



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 11:23–28; Exodus 2:1–15

“Moses, the Faith of Renunciation”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we turn to Thee with thanksgiving and with anticipation as we consider, again, a portion from Thy word. We thank Thee for the unveiling of the marvelous plan of God and, especially, do we thank Thee for some of the great men, whom Thou didst make great and useful in what Thou hast been doing. We thank Thee for Moses and we thank Thee for the faithfulness that he exhibited. We thank Thee for the things that Thou hast done through him, things that effect us even today. We are grateful Lord for the marvelous truth that is contained in the word of God and we thank Thee for the enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. And, not only that, but speaks to our inmost being and gives us the sense of certainty, which only the divine being can give us, concerning divine truth. And we thank Thee that we are not dependent on human arguments for the truthfulness of the word of God, but, ultimately, upon the voice of the Holy Spirit, who testifies that the word of God is the truth. And, Lord, we ask for a proper relationship of submission to it. May our thoughts be framed by the word of God and may our actions also be in accordance with it. We thank Thee now for this time together. We ask Thy blessing upon each one of us. We each have different problems, different hopes. We ask, Lord, that Thou wilt minister to us in a very personal way.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] We’re turning, again, to our study of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and our subject this evening is “Moses, the Faith of Renunciation.” And I’d like to read a passage in Exodus chapter 2, before we read our Scripture reading from Hebrews chapter 11. So will you turn back to the book of Exodus, and follow along as I read verse 1 through verse 15. And Moses writes.

“And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife, a daughter of Levi. So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river’s bank. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, ‘This is one of the Hebrews’ children.’ Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?’ And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Go.’ So the maiden went and called the child’s mother. Then Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.’ So the woman took the child and nursed him.”

Now, wouldn’t that be nice if every time a mother nursed a child father would pay her for the work? [Laughter] And, particularly, in this case when it was the law of the Land that the Hebrew child should be slain. God has a wonderful way of providentially caring for the things that are involved in his plan, doesn’t he?

“And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, ‘Because I drew him out of the water.’ Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens.

And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, ‘Why are you striking your companion?’ Then he said, ‘Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’ So Moses feared and said, ‘Surely this thing is known!’ When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.”

Now, turn over to Hebrews chapter 11, and we’ll read verse 23 through verse 28. Hebrews chapter 11 in verse 23.

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command. By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover. [That word really means “instituted.”] He instituted the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.”

We often hear Bible teachers say and, I think, generally correctly, that God works through men. He does not work through methods. Now, of course, there are some unusual methods that the men use, and we find a number in the Bible. Samson used some remarkable methods that were given him to accomplish the will of God in his life. Gideon, too, overcame the Midianites by the use of a horn, a light, and the actions that certainly suggest a rather strange method for defeating thirty-two thousand Midianites, when his company only numbered three hundred. And then there are

other instances of this in the Bible, in which an unusual method was used in order to do God’s work. But even then, it was God working through the men; through a Gideon, a man who had been made by God a man devoted to him. And, Samson, in his last days, accomplishing what was his greatest work, actually, after he had failed miserably in other ways.

So, I think, it’s generally true that God does work through men, not through methods. That’s preeminently true in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Paul puts it in Galatians chapter 4 in verse 4 and 5, “In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, that He might redeem those who were under the Law, and accomplished His work through the man, Christ Jesus.”

The Apostle Paul told Timothy that he was to do the work of an evangelist, and he was to do it in a most individual way. Listen to what he tells him. He says in 2 Timothy chapter 2 in verse 2, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

It is preeminently true, that in the case of Moses, God worked through a man, and Moses throughout all of his life is a beautiful illustration of that fact that God works through individuals, generally speaking, individuals who have been by him brought to the place of submission to him. Of course, he works through individuals who, at times, are disobedient. But that is his providential working. But, ordinarily, through men who have been made submissive by him; he works through them.

