The Decision of Moses

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(Illustration) A newly married couple decided how they would make their decisions. The man would make all the major decisions, and the woman would decide on the minor ones. After twenty years of marriage, somebody asked the man how their agreement had worked. "Can you believe it? For two decades now, I haven't made one major decision!"

Today I want to talk to you about choices. Choices will either positively or negatively influence our lives. They are made weekly and often daily.

Hebrews 11:24–28

Three hundred and twenty years had passed since Joseph summoned His father Jacob and his brothers into Egypt to preserve them from that terrible famine. Their population had multiplied from 70 to over a million, and there was nothing these people wanted more than to be free from Egypt.

When Joseph brought his family into Egypt, Pharaoh showed kindness to Israel, but the Pharaoh of Moses' day hated the Israelites and subjugated them to slavery. But something amazing happened during their mistreatment. Exodus 1:12 says, *"the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; [so much so that] . . . the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites."*

Since Pharaoh couldn't crush Israel with his cruelty, he employed an alternate solution to suppress them. He ordered the Hebrew midwives to murder every newborn male. But again, his plans were frustrated when the midwives ignored the king's edict.

That called for Plan Three, which commanded the Egyptians to drown all male infants in the Nile. That river of life became a sea of sorrow and death. It was the last place an Israeli mother would bring her son, yet it's the very location Moses' mother dispatched him.

At three months old, she took little Moses, placed him in a papyrus basket, and sent him sailing down the Nile. The writer of Hebrews uses two words to describe everything that was done here—the making of that little boat, the release of Moses, and his launching into the currents of the Nile. Hebrews says all this was done ***"by faith!"***

And just moments after Moses' parents had deposited him into the Nile, of all people, who approached to bathe in that water and find Moses, but Pharaoh's daughter! Surely not the monarchy! But here she comes, and with an entourage to witness her actions.

> She knew the king's command. What would she do? Would she throw out the baby... into the bath water? Folks, God's designs are marvelous. And this was nothing short of unrestrained providence unfolding!
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> When the princess approached, little Moses began crying, and the tears that later broke God's heart for Israel broke this princess's heart. And with tender, motherly instinct, she rescued Moses and claimed him as her own son.
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> But it doesn't end there. About that time, Miriam, probably about ten years old, bravely stepped forward. She said to the princess. "I know a nanny that could help raise that boy." (Pause) And a moment later, Moses' mother was called to the scene, where she reclaimed her son, and was then told she would be paid to raise him!

God's providence is amazing. Here was Pharaoh doing everything in his power to repress and exterminate Israel, yet God forced him to provide, lodge, and educate the very one who would create mayhem in Egypt and overturn all he was attempting to prevent.

Job 5:13 says that God *"catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the cunning are swept away."* Don't ever doubt God's providence. It's always a step ahead. Nobody can outsmart it, outthink it, overpower it, or unravel it. God is always in control!

(Transition) Before investigating Moses' momentous decision, let's first investigate the man. When you understand a man's character, you understand what motivates his decisions.

The Man that Made the Decision

Moses and Jesus are the only men of Scripture whose lives are choreographed from beginning to end. There's no question that Moses had flaws and made misjudgments, but by and large, Moses was faithful to God. The Old Testament records his name 750 times.

One of Scripture's most profound statements is in Deuteronomy 18:15. Moses said, *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him."* This Scripture has always fascinated me. Moses says Christ will be a prophet like him. As venerated as Moses is it almost seems irreverent to equate him with Christ. But there are several distinct qualities that Moses uniquely shared with Christ:

1. First, Christ and Moses were exceedingly humble. The Bible says Moses was the most humble man of his generation. Humility may not seem like much of an attribute, but to God it's a major qualification for walking in God's favor. God delights in a person of humility. He *"opposes the proud"* but gives grace, promotion, and blessing to the humble.

(Illustration) Back in the 80, the Atlanta Braves played a relatively unknown Latin American outfielder named Rafino Lanares. He was an average player who occasionally made spectacular plays. One evening, he made a play that amazed everyone in the stadium when an opposing batter crushed a sinking line drive into the outfield. Instinctively, he charged forward and, at the last instant, leaped out, with his body flying parallel with the ground, and grabbed the ball. The fans went wild! Of course, he was the star of the game, so he was interviewed before he could leave the stadium. The announcer said, "Rafino, that was an impossible catch you made! How in the world did you make it"? Here was the perfect chance for Rafinao to pontificate on his greatness, but that's not what he did. With broken English, this was his response: "I saw "d" ball leave "d" bat, so I run hard to catch it. At "d" last minute, I dive for ball, throw out my glove, and tumble to ground. After the play, I look in front of me, but see no ball. I look behind me and see no ball. I open my glove and say, "Rafino, you are one lucky guy!"

It's hard to dislike someone like that! Remember, in large part, our usefulness with God depends on our humility before Him. When we operate in pride—the antithesis of humility—we're insisting that our plans, opinions, and activities are superior to God's, and this is what harms us. Moses was usable because he was the meekest and most humble man of his generation.

