

The Prince and the Pauper

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[0 : 00] And please take out your Bible and find yourself on over in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 11. And you can also, if you'd like, find the book of Acts, Hebrews chapter 11, and also the book of Acts.

Emily, please come and serve us this morning. We're going to read Hebrews chapter 11, verse 24, down through verse number 26.

Hebrews chapter 11, verse 24, down through verse number 26. By faith, Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. Thank you, Emily. Father, thank you for the privilege that we have of gathering together this morning for the purpose of worshiping you.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as we have sang together, you have intertwined yourself with precious daughters and treasured sons.

[1 : 27] You have intertwined yourself with humanity. As we read in Psalm 8, you have paid attention to us when we didn't deserve your attention at all.

You have sent, Father, your Son, the Lord Jesus, down to this earth to suffer and to die for the sins that he did not commit.

So that we can sing together and really mean it, come ye sinners. Come ye sinners. Don't let fondness, fitness make you linger.

Come, come to Jesus and be saved. Thank you, as we have sang together, for the Spirit's rising beam that draws us, because of new life, to salvation in Jesus.

We confess we would have never turned to you. Our sins were too great. Our rebellion was too filthy. The deep stain, the sickness, the cancer of sin in our hearts was too gross.

[2 : 42] And yet, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you grant life, you grant repentance, you give faith, so that sinners call upon the name of the Lord Jesus and repent and believe this glorious gospel that it has been our privilege to sing about.

Father, would you help us as we turn our attention now to the preaching of your word. Help me to be faithful to the things that are in your word. Take away anything that would be distracting and unhelpful and help us to consider those things that we need to hear from you today.

Please help those who are listening to listen carefully and discerningly to test whether these things are so. And then, if they find that they are true in accordance with your word.

Father, would you please stir up inside of us fresh faith that motivates obedience and nourishes our hope. We ask this for your glory and our good in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Amen. Amen. When Goliath of Gath, the champion of the Philistine army, challenged Israel's army to a winner-take-all, one-on-one fight to the death, conventional wisdom would have said, you ought to find your strongest soldier and you ought to equip him with the best gear you can possibly find.

[4 : 27] Get the guy with the most experience. There's a lot riding on this grudge match. But a far less obvious choice ensured that in the end, when Goliath was dead, God received all the glory.

With their 900 iron chariots, the Canaanite army crushed Israel during the time of the judges. God rescued his people.

But not with a typical alpha male warrior judge that they may have been looking for. But by the helping hands of a courageous woman named J.L.

Who crushed the Canaanite general's head with a hammer and a tent peg. Humanly speaking, there were no good reasons for Jonah to go to Nineveh.

No good reasons to go to Nineveh. The Ninevites were brutal. They were merciless terrorists. They were idolaters. They fully deserved God's judgment and everyone knew it.

[5 : 51] But despite Jonah's initial disobedience and his subsequent half-hearted evangelistic efforts, Nineveh repented and God alone was glorified.

In each of these examples, God overrules what seemed like the most obvious choice.

For a choice that was far more glorious. If we wish to be God followers, then we must be people of faith.

Because it is only people of faith who will choose glorious treasures over obvious pleasures. Now last week we saw how three women cooperated with God in order to save a baby.

Baby Moses from death in the Nile. Fear should have triggered inside of them all kinds of fretting about their circumstances.

[7 : 11] But for at least one woman, faith motivated her to focus on God's promises rather than her circumstances.

Now unlike most other weeks in this particular series, our text here in Hebrews has no direct parallel in the Old Testament.

And this was a little bit jarring for me because last week you're working with two texts. This is the challenge of trying to do a series like this, which I really enjoy.

But you're studying two different texts. And this week I read and I'm studying and I'm thinking like, oh, there's no Old Testament text. That'll be nice. It'll just be this text in Hebrews.

And then I was reminded that there is another text, a New Testament text in the book of Acts and chapter 7. In the book of Acts chapter 7, a man named Stephen preaches a sermon.

[8 : 14] And this sermon provides some helpful context on our text from Hebrews chapter 11. Let's look first at Acts chapter 7 and verse number 20.