Men, on the other hand, are prepared by two choices; the first choice is God’s choice of them. Divine election, divine election which occurs in the ages of eternity past and which is in time a reality. And then, their response to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives. In the case of the Apostle Paul, we know that God chose him long before he appeared on this earthly scene and, in fact, announced it ahead of time. In Acts chapter 9 in verse 15, we read this concerning the apostle, “The Lord said to him, ‘Go.’ He’s talking to Ananias. ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear

My name before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

And then, later on, when the Apostle Paul is giving testimony in chapter 26 of the book of Acts, before Felix, I believe, in verse 15, well, it’s before Agrippa. I’m sorry, I’ve got. It is before Felix. I didn’t know that a cold made you fail to understand what you are reading. [Chuckles] It’s Agrippa. Gives me time to sniff a little.

When the Apostle is making his defense before Agrippa, he says this statement at the conclusion of it. “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” So, God works through men and the men are chosen by him and then they, themselves, by the work of the Holy Spirit, are brought to submission to the will of God. God’s choice often involves intermediaries and all we see in Moses’ faith is the product of the faith of two unknown and ordinary people, his parents.

It’s interesting to ask people, who were the parents of Moses? Very few people, the first time they are asked that question can really come up with the answer. They are very unknown. And so, consequently, it’s rather surprising to see that their faith is mentioned here but their names are not mentioned. For example, we read in verse 23, of Hebrews 1, “By faith Moses when he was born was hidden three months, by his parents.” That is, Amram and Jochebed, his two parents, they performed the act of faith by which Moses was hidden, “because they saw he was a beautiful child and they were not afraid of the king’s command.” There, evidently, was something so significant about Moses that they thought something must be done about it. And, incidentally, this is the opinion of almost all of the Bible students that there was something about Moses and his appearance as a baby that indicated that he was a divinely, providentially chosen instrument for the plans of God. It’s remarkable. Even some who are not believing men, such as Josephus, mark that out, too, from the standpoint of the word of God. “When they saw that he was a beautiful child.”

Now, most of us have had children, we don’t see the thing so unusual about that because aren’t all of our children beautiful? Well, at least, my two were, particularly, the one that looked like

me [Laughter] So, we think of our children as beautiful children. In fact, if someone thinks of our children as not beautiful children, it's very easy for a person to become offended. And preachers have to examine all children and so they had to come up with some comment that would protect them when people bring their children up and put them right in front of their faces and say, “What do you think of that?” And when they look, they couldn't imagine someone with such a poor beginning as that poor little baby. So preachers have learned that the proper response is, “My, that is a baby!” [Laughter] And, they are able to be deceitful in words that are true. Well, Moses was unusual from the date of his birth. And, evidently, there was something about him that marked him out as an instrument of God. What it was, we do not know.

His two parents, Amram and Jochebed, their names are not mentioned in the New Testament. You have to search a little bit to really find out who were the parents of Moses; but they were faithful individuals.

There's a story that I like of a woman who was a very effective writer, in fact she was called a brilliant writer and she wrote several books. And then, for a long time she didn't write anything. And one day, she was speaking with some friends of hers who were berating her a bit for not writing because she had been so successful and so helpful to so many people. And, finally, she said, “I have been writing books.” And they said, “You have? What are the titles?” And she said, “Ethel and Albert,” two children, that she had spent years in forming as their mother.

Paul talks about believers as being living epistles, and wouldn't it be nice if all of our children were really living epistles of the grace of God. That's what He would like, I'm sure, for every mother and every father to produce some living epistles of the sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ. It is so, so important.

We are bound up in our society today, debating the questions of family values, and I know that there are people who under circumstances in which they live have to work, but nothing could be greater for a woman and a husband, for there should be two people involved, to produce a child who is a living epistle. Nothing could be greater. Nothing could be greater in the sight of God in

Heaven. So here then, we have two people who have produced this beautiful child and God, evidently, has something special for this child.

