

Series: Purposeful	Reference: Hebrews 11:24-26	Title: Moses: Making Wise Choices	Date: 02.10.18
Website Writeup:			
<i>We're setting our minds on God's purpose for our lives in His mission, exploring the principle of missional decision-making & how to live in light of God's glorious mission. Moses bears witness that decisions made in faith, honor God!</i>			

Color changes in text indicate slide changes

Hebrews 11:24-26

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Moses, the great leader of the Hebrew people who brought them out of bondage in Egypt into the Promised Land & given the Law at Mt Sinai. The first 40 years of his life spent in Pharaoh's house (Acts 7:23) instructed in "all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (v 22). The next 40 years spent in Midian as a fugitive from Pharaoh (vv 23–30). His last 40 years devoted to leading the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land (Gn 12:1–3 & Dt 34:7).

One of the great figures in all history, a man who took a group of slaves, under difficult circumstances, and molded them into a nation which has influenced & altered the entire course of history. He even appears at the transfiguration of Jesus representing OT Law, alongside Elijah representing OT prophets (Mt 17:1–3). Even the nativity story of Jesus parallels the Mosaic story of infant deliverer rescued from evil earthly despot (Mt 2:13–18).¹

He was born to slave parents in Egypt under the rule of Pharaoh. At the time, Pharaoh, fearful of rising Hebrew numbers, ordered all Hebrew male children to be killed at birth. But Moses' mother hid him in the reeds of the river in a basket in hopes of saving him; where he was found by Pharaoh's daughter, who raised him as her own.

A child, growing up in an adoptive home. As a younger man, tormented internally & mocked by his own people. A man between two identities & with considerable insecurity. Later in life, when God called him to advocate before Pharaoh on behalf of the Hebrews, to let them go, he argued against God as to his own abilities. Although God promised his presence & words, showing Moses miraculous signs on the spot (the staff/snake, his leprous hand), Moses still argued to send someone else. *He said, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me & say, 'The Lord did not appear to you?'"* (Ex

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Moses," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1497.

4:1). Or, *“Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech & tongue.”* (Ex 4:10). And all this follows quickly on the heels of that divine meeting before the burning bush which wouldn't burnt up - which would've inspired confidence in me!

Do you know how frustrating that is to any leader, let alone God, to have someone you know *can* do the job say, “Oh please, no, I can't!” Especially after you've shown them how they can & promised all the backup support for them to do it? “Not me, please, send someone else!” “I didn't ask anyone else! I asked you for very good reason!” Sometimes faith has to be ground into someone. Pressed into us.

Moses didn't see himself for what God saw him to be, at least early on in his life. He never really says no to God, he was obedient despite his insecurity. And God was provisional. He gave Moses a ministry buddy. It says, *Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses & he said, “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. ¹⁵ You shall speak to him & put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak & will teach you what to do. ¹⁶ He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth & as if you were God to him. ¹⁷ But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it.”*

So God never let him off the hook & Moses never outrightly says ‘no’, so one decision led to another, building confidence & effectiveness into Moses' life which God still uses today.

Proverbs 14:12 reminds us, God's direction in our lives takes precedence, as it leads to life: *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”* Moses had the opportunity to deny his Hebrew background & live in power & luxury of Pharaoh's home - it would've just been as simple as a decision. Just look the other way, it was that easy. And it's these small seemingly insignificant decisions we make, born out of conviction & character, under the direction of God's Word & Spirit, which make all the difference to us & others in life.

If we follow our fears & insecurities, or the empty promises of pride & sins temptation, they all lead to death. Maybe not always physical death, but death in some way. If you choose pride, un-forgiveness & anger in a relationship, death comes to it. If you choose to follow a fleeting sexual urge outside marriage, it brings death to your marriage. If we choose laziness, or physical comfort over hard work, there's career & financial loss. If we choose to overindulge & treat our bodies badly in addictive ways, there's a death to our health & loss of vibrant life. If one chooses to ignore the urges of the Spirit in ministry to others, we miss out on the experience of joy, healing & new life. These are simply spiritual axioms, unavoidable in life.