At this time, Moses was born. And he was beautiful in God's sight. He was cared for in his father's home for three months.

And when he was put outside, Pharaoh's daughter adopted and raised him as her own son. So Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

And he was powerful in his speech and actions. If I come over to your home and you are not there.

And I let myself in. Just bear with me. It's just a story. I let myself into your home. And I notice, oh, there's plates and cups and silverware on the table.

[9 : 27] Crumpled up napkins. There's some crumbs on the floor. There's pots and pans kind of in the sink and on the counter of the sink. What would I understand must have happened in your home just before you left?

What do you think? What would I conclude just happened in this home? Oh, I would conclude. You all don't take me for being a very good detective, I gather.

I would conclude this family must have finished eating and then had to quickly get away to some event or some gathering or something like that. Because they haven't cleaned up after themselves.

And that seems like something fairly typical that we would all do. At least a little bit after a meal. The author of Hebrews does something similar.

You do not have to be Sherlock Holmes to sort through what he is doing here in the book of Hebrews. He is making some reflections, some observations.

[10 : 33] He is drawing some conclusions on either this text from Acts chapter 7 or traditional understanding of Moses that perhaps for whatever reason in God's providence was not written down for us in the book of Exodus.

So look again, if you would please, at Hebrews chapter 11 and notice how the author of Hebrews draws out some reflections, some conclusions, some implications.

Because he's aware of Moses' life in a way that if we were just to look at the book of Exodus, we would not understand. Hebrews chapter 11 and verse number 24.

By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

And he chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin. For he considered reproach for the sake of Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt since he was looking ahead to the reward.

[11 : 57] What are verbs? What's a verb? Who's going to help me? I need a little something to know that we're paying attention. Yes. It's an action word.

Very good. I want you to notice three verbs in this text. Notice first in verse number 24. We have the verb refuse. Do you see it?

Notice in verse 25. We have a second verb chose. And notice in verse 26. We have a third verb considered. Let's look at these three verbs in that order first.

As we listen to the author of Hebrews draw some conclusions about the life, the early life of Moses. First then, Hebrews chapter 11, verse 24.

By faith, Moses refused. How did being adopted by the princess of Egypt change Moses' life?

[13 : 07] Well, if there ever was a rags to riches story, this would be it, right? He should be dead. He should be dead.

But instead, he is alive. He should be a slave. But instead, he is a son.

He should be making bricks out in the hot sun. But instead, as we read in the book of Acts chapter 7, he is educated and trained in all of the wisdom of Egypt.

He should be crushed by affliction. And yet, Moses is powerful, Stephen tells us in Acts 7.

Powerful in speech and actions. This is a real rags to riches story. Moses' position as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, the SOPD, the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

[14 : 21] This provided him with unimaginable possibilities and privileges. But Moses refused.

He refused all those possibilities. He refused all of those privileges. He did not consent to the royal title, son of Pharaoh's daughter.

And instead, verse number 25, by faith, Moses chose. Sometimes, we get to make a decision.

And in making our decision, we don't have a lot of options. For example, Sylvia.

If I were to offer you these two fig bars, which, if you happen to be listening to this later, they are the same fig bar. If I offer you these two fig bars, you can choose, right?

[15 : 31] But it's really not much of an option, is it? It's like, what am I supposed to do here? They're the same. But you can choose one anyway, because I want you to have one. You're welcome.

Now, that's not the only situation that we find ourselves in. Sometimes, sometimes, we find ourselves in a situation where we have to make a choice.

But we do not know the options. And we just have to choose, Amelia, the left hand or the right hand. Which will you choose?

The right hand? The right hand. And then, there are times when we also have to make a choice.

Sometimes, we choose, and we get to see and to decide which option we will choose. Now, I have here a go-go squeeze, which is fresh.

[16 : 38] Fresh. And it's a good kind. It's the premium kind, apple, pineapple, passion fruit. And I also have here a package of black licorice that has been sitting in our pantry literally for months.

You should not choose this licorice. But I will give you the choice of either one of these options. Yeah, good choice. So, you take the go-go squeeze.