Now, we look at Moses' renunciation of the position in which he had been put. In verse 24, we read, “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.” “By faith,” would indicate that Moses had some indication of the fact that God had a special purpose for him.

You must remember, that according to Exodus, the child was turned over by the King's daughter to his mother, for parental upbringing. How long that took place? We don't know. But it gave the mother a time to tell the son just exactly how he was born and how the children of Israel had been called of God and how God had given them great promises and how important it was for them, as Hebrews to follow the divine plan for them. And so Moses had the privilege of being brought up by a godly mother and was evidently taught in the things of the word of God that they knew at that time because we read, “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.”

We remember, that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. And so when anyone has faith, it's because the word of God in some form has been brought to them. So I don't think we are saying anything other than the truth when we say that Moses had been exposed to the word of God and had responded to him.

“When Moses became of age,” the Greek text says, “When Moses became great.” Now, the great does mean great in growth, and that's what Stephen says when he refers to this incident, as well. When he became great, however, in the sense of great, a great man, would have been true of Moses, too, because there is a lot of indication from Fallow, the Hebrew-Egyptian writer, who wrote some very significant things around the turn of the first century and from Josephus to indicate that Moses had had opportunities and had accomplished some unusual things. For example, it has been suggested that he was probably, because he was as Stephen says in Acts, chapter 2, he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Moses was learned in all the wisdom or learned in all the wisdom of

the Egyptians and was mighty in words and deeds. So, evidently, Moses being brought up in the royal household had opportunities that you might expect and among them were the opportunities to learn the philosophy of the Egyptians, which was of a rather homely type, not like the philosophy of the Greeks, like an Aristotle or a Plato. They had their own special kind of philosophy. But he surely was very familiar with it. They had a great deal of interest in the things that had to do with the future. They were interested in future things. And so Moses had some understanding of how they thought about the future. Egypt was also a place where magicians had a large place. It's not surprising when later on Moses has to contend with the magicians to get out of Egypt. That was something that was characteristic of them. They were known all over the then world for being experts in those types of arts.

We also know that he was a great statesman. And, in fact, there is a good testimony from others to the effect that Moses was destined to be the next pharaoh. In Egyptian kingdoms, the title to the throne came through the women and through the firstborn woman. This pharaoh had only one daughter and so the son of the woman would be the next pharaoh. So there is some strong suggestion in the other literature that we know about this that Moses was going to be the next pharaoh. So it was not simply a person who is brought up in the household, but brought up in a royal household, and perhaps heir to the throne of Egypt, one of the great kingdoms of that day.

He was also, we know, not only from the statement in Acts, but from the facts again, that Josephus mentions. He said he was mighty in words and deeds, that he was a military hero as well. He was responsible for an unusual victory over the Ethiopians. That may give you some indication of how God prepared this man to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and then into the wilderness where they had to contend with a lot of the nations about them and contend in battle.

So Moses, when we read here, “when he became of age,” or was great, that term, while it does refer apparently to the fact of simply adulthood, is also useful and useable to explain what he really became as the royal son of pharaoh's daughter. So “By faith Moses when he became of age...” What a remarkable preparation for the work of God. Born of a Hebrew woman, trained by the



Hebrew woman in the lore and the word of God as the Hebrews understood it at that time, but also brought up in the palace of the pharaoh, with all of the advantages that that provided. Determined by God to be the leader of the children of Israel, out of captivity and into the Promised Land.

There’s a whole lot in that statement, “By faith Moses when he became of age.” So renunciation that this passage speaks about is one of the great renunciations of all time.

Back when I was growing up, back in the nineteen thirties, the great renunciation was the renunciation of Edward the Eighth, who turned away from the British throne because, as he said, “of the woman that I love.” But this is so far greater than that, there is no comparison.

