Heb. 11:23-28; Ex. 2:11-15; By Faith, Moses Chose I. The Rejection of this World II. The Embrace of Reproach III. The Hope of True Faith

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian faith is often a battle of wills. There is a conflict of desires that takes place within. In order to live a Christian life, we have to make choices. In fact, we could summarize the Christian life as one of making wise choices. Spiritual discernment is to choose and pursue what is best over what is easy. As we return to Heb. 11, today we find ourselves considering the choices that Moses made. 400 years have passed since our last hero of the faith. From Joseph to Moses, the people of Israel have multiplied greatly. However, there is a new Pharaoh over Egypt and this new king does not remember Joseph nor does he appreciate the size of the Israelites. He views the people of Israel as a threat- he wants their labor but not at the expense of his security. Egypt has turned from a place of refuge to a place of bondage. The Israelites are now oppressed in the land of Egypt- forced to be slaves in a foreign land. The fact is, there is often a stigma that is attached to the people of God. It is more common than not, that the followers of Jesus Christ are despised or at least marginalized for their faith. So today we consider the choices that we make by faith. With this theme: by faith Moses was able to choose Christ over this world.

**I. The Rejection of this World**

To begin, we find that Moses makes a conscious decision to reject this world. In v. 24, Moses is said to refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. You will remember the context here, when Moses was yet a small child of 3 months, his mother placed him in a small basket among the reeds of the Nile River. Pharaoh had made a decree that all of the baby boys of Israel had to be killed by throwing them in the Nile to drown, but Moses’ family had saved Moses and constructed a way for him to be rescued. As v. 23 clarifies- this too was an act of faith. So Pharaoh’s daughter found Moses in this little basket boat and raised him as her own child. Moses, who will be the future savior of the people of Israel, was rescued and raised by an Egyptian. We can see that the attack of the Devil on the people of God is found in two directions- two specific ways. Either the baby boys of the covenant are to be killed by throwing them in the Nile, or the baby boys of Israel are to be assimilated! Turn the future leaders of Israel into the future leaders of Egypt or kill them! As found in the book of Daniel as well, teach the covenant children to think and act like the world. So the plan of the world was to make Moses into one of our own. But Moses refuses to forget his family and he rejects this offer to be known as the grandchild of Pharaoh. For Moses, this would be the sin of Esau- to sell his birthright for a cup of red stew. At this point, Moses was likely 40 years old. The privileges of being raised in the house of Pharaoh were clear and they were impressive. Moses had a bright future in Pharaoh’s house. The education, prosperity, entitlement, luxury and freedom would be without parallel. The world would be his playground- as the rulers of Egypt had complete control over the nation and were the superpowers of the day. Being Pharaoh’s adopted grandson would bring a lot of privileges. But the treasures of Egypt as v. 26 calls them- are in fact the fleeting pleasures of sin as v. 25 identifies. They are temporary and passing- and Moses sees them as such. Earthly treasures- satisfying the cravings of the sinful flesh- these would not be pursued by Moses. For he knows, as James 4:4 puts it, friendship with the world is hostility towards God. So at 40 years old, Moses makes the conscious decision to reject and forsake Egypt, Pharaoh and all that goes along with it. The idolatry and pleasures of this world. Instead, Moses will choose what is better- what is lasting and of eternal significance! The prince of Egypt will choose slavery! If you were in the same position, what would you choose. Imagine for a moment that you could choose to have Elon Musk as your father- to be raised in his household where everything and anything could be yours. Or would you rather remain in the household you were given- a covenant family and a Christian upbringing without all the trappings of this world. For most people, there is no real choice here! Lots of money and power would win hands down. But God’s people see the things of this world as distractions- passing- temporary- and of no eternal significance. What good does it do you to gain the world and lose your soul?! So Moses lets go of Pharaoh and his house- putting to death that part of his life. Rather he will embrace something else.

