

Moses Chose to Suffer Affliction
Hebrews 11:24-27,
Trinity Sunday XXI November 9, 2014

Beloved of the Lord.....We are taught in the sacred and Holy Scriptures given us by God above, that if we are believers in Christ, we are going to experience suffering in this world. Acts 14:22 says, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Psalm 34:19 says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous but the LORD delivereth him out of them all." Jesus also said in Matthew 10, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Not only does each believer have a cross to bear, but our cross leads to an eternal life above. And that is why the Apostle Paul said, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." In other words, its all worth it!

When a believer dies and their soul is carried by the angels into heaven, no one is disappointed when they look upon heaven for the first time. Rather there is a surge of joy, a mighty triumph which fills their hearts! In heaven they see Christ face to face, the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world. That is really the truest joy of heaven, simply to at long last be with the Good Shepherd....to finally be forever a child eternally safe and happy in His arms. What joy on earth can compare to that? In heaven not only will our eyes look upon Jesus for the first time, but for the first time we will see His eyes rest upon us. Through such His love will fill our soul. Knowing this....knowing all the glory which awaits, can't we say that whatever we suffer here IS CERTAINLY WORTH IT! "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Run your race with patience then dear Christian, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith.

We begin our lesson today looking at Moses.....

I. Moses chose affliction with the people of God, rather than the pleasures of sin. In the Holy Scriptures, Moses is one of those fine examples of a faithful believer. We see from our text this faithfulness came in part by way of his godly parents who hid the baby Moses for three months when he was a child. When Pharaoh sought to murder all the Hebrew baby boys, these parents feared God more than man. Imagine what it was like for the godly mother to let Moses float away in a basket down the river, yet God rewarded her faith. Moses was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter. By way of Meriam we also remember the mother of Moses was hired by Pharaoh's daughter to nurse her own son. This time of nursing was much longer in those days, and this early childhood was when she taught Moses the Word of God, the many promises God gave His people, the Hebrews. What is important to understand here is this early instruction of God's Word by the mother, was so great and firm a foundation that the Word and God's Spirit stayed with Moses all the years thereafter. In spite of his pagan education, Moses believed and trusted the promises of God to His people, the children of Israel.

This should be a comfort to Christian parents today if they diligently raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. God can prosper and bless their efforts and set a child upon the firm foundation upon Christ. Therefore do not give up in the good teaching and training of God's Word. It is written "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Also let no child resent the good efforts of Christian parents who diligently teach God's Word to them. Such parents are seeking to save the child's soul from Satan, death, and hell. So the Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

From Acts chapter seven we know Moses was learned and taught "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." In other words he didn't neglect his studies, but was diligent, even "mighty in words and in deeds" among Pharaoh and the Egyptians. All the riches of Egypt were well within his grasp. Yet the Bible says, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." This was a very public affair, a turning point in Moses' life. By words and then by deeds he would have no part of idolatrous Egypt. Loving Christ above all things, Moses chose to leave the comfortable life and instead suffer affliction with God's people. Imagine that!....he left everything for the sake of God's Kingdom, much like Abraham who left Ur. Moses moved to Goshen, and we assume shortly thereafter he defended the life of a fellow Hebrew, thus slaying the Egyptians. The rest, as they say, is history.

Of course this choice Moses made, was a choice he made BY FAITH alone. Throughout life each Christian must do the same, namely when we see the evil in our life, we must mark it and avoid it and separate ourselves from it, lest the evil seduce us away from Christ. When the evil is within us we separate from it by way of repentance. But when it is around us in the world, perhaps evil friends, or a pagan environment, then our feet must do the separating. Proverbs 4:26 says, "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." Psalm 37 says, "Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore." God's commandments do not give us life, but they do tell us the way we should go. Moses chose the right path. He chose to "suffer affliction with the people of God than [enjoying] the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

What is this reproach of Christ? It is the hatred and enmity of the world because you love Christ but they hate Him. Jesus spoke of the reproach of Christ in Luke six saying, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets." In today's world if you condemn the sins of fornication, adultery, drunkenness, or homosexuality, the world will hate you for it. If you say Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven, and we are saved only by believing in Him, they will hate you for that too. If you teach that all men should

repent of their sins and believe in Christ, this they also hate. The point is you cannot be a camouflage Christian, if you want to remain a Christian. Your faith will compel you to speak up on occasion. It will cause you to separate company also from the ungodly who wish to corrupt you. There are certain times where it is sinful for you to keep your mouth closed and say nothing just so you can hold on to your job or have an easier life. Do you love the world or do you love Christ? Are you for Christ or against Him? Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”

But let us look a bit more at the suffering Moses chose. Why is there suffering in the first place? If God loves us and Jesus has saved us from sin, why should we His children suffer at all? The simple answer is that God must keep our sinful flesh in check. It is true we are forgiven and God loves us, but God’s discipline keeps wandering sheep from going astray. Martin Luther puts it this way. “To be sure, all our sins are forgiven and covered; but they are not as yet driven out of us.” By way of affliction God thus works to purify us and make our faith grow, even though we may not see it. If God then did not afflict us we like sheep would go astray and never turn back. God thus on occasion strikes us with the rod to wake us out of our sins, or correct us, yet this does not come from His wrath, but from His grace and love. So it says in Psalm 103. “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.”

By no means should we resent God’s chastening, but rather we should be very thankful for them. Indeed if God didn’t chasten us we would despise His sacrifice and count His blood as useless, but by chastening we treasure His sacrifice and know His great love. By the gift of affliction, God is pruning back our sinful nature, which helps us to continually repent of our sins, and also trust only in God’s grace and mercy. The broken sinner is the one that seeks God’s forgiveness of sins, but proud sinners do not repent. Above all things when we are experiencing those difficult afflictions, let us remember Jesus still loves us very much, and this chastening is a sign of His love, not His wrath. Likewise God will never give us more than we can bear. It is also written, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. This means if you stick it out, or patiently bear it, for God is going to help you through this difficult days, and He will surely take you by the hand and lead you.

II. Moses endured all things because he kept his eyes on Christ..... “as seeing Him who is invisible”. That brings us to the final point for the day, namely the best way to endure and get through affliction, is to keep our eyes upon Christ. This is the very thing Moses did. Notice the Bible says, “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.” This means just before Moses left Pharaoh’s

house, Moses stood up to Pharaoh, much like David stood up to Goliath. Moses did not fear the king's wrath, turning his back and renouncing Pharaoh's pagan life. And Moses did such not out of spite, but love for Christ. Moses would follow Christ and not Pharaoh, even though it meant Moses would suffer many things in life.

So it is for you and I dear brethren today. We cannot follow kings or princes or men when it comes to our own salvation. We follow only one Man whose name is Jesus Christ, the very Savior of our soul. Faith then, true faith sees Christ and knows Christ who is also True God, not just Man. Even in the furnace of affliction, we follow Jesus "as seeing Him who is invisible." The eyes of faith alone can see Him. Unbelief cannot. We do not physically see Christ of course, but we know He's there by our side upon the plain. We are never alone in this battle against sin and temptation. But most importantly we see Christ in the Means of Grace, His Gospel Word which absolves us, His Baptism which washes us clean, and His body and blood, "given and shed for you for the remission of sins." This is a God who cannot fail us. He gives grace to help in time of need. Since all of God's wrath has been removed from us by Jesus, in its place there is only grace and mercy, a cup which overflows, a living fountain which never dies. When times are hard, and it feels as if all is failing, Jesus will never fail you, and He is closer to you in His word, than the very thoughts of your mind. "Be still, and know that I am God." "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you" "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil." Amen.

Now may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds and faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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