Now, we go on to read, verse 25 and verse 26, of how Moses refused to become the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. Further explanation, “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.” This is the basis of Moses’ great renunciation. It was something that he, himself, made. We know by the direction of the Spirit of God. We know the Spirit of God moved in his heart but, nevertheless, it was his choice, “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”

This renunciation of Moses we tend to think of as something rather unique, but when an individual such as Moses is faced with a choice, well he’s faced with is simply just a large choice, a significant choice, of the kind of choice that you and I are faced with. Everyone of us, born under the guilt of Adam’s sin, born sinful, living our lives for a particular period of time under the dominion of sin, and then the call of God comes from the Holy Spirit and the gospel and we are faced with a decision. And the decision is shall we give our lives over into the hand of Jesus Christ or shall we retain the power of the choice of all of our activities and live for our own glory. I don’t think that anyone who is in this audience who is a Christian, if you look back at your life and analyze what happened to you, could ever say anything other than that there was a critical point in your life in which you were faced with such a decision and God in his marvelous grace enabled you to make the right one, if you have become a Christian.

I know, in my case, that was so. Twenty-five years of age, in Birmingham, Alabama, in the insurance business; in one way God had prepared me for what he had intended me to do with my life. But I didn't know anything about it. I thought I took Greek simply because I wanted to play golf every afternoon of the week, rather than take German, because the German class met in the afternoon. That was the only reason why I took Classical Greek. And I was also a bit startled, too, that I was, I must say this, pardon me, I was very good in Greek. [Laughter] My professor always said, “You're the best student I've got.” I was astonished by that, really. I'd had a lot of Latin. I had five years, Latin and Greek are very similar, but there were others in there who'd had Latin, too. But God gave me a special little ability to look at a Greek sentence and do pretty well in it.

Now, I was playing golf. I didn't care whether I was good in Greek or not, except I wanted to pass the course. But when I was twenty-five years of age in Birmingham, Alabama, and God called me to himself and then moved on my heart to go out to Dallas Seminary and to study the word of God, I began to understand why things, which had happened ten years before that were significant for that time.

I think it's true of every one of us. If we look at our lives in the past, we'll see that God has been active in our lives. And for various other reasons, I knew that it was God who brought me to the ministry of the word of God.

So we read here then, “choosing.” The lust of the flesh was something that Moses by the grace of God, won the victory over. Choosing, the text says, “rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”

G. Campbell Morgan has a little paragraph, which I think is interesting. He says, “I love that passage because it's so true to life. Pleasures of sin. There are such today. What a stupid thing it is that some people say that there is no pleasure in sin. Of course, there are pleasures in sin.”

Dr. Gordon of Boston wrote a hymn. “My Jesus, I love Thee.” In many of the books, one of the verses reads, “My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine, for Thee all the follies of sin I resign.” I wonder what made some good dear pious soul alter that. Dr. Gordon did not write that.

He wrote, “For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign.” “I say, ‘some pious soul’” Morgan said, “There are such about. Someone thought that it would be wrong to talk about the pleasures of sin, but the writer of this letter knew, O, Moses saw the pleasures, the pleasures of sin, saw them all in Egypt. But did you notice the little qualifying phrase. “For a season.” That’s so important.” So, “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.” The pleasures of sin are passing; they are temporary.

Now, secondly, as he pictures the process that went on in Moses’ mind. “Esteeming.” This is why he chose, “esteeming,” counting, “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” Esteeming! If choosing as over against the pleasures of sin marked our victory over the lust of the flesh, “esteeming the reproach of Christ great riches than the treasures in Egypt,” this marked victory over the lust of the eyes. The basis of the choosing, then, is the hope of the Messiah. You wouldn’t think that to enjoy the stigma of a Messiah is riches, but, my Christian friend, it is! That’s precisely what he says. Look at it again. “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” So to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ, that’s not simply reproach. That reproach is riches. Riches! Every Christian who has a testimony that marks him out as a Christian, and thus bears the stigma of association with the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is such a stigma.