Sometimes, in life, we get to make decisions. And it's clear what the option should be. And it's not a question for us. And then, sometimes, you just get stuck with whatever is left over.

Sky, I'm not going to give you this because they're disgusting. But this is the leftover. But here's the thing. You get what you get, and you don't throw a fit. Right? That's your option.

Sometimes, that's how we're forced to make decisions, in one of those ways. I want you to notice the way that Moses made decision. Notice this.

[17 : 41] Moses could have said, I am the son of Pharaoh's daughter. I am entitled to the very best that all of Egypt can provide.

I don't want anything to do with those filthy Hebrew slaves. Moses. And making that choice, he could have enjoyed all of the possibilities and privileges of being a prince in Egypt.

Moses didn't make this decision with hands behind his back like I offered to Millie, where she didn't know what her options were. He knew. He knew his choices.

He understood the consequences. With full knowledge of the options and fully aware of the possibilities and the consequences of his decision, Moses chooses to identify with and associate with and therefore suffer with his people.

God's people. God's people. Now, this seems like a very odd choice, doesn't it? It would be like choosing that dried up piece, that dried up bag of black licorice, instead of the fresh go-go squeeze that's the premium organic kind.

[19 : 18] This seems like a strange decision. Who in the world would ever choose to suffer instead of enjoying?

Do you notice those two words in your Bible? If you're into that circle or highlight or whatever, notice that. He chose to suffer when he could have chosen to enjoy.

Why? What would ever cause Moses to make this decision? To suffer rather than enjoy.

Verse number 26. By faith, Moses considered. In other words, he weighed his options.

Sometimes we make decisions where neither option is great. Like if you're choosing to replace your hot water heater with a regular hot water heater or the kind that doesn't have a tank.

- [20 : 26] Neither of those options are great options. They're both ridiculously expensive. You can't plan for them. You don't prepare for them. It just happens. And here you are. Now you're making a decision. Sometimes we make decisions when neither option is good.

Sometimes we make decisions without options. It's like going into a test thinking that it's going to be multiple choice and you get there and realize, no, this is an essay exam.

Sometimes we make decisions and we don't have choices to work with. Sometimes you work a job that you don't love because it's better than not having a job.

But Moses has options. As the SOPD, he has a future that is incredibly bright.

It was all open to him. The wealth and the wisdom of Egypt was all his to enjoy. But there was another option. And that option comes at the end of verse 26.

- [21 : 38] He considered reproach for the sake of Christ. Greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt.

Now, we have to pause here a moment and think about this. On the one hand, Moses has all of the wealth and wisdom of Egypt.

It was all his for the taking. It was all his to enjoy. And the other option that he considers in making this choice is reproach for the sake of Christ.

The NIV Bible translates this disgrace for the sake of Christ. And I think that's actually pretty good and pretty helpful. What does this mean?

What does this mean? Disgrace for the sake of Christ. We're in the Old Testament. Jesus isn't even born yet. What is going on here? Jesus gives us some insight into this in Matthew chapter 25 and verse 45.

- [22 : 57] Jesus says this. Truly, I tell you. Whatever you did not do.

For the least of these, you did not do for me. And earlier in this text, Jesus makes a similar but an inverted statement.

He says, whatever you did do for the least of these, you did for me. Whatever is said against God's people is said against Jesus.

Whatever is done against God's people is done to Jesus. When his people suffer, Jesus is so close that he suffers too.

This is worth pausing for a moment. When you are ridiculed, when you are laughed at, when you are mocked for the name of Jesus, you are not alone.

- [24 : 13] Jesus feels your shame. When you are beaten, when you are persecuted, when you are enslaved, when you are abused by those in power, Jesus shares that pain with you.

When you are abandoned or orphaned or humiliated, Jesus feels your loneliness, child of God.

So here are Moses' options. The treasures of Egypt.

The treasures of Egypt. I love watching documentaries about Egypt. I am a sucker for those. I'll watch those all the time. So fascinating to me when they go in and they find these wonderful treasures buried in the sand for decades and centuries and millennia.

And then they open these things up and they're like, look at this. Moses is seeing this, but in real time. Before they were buried for millennia.

