

Walk by Faith – Faith Makes the Right Choice

8/05/18 – Pastor Randy

Hebrews 11:24-29

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. ²⁹ By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

The worst decision ever? Maybe not!

In a March 2016, Money.CNN.com ran an article on Ron Wayne. Very few people are familiar with the name Ron Wayne, but most people have heard about Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniack.

According to the article, "The signatures of all three men appear on Apple's April 1, 1976, incorporation documents. They also appear on a document signed 12 days later, dissolving Wayne of his 10% stake. Wayne, Apple's lesser-known third co-founder, signed away his share of Apple for \$800. Today, 10% of Apple is worth roughly \$62 billion."

The article went on to state, "There's no chance Wayne, who's 81 now, would have actually been worth anything remotely close to that much today. His stake would have been diluted when shareholders were added later on. But it's not a stretch to say that he would have been a multi-millionaire -- and substantially wealthier than he is now."

Many people have considered Wayne's decision to be, perhaps, one the worst business decision ever. However, Wayne does not see it that way. The article cited the following quotes from Wayne in his interview with CNNMoney,

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"What most people know is that I was there at the beginning and walked away; what they don't know is I had very good reasons for doing it. "I've never regretted the move." About Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniack, Wayne said, "They were absolute whirlwinds. I was standing in the shadow of giants. If I stayed at Apple I would have probably ended up the richest man in the cemetery". "Would I rather be rich? Of course I'd like a lot of money," Wayne said. "But I have managed. If I just wanted the money, I could have been rich and miserable."

So was Ron Wayne's decision a bad one or a good one. It depends on your value system? It depends upon what you think the purpose of life is? If money is the ultimate blessing, then you can probably argue that Ron Wayne's decision turned out to be the worst ever. If money is only a potential blessing and always a lesser blessing to some others, then you can understand why Ron Wayne believes it was not the worst decision or even a bad decision. Many people hear it as the worst decision because they equate draw this equation "more" money = "better" life. But that equation does not always hold true.

We have been talking about what it means for us as Christians to "walk by faith" using Hebrews chapter 11 as our guide. In the second message we learned that Hebrews 11 can be broken down into two parts. The author began with a statement about the nature of faith. He said NOW FAITH IS...

Then he went on to list examples of men and women of the faith, repeatedly using the phrase, "By faith" followed by a description of something someone did because of their faith. So Hebrews 11 tells us what faith is and then shows us what faith does. Faith – what we believe to be true about God and our trust in God - leads to faithfulness to God; the choice to obey Him because of what I believe about Him.

Life is all about choices. We live in a society that has blessed us so many liberties that are accompanied by so many choices. When I was a child we

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had 7 channels to choose from on the TV. Today there are 100's. But one tech site estimates that there are approximately 50 million youtube channels!

You would think that this proliferation of options would be a blessing, but it often hinders our ability to decide. You have to go to the grocery store with a very clear plan about what you need or want or you will never make it out.

When I was a kid there was Special K cereal. I was in the store the other day and there must be 10 different kinds of Special K! When I was a kid I had to choose from three salad dressings. Italian, French, or Russian. Now I stand at the door of the refrigerator for 10 minutes trying to figure out which salad dressing I should use. It takes me so long to decide, I don't have time to eat! Too many choices make us vulnerable to paralysis in decision making.

Too many choices can also lead to a lot of bad decisions or decisions that distract and detour us from the path that God has for us. The more options we have the more distractions there are to keep us from our focus on what we ought to be doing. You know the saying, "don't go shopping without list"? The list helps you to avoid ending up with 2x as many items as you really needed or even wanted. The "list" is a thoughtful process that enables wise choices or decisions ahead of time prior to entering the store. It provides you with focus before you go into battle in the store where some products will be calling your name and others will practically jump off the shelves into your cart!! Budgets serve a similar purpose. In budgeting we make thoughtful, strategic decisions ahead of time to eliminate impulsive spending. This enables us to focus on what we need to do amidst a million options!

Our faith provides us with clear guiding principles that limit our options and enable wise, God honoring decisions. Our faith is our spiritual grocery list or our spiritual budget. It defines our guiding principles ahead of time so that we are equipped to discern the right decision when we are faced with it.

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Let's look at Moses choices made by faith

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

1. Moses chose to delay gratification.

In Hebrews 11:24 we read, "By faith Moses, when he was grown up..." Now that statement is probably just a reference to Moses biological age, but I think it serves as a reminder that Christian maturity is about putting our faith into practice!! In Acts 7:23-25 Luke tells us Moses was 40 when this happened. I hope it doesn't take most of us men until we are 40 to grow up! But here we have an example of a key feature of Christian maturity; the willingness to choose what is right over what is pleasant; the ability to say "no" to personal desires so we can say "yes" to that which brings God glory.