Paul calls it the “offense of the Cross.” If he has that stigma about him, because he belongs to Christ, you’re rich! Rich! Richer than the treasures of Egypt or the treasures of Washington. Nothing could be greater than to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ, in reality.

Esteeming! Counting the reproach of Christ “greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” That’s the third thing. That verb means “to look away.” It’s like you’re looking at this scene, but now you look away. And so you look away to the reward. And so Moses in the experiences of life, just as you and I do or should do, in the experiences of life, we look beyond the experience, we look away to the heavenly significance of what is happening in our lives. Looking away. This is the basis of his “esteeming” and his esteeming is the ground of his choosing.

So looking to the heavenly rewards led to the esteeming of the reproach of Christ “greater riches than the treasures in Egypt and that led to the choice “to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”

Now, when we think of riches, in Moses case, they were big riches, by human standards. Big riches! Pharaoh! Think of the riches of the pharaohs. Big riches in almost every way; money, business, whatever could be called riches, they had and Moses, evidently was destined to have. So this is a magnificent renunciation, far greater than the ones that you and I, of course, do make when we make our renunciation. When we think of the fact that what he is doing is turning away from all that was involved in being the royal son, who is soon to be the pharaoh, and deciding instead that he will pursue what the world calls “the foolishness of God,” this was a magnificent renunciation.

And, my Christian friend, you’re renunciation, of course, should be as real as Moses, and oh, how much more we should be renouncing the things of this world, when our choice is not so significant as Moses’ was. God, of course, enabled Moses to make this choice; and he will enable you to make that choice, too.

Robert Burns has a little poem that has a stanza in it that goes like this, “But pleasures are like poppies spread, you seize the flower, its bloom is shed. Or like the snow falls on the river, a moment white then melts forever.”

So the things that we think are great, the things that we occupy ourselves with we think are so great, the activities that we’re involved in, which make up so much of our day, those things are as Burns says, “like poppies spread, you seize the flower, its bloom is shed.” There’s nothing to them! Why is it that we become so concerned with it then that we occupy ourselves with the things of this life and this world, which have so little significance for the life that is life indeed?

Now, in the 27th verse, Moses, we are told, “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.”

Students of the text of the Epistle to the Hebrews debate whether this is the flight into Midian or which is the final leaving of the country of Egypt at the Exodus. I’m inclined to think that

it probably is the flight into Midian, that incident that I read in Exodus chapter 2, would be the incident that is involved. I know that in Exodus chapter 2, it says that he was fearful, because he had slain the Egyptian. But, at the same time, that was not why he left Egypt at that time.

We read here, “By faith he forsook Egypt.” That is, he understood what he was doing. He understood that he was leaving, that his life was going to be different. He had gone out and when the Egyptian was fighting with the Hebrew man, he had made his decision. He had identified himself with the Hebrew man, had identified himself as their leader. In fact, Stephen tells us that he thought that they would surely understand that he was destined by the Lord God, to lead them out of Egypt. So the faith that is referred to here is his faith that came to him through the divine message to him. “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.” For, remember, to leave as pharaoh’s son and heir would have produced tremendous wrath on the part of the Pharaoh.

So “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” If you’d like to take the other interpretation, then it’s a reference to the Exodus. But then, you do have a bit of a problem because in verse 27, you have reference to him fleeing at the time of the Exodus before verse 28, where reference is made to the keeping of the Passover. So if we keep the chronological order, then the reference is probably to the flight into Midian, where he was for forty years. Incidentally, don’t feel pity for Moses to be in the wilderness for forty years.

