case of Abraham, when God spoke to him, he reverently heard the will of God put forward for consideration.
- ***Feet of cheerful obedience.*** Having heard and understood, Abraham *'obeyed.'* There was no feeling or expression of opposition or disapproval. He had no reason for objecting. He just obeyed. He acted as God directed; walked as he marked out the way. God said, this is the way and Abraham walked in it.
- ***Unsuspecting surrender of all into the Lord's hands.*** *'Not knowing,'* God knew, and this was his comfort. It is not necessary for a passenger to understand navigation while on a cruise to reach the port in safety or for a child to know the way to the park, when his father holds his hand, or for the patient, to know anatomy or medicine when the skillful physician is present.

[You just surrender all in their hands] That's what the Lord requires from everyone on this pilgrimage to heaven. We give up **body, soul and spirit**; absolutely no half measure.

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give,
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord I give myself to Thee,
Fill me with Thy love and power,
Let Thy blessing fall on me.

The surrendered life is indeed the holy life. Listen to the apostle Paul at Rome:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service (Rom. 12:1)

B. Following as Strangers in the world. *'In a foreign country.'*

Abraham considered Himself a stranger. As such he acted and lived. He conducted himself as dying, and in a dying world; he knew this was not his rest, or home, or portion and this is precisely the spirit we should feel and cherish. This world is merely a land of passage - billions are ever crowding its surface; but they are all moving. One generation passes away, some are just leaving it - others just entering - but all are moving. Hence life, as a river, is ever emptying its countless drops into the ocean of eternity.

C. Following after a More Fixed and Abiding Habitation. *"Whose builder and maker is God."*

Just like Abraham, we should recognize our own immortality; we also should associate ourselves with future existence a union with kindred spirits. He beheld above not a desert but a city - the city of God - the new Jerusalem - the place of Jehovah. One day, we will enter Heaven; we will see its firm foundations. The very being of God sustains it. Its beauty will be worthy of its maker - God. We must keep on looking for it by faith, and daily hope, and constantly pray about it, think about it as our own and live in relationship with it.

Conclusion

Other instances of the faith of Moses

"By faith he left Egypt" - v. 27.

He believed that God would fulfill the promise He had made, and he cheerfully changed an earthly for a heavenly portion. *"By faith he kept the Passover"* - v.28. God told him he would destroy the first born of the Egyptians, but would spare those whose doors were sprinkled with the blood of the paschal Lamb. Moses believed this, kept the Passover, and sprinkled the blood. *"By faith they passed through the Red Sea"* - v.29. The Egyptians thought they could walk through the sea as well as the Israelites; they tried, and were drowned, while the former passed in perfect safety. One walked by faith and the other by sight; one perished and the other was saved.

The man of faith must act according to God's Word.

The man of faith is known by God.

The man of faith is sometimes hated by the ungodly, but,

The man of faith will always be taken care of by God.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous; his ears are open to their cry.

Indeed, your life's choices, will demonstrate the quality of your faith.

Assignment

1. In Luke 14, Jesus gave the criterion for a genuine follower of Christ. What difference might his teaching make in the way we consider our personal behavior and ethical judgments? (v. 33)

2. In what ways does 1 Peter 4:12-19 challenge the contemporary Church concept of *'suffering for Christ'*?

3. The believers at Colossae in the city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, were admonished to pursue *holiness*, *"set your mind on things above"* - Chap. 3. Look back over the chapter and give a concise brief on wisdom.

4. Hebrews 11 Illustrates the pattern of the resolute pilgrim. In what way would you like to have this kind of experience with God (vv. 8-10)?



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