- [25 : 30] Moses is choosing between the treasures of Egypt and associating with God's people.

Which means sharing in their shame. Sharing in their reproach. Sharing in their disgrace. What kind of disgrace?

He acknowledges implicitly the reality of persecution and suffering. That's why he tells this story about Moses. Because he's like, look at this.

Moses had to make a choice. And humanly speaking, with our own eyes, he should have chosen the treasures of Egypt. But he didn't. Why not?

Because something less obvious but more glorious overrode his decision. A future reward. And so the author of Hebrews is stirring up faith in his readers, in his hearers, in us.

[32 : 03] Not by minimizing the suffering or the persecution, but saying, no, I get it. Suffering and persecution. All of that is awful and unpleasant. I get it.

But look at Moses. Moses. Remember Moses. And then, be like Jesus.

Philippians chapter 2. Adopt this same attitude. As that of Christ Jesus. Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited.

He didn't have to grasp onto it. He knew it was his. And he didn't have to cling to it. What does Jesus do? It's the same word. He considers this.

And as he makes this decision, it seems like the most obvious choice is to stay in heaven and remain in the glory of the Father's presence.

[33 : 13] And yet, Jesus considers us. And he knows the needs of sinful people.

And so, he makes this choice. Far less obvious, but far more glorious. He emptied himself.

He assumes the form of a servant. He takes on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

Even death on a cross. Hebrews chapter 12. For the joy. The joy that lay before him.

Jesus looks and he remembers the joy that's out in front of him. He grabs hold of that joy that is to come. He pulls it into the present and then lives as though that joy is already his.

[34 : 16] For the joy that lay before him. He, Jesus, endured the cross. Despising the what? The shame.

And the disgrace. And the ridicule and the pain. And now he has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Is Jesus your savior? Brothers and sisters, how does your faith influence your decision making?

How does your faith influence your decision making? Because make no mistake. The reality of or the hypocrisy of your faith will be observed in how you make choices.

When and to what extent do you forgive?

[35 : 29] How sincerely or superficially do you repent? How do you serve those who are weaker than you?

Or do you exploit them for your own gain? How do you respond to accusations? With rage?

Or with humility? To what extent are you willing to be disgraced for the name of Jesus? How do you decide whether to tell the truth or to cover it up?

How do you choose whether to live here or there? How do you spend or squander your time and your money and your gifts?

How is faith motivating your thinking, your decision making, your behaviors such that people around you wonder? This choice seems intuitively obvious to even the most casual observer.

[36 : 38] And yet I see that you have made this choice. Who does that? Like this seems so obvious. And yet I see you making this choice.

A choice that will cost you. Faith gives followers of Jesus courage.

Courage and resolve to include God's promise of future glorious reward. Hear this. Not as a factor in your decision making.

Not as a factor in your decision making. But as an overriding, overruling, dominant, primary consideration.

The type of consideration that will allow you to overrule something that seems so obvious. And choose something that seems, that is, more glorious.

[37 : 52] So that. So that. Like Moses. But so much more importantly. So that like Jesus.

The scale. Tips in favor. Of suffering with and for Jesus. With and for his people.

Rather than enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin. Faith. Chooses. Glorious treasures.

Over obvious pleasures. Let's pray. Oh good father. Oh great God in heaven.

Would you please as we have sang together. Deliver me. From the need of having comfort.

[38 : 52] Would you deliver me. Would you deliver me. From the fear. Of having nothing. Would you deliver me. From worldly passions.

Would you deliver me. Oh great God. Would you deliver me. From the need. To be understood. And accepted.

Would you deliver me. Would you deliver me. From the fear. Of being lonely. Would you stir up faith.

In me. And in my brothers and sisters. Such that we can say. As we have sung together. I shall not want.

Why? Because we have tasted of your goodness. Father, you know our hearts and you know our needs and you know our weaknesses and our tendencies.

[40 : 04] Help us as we consider your word, as we remember Moses, and as we desire to be more like our Savior Jesus.

We ask that you would deliver us for Jesus' sake, for his glory, and for our good. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.