The last two weeks, I was in the Netherlands, giving lectures in a theological seminary, a very small seminary, that we go over and try to help out. I had six students. One was from Sierra Leone. It was a black lady. The first person, I think, I’ve ever met from Sierra Leone. Now, I’m patting myself on the back. I thought Sierra Leone was on the west side of Africa, but I wasn’t sure. So I hastily, when nobody was looking, looked at the map to be sure that I knew where Sierra Leone was. It’s just a little country on the west side of Africa. A very keen young lady and to have the opportunity to teach her theology and to realize that she’d be going back to Sierra Leone and I’d have a representative in Sierra Leone was rather thrilling that I had somebody from Zambia and then

a Scot, from Scotland, a man about forty years of age. He was making a change of life as an engineer. Decided that serving the Lord is much greater than being an engineer, so he's making his renunciation and he's a good student, too. I had an American over there, who was living in Belgium. And then, the most interesting of all, a Dutchman, about six feet six tall, at least six, and his testimony is absolutely remarkable. The sense of the Lord having changed and transformed his life is so obvious. And he's a man who actually has spent time in a padded cell. You would never, never in your life believe it.

Well, anyway, I was talking about the things that we sometimes have to do. So, I had to deliver twenty-seven lectures to them in two weeks, well, less than two weeks, about eleven days and then give them an exam. And when we got on the plane on Friday to come home, I was tired. I must admit, I was tired.

And the things, often, that we have to do are things that do give us a great deal of reason for being tired in life. Now, I was so interested in what I was saying, I forgot the point I was going to make and I know you are probably not interested in the point, so we'll pass on. [Laughter] No, I really, you think I've forgotten it. No, I haven't forgotten.

Forty years, Moses spent in the wilderness. You might think, my goodness, consigned to the wilderness for forty years. Don't feel pity for Moses. That's where Moses became the kind of servant of God that God wanted him to be. There he kept the flocks. Shepherds. The shepherds like David, like others, who were the servants of the Lord. You learned a lot by being a shepherd. But above all, you sat out there with the sheep and you thought and you reasoned and you reflected upon your life. And you looked at the stars at night and saw the beauties of God's creation and thought about the mighty creator responsible for it all, and all of the other experiences for forty years were experiences necessary to prepare this man for what he was to do in the last forty years of his life; lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Moses' life, as you know, is divided into three periods of forty years. He was forty years old when he slew the Egyptian. Forty years on the back side of the desert. Forty years in the critical facts of the history of his day.

Someone has said, “In the first forty years, we learn that God can do nothing with a man trying to be somebody. In the second forty, we learn that he can do nothing with a man trying to be nobody. In the last forty, we learn what God can do with a man who has learned the first two lessons.” I don't think that's really true. That isn't really true, at all. Moses wasn't trying to be somebody; he wasn't trying to be nobody out in the desert. And, it's true, of course, he had learned all the lessons when he became when he did become the leader of the children of Israel.

At any rate, he forsook Egypt, and that he did by faith. God spoke to him and took him out of Egypt. Now, we read, “Not fearing the wrath of the king; for.” This is why he didn't fear the wrath of the king. “For,” and also why he left, “For he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.”

Notice that. “He endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” What scientist looking at that statement would not smile? Seeing somebody who is invisible? Why, the very term invisible means they cannot be seen. But Moses we read, “Endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” This expression really means something like he kept on seeing the invisible one. This was the source of all of Moses' motivation to do the will of God.

Seeing him who is invisible. That is what you and I do, when we are in the will of God and in communion with him, we are thinking as we reflect upon him and all that he is doing for us, moment by moment, in our lives. We see him who is invisible. He was listening to an entirely different drumbeat from the others about him, and God, of course, so marvelously spoke to Moses, that Moses actually, finally, heard the voice of him who was invisible. For, at the burning bush, you'll remember, the words of the Son of God, probably, the Servant, the Angel of the Lord came to Moses. “Moses? Moses?” And he was given his call to do his great work in connection with the promises made to Abraham.

Now, the text goes on to say in verse 27, “He endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” And then, “By faith he instituted the Passover.” By faith? Well, God told him, did he not? God told him to institute the Passover. That’s what that expression means. But it is by faith that he instituted the Passover. Well, of course, to simply respond to the word of God is to exercise faith, isn’t it?