God's direction is always the way to go. No matter what you are facing, don't let your mind defeat you from the beginning. Don't say to yourself, “I might as well give in, I'm gonna anyway later!” NO! Now's the moment of truth & victory. Making a decision in

the moment to be obedient to Jesus right now, is always the best decision. Put down the bacon double cheeseburger right now, don't worry how you will respond to the next one. Put down that vodka right now, don't worry about the next one. Say yes to Jesus now & pray for that person or share the Gospel, don't worry about the next time, this is the opportunity you're faced with now.

Moses could've taken the easy route in decision making, but didn't. And he learns outright obedience over time as he sees the hand of God move in one decision after the other - his faith is built up as his relationship with God deepens through simple obedience. Simply saying yes to God.

The decisions we make define us & have a profound impact on the lives of others. We make decisions every day. We say here at Six:Eight, 'Everything's spiritual'. All decisions, actions, thoughts, commitments, finances, our stuff - everything is spiritual. And some of our decisions relate to very important aspects of life & faith & bleed out into the lives & future of others.

We're setting our minds today on God's purpose for our lives in His mission (Mt 28:18-20 the Great Commission - His last command, our first concern). **We want to explore the principle of missional decision-making & how to live in light of God's glorious mission.**

This chapter in the book of Hebrews bears witness - **Decisions made in faith, honor God.** Prayerfully consider your own heart & context right now. Let's take a prayerful moment to call upon the Holy Spirit - ask him to tell you how important your life & decisions are to his Kingdom purposes (pray into a silent moment).

Here are some points to think on... (1) Moses was a game changer, a pivotal person in history. But Moses didn't live in a vacuum of influence from others. He was surrounded by people who also, in their obedient decisions, helped Moses to fulfill God's purpose. What if his parents had succumbed to fear of Pharaoh? What if they chose to abort their child in concern of their own safety? Hebrews 11:23 tells us, *²³ By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.*

Moses' parent's decision to obey God & protect him resulted in the short-term loss of their son to Pharaoh's daughter. They were living under the very real threat of death in protecting their baby. And they could've tried to keep hiding him, instead of releasing him to the protection of God. They could've been the helicopter parent, always protecting & never stepping into risk, keeping their child cocooned away from harm never seeing the sunlight of day or having opportunity for healthy growth. They could've denied their child was God's with which to deal. But they didn't.

Moms, can you imagine releasing your child into the water in a basket, trusting God would float him to the right person to care for him? NO! You can't, you won't even let someone touch your baby without hand sanitizer! People in Moses' life made strong

godly choices, living in faith risk, which furthered God's kingdom. And once Moses grew up (vs. 24) he chose to suffer along with God's people instead of living it up in the palace.

What are you afraid of? What holds you back from saying yes to God? What fear stands in the way of your fulfillment of God's desires? My daughter went to Uganda, it's spooky, but I know God'll do great things in her - if I inserted my fear, she wouldn't experience what God has in store. Kim & I are currently being approved to be transitional foster care parents for kids separated from their parents at the U.S. border - I'm 52! The kids don't speak English...and my Spanish...Solo se un poco! But it seems like God would have us try! Ministry's frightening. Think about it, praying healing over people! I can't control the Holy Spirit! I don't like it when I hear something strange & God says, "Say it Jason!" What if it's wrong, or I look like an idiot!? I carry traumatic burdens for some as I pastor & have to trust God will move in those stories. I sometimes have to say things which are very unpopular & culturally not okay! I'm less than adequate & painfully aware of it. No one is adequate, but Jesus himself! All we fear is fear itself.

(2) Life's circumstances may be somewhat unfair. Everyone wants to win the lottery. Everyone wants a break. None of us would normally say no to an opportunity which drops in our lap & seems to benefit us so greatly. Moses won the lottery, plucked out of the water by Pharaoh's daughter, dropped in the lap of luxury. It's like a baby left on the doorstep of Windsor Palace. He could've said, "Oh, God's blessing me right here." He could've look at it through the eyes of his own individual wants & desires, but didn't. He saw himself as a child of God - an influencing member of God's community. He acted not to his own interest, but to the interest of God & others.

Decisions determine the steps we take. Moses actions, in identifying with God's people, demonstrate he places the eternal above the temporal. Are you willing to forgo something which seems so tasty, comfortable, or satisfying for the sake of God's purpose in the world? Are you willing to suffer the arrows of accusation, ridicule, loss of opportunity, or worse, for the sake of the Gospel?