"Moses refused...choosing rather..." Moses chose to give up the "big three" that our world says define "the good life". Moses gave up:

A) Prestige/Prominence – He chose to give up his "pride of place" as a prince in Egypt. "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter"

B) Pleasure – He chose to give up the "fleeting pleasure of sin."

C) Possessions – He chose to give up the treasures of Egypt.

Moses acted completely contrary to the common American world view that moral decisions should be made on the basis of what will maximize pleasure and minimize pain; also known as ethical hedonism. Moses chose a path that robbed him of present pleasure and caused him present pain.

There is nothing inherently noble or godly about choosing to give up a prominent position, pleasure, or possessions. There are many times that the

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godly choice directed by the Holy Spirit will result in the gain of one or more of those. They are not sinful in and of themselves. God often elevates people to positions of power and prominence so that they may use that position to bring glory to God. Joseph, Esther and David are just a few examples.

Pleasure is not inherently evil. Look at the positive role feasting plays throughout scripture. You can enjoy the pleasure of food without the sin of gluttony. Sexual pleasure is part of God's good creation. It is wonderful gift to be enjoyed as an expression of mutual love, enhancing the bond between a husband and wife.

Neither are possessions inherently evil. Paul wrote to Timothy, *"Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment."*¹⁸ *Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others."*

Moses did NOT choose the path of NO prestige, pleasure or possessions. He refused the path to IMMEDIATE prestige, pleasure, and possessions. Moses chose a path that robbed him of present pleasure and caused him present pain because, by faith, he knew that there was a future reward of a deeper and more enduring prestige, pleasure, and possessions.

Hebrews 11:26 tells us Moses was looking to a future reward. The NT constantly uses the promise of our future inheritance as motivation to endure present trials. The gratification experienced through earthly prestige, pleasure, and possessions does not compare with our eternal inheritance.

"St. Augustine said that in heaven the love we receive from God into our souls will overflow into our new, resurrection bodies in a torrent of joyful pleasure." (Peter Kreft in *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* pg. 269)

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The NT does not shy away from motivating us to endure in the present by the promise of a future reward of glory and honor! John Piper expressed it so well when he wrote, “The Christian doctrine of glorification is stunning, to say the least. Not only we will see Jesus in all his new-creation glory, but we will share with him in it. “When he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2)...Paul tells us we “will appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:3), and that awaiting us is “an eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:16). Jesus himself prays to the Father about us, “The glory that you have given me I have given to them” (John 17:22)...Most of us recoil at the talk of our being glorified like this, and that can be a good instinct. We don’t want anyone to eclipse God’s glory, after all. Our pursuit of glory on the wrong terms is sin and high treason. But our reception of glory from God is a beautiful and biblical reality...” (desiringgod.org, June 28, 2014)

To summarize: Prestige, pleasure, and possessions are not evil, but when they become more important to us than obedience to God or more valuable to us than God Himself they have become corrupting idols in our lives. We must sacrifice them whenever they stand in the way or even hinder us from being faithful to God. Our faith guides us to know when prestige, pleasure, and possessions need to be sacrificed for God’s glory and the good of His people.

Moses decided he would gladly give up fleeting pleasure for a reward that is forever. Moses decided to accept a diminished social status and embrace becoming socially stigmatized as a badge of honor.

2. Moses chose sides

Luke made the following comments about Moses’ choice to give up his identity as the Prince of Egypt in order to align himself with the oppressed Israelites. In Acts 7:23-25 we read, *One day when Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his relatives, the people of Israel.* ²⁴ *He saw an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite. So Moses came to the man’s defense and avenged him, killing the*

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Egyptian. ²⁵ Moses assumed his fellow Israelites would realize that God had sent him to rescue them, but they didn't.

Moses faith guided him to make the choice to align himself with God's people against their oppressors. Moses' faith compelled him to identify and support God's people because although he was dressed like an Egyptian outwardly, he was an Israelite inwardly. The point I believe the Holy Spirit wants to drive home to us today is that if you believe that you are a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ, then you must embrace the reality that you are a sibling to His other children. If you choose Jesus, you simultaneously choose His church which He calls his own body. Faithfulness to Jesus necessitates faithfulness to His family. If you harm my son, you might as well have harmed me. If you help my son, I will feel as if you have helped me. Our children are an extension of us and it is the same way in the family of God. Jesus said, In as much as you have done it, or not done it, to one of the least of my brothers, you have done it to me. (Matt. 25:40,45) Jesus also said, If you're not with me, you're against me. Unless you're gathering the flock with me, you're scattering it. (Matt. 12:30)

Close: I love the way Hebrews 11 concludes this section on Moses. Verse 29 reads, *"It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground."*

Moses faith was used by God to inspire others to faith. It's ironic that the Israelites are credited with faith since when they were at the Red Sea with the Egyptian armies pursuing them they showed no faith. But they did have the faith to cross with Moses. Moses must have wondered if he was having any influence, but God was using him...and God will use your faith to inspire others, if you remain faithful!

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