**II. The Embrace of Reproach**

But what could be better than being Pharaoh’s grandson? Grandkids are spoiled all the time- imagine being the grandson of the king of Egypt! But to Moses, something is more important and offers a greater reward. The historical example given in Heb. 11:24 is where Moses refused to be called by the name of Pharoah’s daughter- rather he takes up the name of a Hebrew. He identifies with the people of God and takes on their cause. Back in our reading from Ex. 2, we found Moses going out one day to His people to look upon their burdens. In other words, he takes up the plight and the cause of the Israelites. When he sees them being mistreated, he takes matters into his own hands and kills the Egyptian that was beating his own kin. Later on, he will find two of his own kinsmen fighting, and he will seek to settle the dispute. However, his own brothers throw these words at him- “who made you prince and judge over us?” Will you kill me as you did the Egyptian? When the matter was found out by Pharaoh, the king of Egypt would seek to kill Moses so Moses fled and stayed in the land of Midian. But the focus of our text in Heb. 11 is on this fact- Moses took up the identity and cause of the Israelites. Now the way in which he defended them- by taking the matter into his own hand and killing the Egyptian was not the right way to go about it. But it remains that Moses was associating with the people of Israel. He also chooses exile over staying in the house of Pharaoh. As v. 27 puts it, he left Egypt. He did this twice in fact- once when he was 40 and again when he was 80. One alone- and once leading his people. Both times, he departed because he was moving by faith- choosing to separate and remove himself from all he knew. He chose the pilgrimage over the palace! Moses did not forget where he came from- he was and remains a member of the covenant! For Moses this was not just choosing to go back to his roots, it is not just a cultural thing- it is an affirmation of his allegiance to the LORD and His people. He chooses to align with Israel over Egypt v. 25 puts it. In doing so, he chose to be mistreated. He counted the cost- and considered it worth it! Suffering is a good investment for him. It is clear, then, that true faith is a choice! It is commitment followed by action. It was worth it to Moses- this choice was made by faith! He chose to be mistreated! Let that sink in? Who chooses to suffer? Who willingly makes the choice to do that? Only those who believe this promise- blessed are you when people persecute you, for great will be your reward! But Moses not only chose to be mistreated, he also chose the reproach of Christ as v. 26 puts it. The suffering that Moses and the people of God endured in Egypt is a type or a picture of what Christ would endure one day. As Jesus would suffer and be driven to Egypt to flee for his life from the evil ruler Herod, so the Israelites, God’s Son, would one day be called out of Egypt. So to be joined to Christ is to take on His reproach. Not that we replace the suffering of Christ, but we do share in it. As Col. 1:24 puts it, I rejoice in my suffering for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s affliction for the sake of His body, that is the church. So for Moses, it is of greater worth to be joined to Christ in His suffering than to be joined to Pharaoh in the lap of pleasure. Let’s read Phil. 3:7-10. Everything- Egypt and everything it has to offer. All of this world and the pleasures of it- all is as loss. It is worth nothing to me compared to knowing Christ! In this way, Christians are the richest people on earth! We are the most blessed- because we know Jesus! Do we see it that way? Do we see knowing Jesus as a better reward and greater gift than having lots of money? It is clear that the life of faith is one that changes our priorities! What are you living for? What is the chief end of man or the goal of your life? Is your life about faith or fortune? For this world or for the church of Christ? Choosing to be aligned with God’s people is to choose the narrow, difficult way! The world hated Christ, they will hate His people! They persecuted Christ, they will persecute you! Becoming a Christian is not for the faint of heart- it is not a choice you make lightly! But for those who have faith, the seal of baptism is stronger than the allure of this world! The shiny things of today do not distract us from the reward of great worth!

**III. The Hope of True Faith**

So, as we come to our last point, the question is “why?” Why would Moses give up on a life of ease and choose a life of sorrow and hardship? Why give up the cushions of Egypt for the sand of the desert? A palace in Egypt for a tent in the wilderness? What was Moses hoping to gain when he renounced Egypt and affirmed his allegiance to Israel? Well, as v. 26 puts it, He considered Christ to be of greater wealth. Moses has true faith- which is the assurance of things hoped for. And the first thing that He hopes for is Christ! Christ is the reward- Christ is of greater wealth than all the gold and silver of Egypt! Knowing Christ is worth more than anything else! Having a relationship with the Anointed One changes our priorities to such an extent that everything else fades into the background! Give me Jesus- you can have this world- but give me Jesus! Remember this point- Jesus is also the image of the invisible God- that will come up again in moment. The second thing that moved Moses was his hope for a reward as v. 26 ends. Looking forward to the reward. As Psalm 16:11 makes clear, in your presence there is fullness of joy, at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Now what was the reward? Well, in addition to knowing Christ is the benefits that Christ brings! Life, resurrection, forgiveness of sins, entrance into the promised land, and an eternal dwelling in God’s presence. In this life, the rewards are mostly spiritual. But in the life to come, the rewards will be enjoyed physically as well. So Moses considered Christ and the reward to come as greater than the passing treasures. But Moses also looked forward to seeing someone- someone who is invisible. As v. 27 concludes, he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. The prospect of seeing God revives our souls! By faith, Moses was able to perceive God. By faith, we can see Him who is invisible! It is this vision of God that enables us to endure! Now we can read of at least 3 specific times when Moses was in the presence of the invisible God. First in Exodus 3, Moses perceived the burning bush which was said to be the holy, presence of God. Next in Ex. 19 where God came down and met with Moses on the top of Sinai. Here the invisible God appeared in the thick cloud and fire. And third, Moses met with God in Ex. 34 at the covenant renewal. After this meeting with God, Moses’ face shown brightly. So Moses would be able to stand in the presence of God- and it is this desire to see God that moved him. Moses had faith that he would one day see God- and dwell with Him forever. This was the greatest reward! This was the hope for which his faith longed! Moses would rather choose to be with God who cannot be seen than to have all the treasures that could fill his eyesight.

To conclude, as a man of faith, Moses made a choice. He would choose to be associated with the lowly people of God than to sit with the exalted rulers of men. As Psalm 84:10 puts it, a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked. What bothers us more? Our sin or loss of worldly possessions? Would we choose worldly recognition over church attendance? Like Moses, we have to count the cost. Being willing to suffer for our faith lest we deny Him. To take up our cross and follow Him- this must be our choice for we know that those who follow Christ will see Him and will receive an eternal reward! Choose you this day whom you will serve! To whom will you be loyal- where is your allegiance? By faith Moses was able to choose Christ over this world. So may we also see membership in the covenant and our union with Christ as more of a reward than anything this world can offer.