When we, for example, when the word of God says a certain thing and we by, in our weak way, seek to follow the word of God that is the exercise of faith. Now, what about Moses? Well, he exercised faith in that respect, too, but think of some other things. In Moses’ case, there were other reasons why he might be said to have exercised faith because I’m just going to propose some things to you that might have been a test to his faith.

God told him that this was what was going to happen. He was to slay the animal. He was to take the hyssop, to dip the hyssop in the blood of the lamb, and then he was to stripe the doorpost on the two sides and up above, and the children of Israel were to do that. And they were to be delivered from the slaughter of their firstborn son. Egyptians, on the other hand, were to lose their firstborn son.

Suppose I had been talking to Moses and with my usual case of unbelief, I were to say to Moses, “But suppose, Moses, the angel does not pass through? Suppose he does not pass through? Suppose the blood is ignored by the angel of the Lord? I can think of all kinds of things, you know, the kinds of things that we think up which make us ultimately unbelieving with reference to the word of God. All of the things that we can think might happen when God has plainly said certain things in his word. So I’m believing that when we read, “By faith he kept the Passover,” that more was involved in that than appears at the first. That is, that he simply carried out God’s directions. He simply carried them out, but he also believed that the destroying angel would come through and they’d better have the blood on the doorposts, if they were to survive. “By faith he instituted the Passover.” By faith, they also observed the Passover, “Lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.”



I have no doubt, too, that there were many who did not fully understand what was going to take place. Moses told them to do certain things and when they gathered and they said, “Moses has told us to do this, but doesn’t it seem strange to you? Doesn’t it seem strange to you that what we are to do is to slay a lamb? Take a piece of hyssop and dip it in the lamb’s blood and then sprinkle it on the doorposts of our houses? Isn’t that strange?” Of course it’s strange! It’s like the Gospel, the Gospel is strange too to the unbelieving man. But it is the Good News concerning the forgiveness of our sins.

Now, what then, if I may conclude, what then was Moses’ secret? Well, we read in verse 27, “He endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” What that really means is he kept on seeing the one who was invisible. He kept on, he persevered, seeing the one who is invisible. That expresses the mood of Moses’ life as the hours went by and the days went by. Moses had the faith that he had, because he knew God in the way that he did. And he knew that God’s hand stood for him.

You might imagine and, I think, this would have been real, too, it could be said, Moses had Egypt at his feet, being the son of the daughter of Pharaoh, and perhaps, the next Pharaoh. Everything was working out fine for him. I would imagine he would turn around and say, “Do I not have a good position or what?” To use the language that we use today. It was a magnificent position. Everything sounded good to Moses. Was his renunciation worth it? Can you not imagine someone like, well, let’s say Aaron. Aaron might have said to Moses, “Look, Moses, don’t you think it would be far more useful for the purposes of God if you become the Pharaoh? Just think what you could do, if you were the Pharaoh?”

Do you understand that? That’s the kind of argument we use today. You’ve become converted, and you’re in a liberal church and so how do you respond. Shall I leave the liberal church; go to the church where the Gospel is proclaimed, where the word of God is proclaimed, that I may grow in faith? No! Some of us say, now that I’m here, I’ll stay here, where the word of God is not proclaimed, where error is proclaimed, because from this position I can influence so many people.

That’s a sad kind of decision. Many Christians make that! Many Christians in the city of Dallas make it! I wish I had a quarter for every time I’ve heard a believing Christian make a statement like that.

When Scripture tells us to “forsake not the assembling of ourselves together with our brethren,” and our sisters? So I can just imagine all of the temptations that would have come to Moses. Just think of what influence you will have where you are? But the influence that Moses would have had, would have been the kind of influence that exposed him to all kinds of temptations that sinful men have very little strength to meet satisfactorily.