(3) The decision which made Moses to have to leave Egypt & the comfort of Pharaoh's care was to stand in the way of a Hebrew being beaten by an Egyptian guard. A decision which swiftly brought a death sentence on Moses from Pharaoh. He reckoned his sacrifice was worthy of the cause of justice in God's eyes. How valuable is the Gospel to us? How valuable are the things of God? What price would we be willing to pay in order that God's story would reach the nations & his purposes be complete? What are we willing to give up? It seems to me that this was simply a natural outpouring of who Moses was; we're starting to see his courage emerge for the things of God in him, although he's still a little whiney & wimpy.

(4) Following God's purpose means we'll need to discern which path to follow along the highways of life. Although issues of the past may have led to our present circumstances, we see that Moses' choice for God's purpose, illustrates we have a responsibility to apply our minds to wisdom now. We have opportunity & need to seek, not only the knowledge

of God, but also the experience of His leading in life as well - a process fraught with risk & mistake!

It's incongruent with the mature spiritual life to only know about God, but not seek his direction in all things we do. To profess Jesus in word, but not confess Jesus in lifestyle. To *do* church, but not *be* church. To say you *go to* church, instead of living *as* the church.

What does God want for all of us? He wants people deeply committed to the Gospel & one another, devoted to His purposes, living out of His will & direction, making decisions to follow him in all ways. People of holiness & spiritual depth committed to Truth, not just in word, but in deed. People not tripped up by arguments, but convinced of Jesus & all the church holds as Truth together in unity. People who disciple others, and who are deeply passionate about drawing all the others outside Jesus into Jesus! Closely into the life of Christ together along with them. People making godly decisions who realize everything is spiritual!

How do you apply this? Firstly, realize our faith decisions impact generations to come. Christians must have a long-term outlook & view obedience in that light, rather than seeing everything for short-term personal benefit. Secondly, the eternal trumps the temporal - choosing to follow in obedience will always be the best option.

Here are a few challenges...

Firstly, ask yourself, what have I inherited from those before me in terms of faith issues? (*friends, family, acquaintances, past church relationships*) Take a prayerful moment right now, ask the Holy Spirit to identify aspects of your journey which might be a hindrance to God using you in the future. Maybe it's family stuff? Maybe your family always looked at everything with a crooked eye? Maybe your family is filled with fear, unwilling to take faith risks? Maybe you had a trauma when you were a child, and your life whirlpools around that? Maybe your friend groups have never been ones to encourage faith, and actually mock it? Maybe you've lost your desire & need God to uncover it?

Secondly, what aspects of God's purpose requires your immediate attention & obedience? How's God been calling you deeper into obedience? Maybe you need to finally share the Gospel with that neighbor, co-worker, or friend? Did you know that 50% of the unchurched population is favorable to an invite to church from a Christian although they don't go to church? You may be making the mistake of assuming they're not open! Maybe you need to map out your neighborhood & begin to pray for your neighbors? Maybe you need to finally get into a community group because you realize you're at a church not just WITH community groups, but a church OF community groups! That growth happens much more strongly in the intimate atmosphere of a small group. Maybe you just need to show up to something, or begin to make coming to church a regular thing? How do you build muscle if you only go to the gym once or twice a month? Maybe you need to ask someone, can I pray for you right now? And do it!

Thirdly, is there anything in your life which needs to be 'refused' in order that God may work his greater purpose through you? Maybe it's a relationship of which you need to let go? An ungodly union between you & another person sexually, financially, or just emotionally? Maybe, it's something private you need to confess to a trusted brother or sister here, and have them pray over you & keep you accountable? You can never lose your relationship to God, but you can clog the pipes & diminish the flow of life. You can miss blessing & joy while living in bondage. What would God be asking you to put aside so that he might work more in your heart & through you for his purposes?

And finally, do you consider the reward ahead of us as sufficient motivation for adopting Christ's mindset as described in Philippians 2? Do you realize Joy & Suffering are twin sisters who live in the same house - you can't truly have one without the other? Are you willing to suffer, and risk to see the promises of God come to fruition in your life, church community & world?

Our decisions, made in faith, honor God...