Now, I can imagine another person saying, “Now, Moses, you’re going to be identified with those despised Jews! That’s right, Jews!” That’s the way they are spoke of today! Hebrews! Identify with them? And not with the Egyptians? The learned, powerful, smooth, smart Egyptians? You going to be identified with the Jews? You’ve given away your life! Thrown away everything.

Many of the seminary students and at other Bible colleges as well, have had this experience. You can talk and their testimony’s often is similar to that. Their families have told them. “You’ve given away your life! You’ve given away what we have spent twenty years to do for you! To provide you with the kind of opportunity in this world, and you’re turning it away!”

I remember my father writing me a letter and saying, “If you go to Dallas Theological Seminary, I’m going to give up Christianity.” Well, I didn’t want him to give up Christianity. And he didn’t give up Christianity and God worked in his heart. And later on, a couple of years later, he was glad I came, because he was a Christian man.

But those are the kinds of decisions that all of us have to make. But now, let’s look at what really happened. Sure, he didn’t have the palace. And he didn’t have all of those camels, or whatever he would have had to ride around in the chariots or whatever like Ben-Hur. He wouldn’t have had all those things. But what did he have? Well, Scripture says, he spoke with God face to face. What would you rather do? Would you like to have Perot’s millions or speak to God face to face? Come on? How many of you would rather have Perot’s millions, billions? All right, Warren Buffett’s eight billion? Three times as much as Perot? How about that? No, you would rather speak with God face

to face. That’s worth more than all of that. Or, as God said, he spoke with Moses mouth to mouth. God says, in this very same chapter here in verse 38, with reference to these saints of God, “Of whom the world was not worthy.” He also speaks in the next chapter of “Just men made perfect.” Warren Buffett? I hope he’s a Christian man. Ross Perot? I hope he becomes a Christian man. But to be a “just man made perfect,” nothing could be greater than that. All the riches in the world could never measure up to that.

So this man Moses, the greatest man. Melvin Kyle once said, an archaeologist, well-known archeologist of the last generation, “He was the greatest man among mere men in the whole history of the world.” But Moses was not perfect. In fact, in Psalm 106 in verse 33, referring to the incident in which Moses spoke when he should have kept silent and obeyed, he says, the Psalmist says, with reference to him, in verse 33, “Because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he spoke rashly with his lips.” He spoke unadvisedly. He was not perfect but he was a man who would be perfect and made perfect now, in Heaven, by virtue of God’s marvelous grace.

One final thing, in our Lord Jesus Christ’s life. The time came when he stood on the mount of transfiguration, and whom does he hear, speaking there? Moses and Elijah. Speaking of his exodus, which he would accomplish, the cross at Calvary.

So Moses’ choice wasn’t so bad after all. In fact, it was a great choice. It’s one that he, throughout the ages of eternity, will thank God for moving him to make. And if you, by the grace of God, have made a similar choice, in your own small way, you, too, will think that God, in his marvelous grace, has been infinitely blessed toward you.

Moses’ choice was great, but it’s not the greatest. Paul’s choice was great, but not the greatest. The supreme renunciation is the renunciation of Philippians chapter 2, in verse 5 through 11. And I’ll just read these verses, and that will be the conclusion of the message. Philippians 2:5 through 11. Moses’ choice pales when we read about this choice but Moses’ choice was great.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, [not a son of the Pharaoh, but even greater]. Being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

May God help us in our own human experience to remember that the choices that we make are choices that do have eternal significance. And pray for me that I will make those choices positively, too.

Let's bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the word of God and for the light that it does throw upon our pathway, and for the young people and the middle-aged people who are in this audience, Lord, we pray for them. We ask that the choices that we all must make as fathers, as mothers, for our children, and the choices that they may make may be choices that are moved by the Holy Spirit of God, with the glory of Jesus Christ as the goal. Help us, Lord, to endure seeing Him who is invisible in faith submissive to Thy word.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.