2. Second, both Christ and Moses communicated with God in an unparalleled way. Exodus 33:11 reveals how God spoke to Moses: *"The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend."*

You remember how the Old Testament prophets and priests ascertained God's will. God spoke to the prophets through dreams and visions, and the priests would cast lots or use the Urim and Thummim. Gideon laid out a fleece to determine God's will. But God spoke to Moses in an altogether different way. He spoke to him conversationally—face-to-face.

3. Third, both Christ and Moses were unmatched in supernatural power. Deuteronomy 34:12 says: *"no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel."* Only Christ performed more miracles.

4. Fourth, both Christ and Moses gave us the world's greatest teaching. Moses gave us the Ten Commandments, which have affected every nation on this planet; and Christ—the Word made flesh—gave us the Sermon on the Mount.

When you consider everything about Moses, no one else, except Christ, exceeded him in the combined areas of character, miracles, revelation, and intercession. No other mere man influenced the world as much as Moses.

5. But there's one other thought about Moses I need to mention that helps us understand this decision I want to highlight. Consider Moses' upbringing.

As the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses was wealthy. He enjoyed every convenience Egypt offered and socialized constantly with the aristocracy for forty years.

Because Moses was raised in 'royalty,' he was schooled in Egypt's renowned educational system and tutored by the most brilliant professors.

When it came to food, Moses feasted on the world's finest delicacies. He ate at the king's table every day.

Interestingly, the historian Josephus writes that Pharaoh had no children besides his daughter, Thermuthis. Now think about that implication. Scholars have speculated that, by adoption, Moses could have succeeded his step-grandfather to the throne. But here is where Moses' incredible decision crystallizes:

> Hebrews 11:24 says: *"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter."* Can you believe that? His first decision of record was one of renunciation. He said, "Don't call me Pharaoh's grandson! I'm not part of the royal family!"

With one sweeping decision, Moses renounced sonship; renounced aristocracy; renounced wealth; and rejected access to Egypt's throne—**he *"refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*."**

That seems like an incredibly foolish decision. If he really wanted to mitigate Israel's burdens and liberate them, he should have seized the throne at Pharaoh's death and issued an *Emancipation Proclamation*. But he rejected that idea. With all Moses had going for him, why would he make a decision to renounce his connections with the monarchy? Isn't this why God used Thermuthis to rescue Moses from the Nile?

No, it wasn't! God didn't want Israel's release from Egypt to come by human forces. He wanted to display His glory to Israel in such a fashion that nobody could ever misunderstand the divine nature of Israel's deliverance. God wanted to show the world that He could split the sea, rain down manna, open a river, and provide for two million people traveling through the wilderness, all apart from human means. God had no need for a man connected to the throne to deliver Israel; He needed a man connected to the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we are quick to exercise the world's tactics to achieve our purposes, but it's never God's plan. The plan always falls short. But when we operate by the power of the Spirit and the principles of the Word, we will get what God can produce. I'd rather use the power of Heaven than the power of Egypt any day!

(Transition) Let me show you what type of weapons God wants used to achieve His purposes. He wants you to use weapons that **don't materially exist** to accomplish His designs.

Make Use of the "Are not" Weapons

This is exactly what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:27: *"He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that **are not**—to nullify the things that are."*

Did you hear that? Paul says God gives us weapons that *"**are not—[weapons that don't materially exist]** to nullify the things that are."* What on Earth does Paul mean when he says God gives us these ***"are not"*** weapons to accomplish His purposes? What constitutes this weaponry? These ***"are not"*** weapons involve the arms of faith, praise, the spoken Word of God, the name of Jesus, and the Blood of Jesus that God wants you to use bring victory!

The most powerful weapon you have in your arsenal is ***the weapon of faith in God!*** Hebrews 11:24 says: *"**By faith** . . . Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."* He used that weapon because he knew it wouldn't fail him. He could renounce sonship with Pharaoh because his faith in God was greater than all the resources and forces of Egypt.

Moses's Decision Was Based On Faith Toward God

Do you know what God wants us to understand when we make decisions? He wants us to thoroughly understand Romans 8:31, which says: *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* We may face conflict every step of the way. We may experience loss and setbacks, but God will never let us down! The faithful Father will sustain us, the abiding Son will defend us, the omnipotent Spirit will empower us, and the heavenly hosts will fight for us. *"If God is for us, who can be against us"?*

(Example) Let me illustrate what Paul meant when he said, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* At some point in life, most people have dealt with a bully. A bully is someone bigger and stronger than you who gets away with intimidation and harassment. He makes you feel helpless! But if you've ever been bullied, you might have found relief when someone befriended you who was bigger and stronger than you. And when that happened, it didn't matter how weak you were in the bully's presence; all that mattered was how strong your defender was. That describes our big brother, Jesus Christ. Our elder brother has never been defeated in a fight! He's never finished second. *"If God is for us, who can be against us"?* The answer to that question is: the loser is against you! This is why Moses renounced his sonship to Pharaoh; his faith was in Almighty God.

(Transition) But then, Moses made this courageous decision for another reason. He renounced Pharaoh and Egypt's treasures because he knew the value of what awaited him in eternity. He knew Heaven, not Egypt, would yield his greatest reward.

Moses' Decision Was Deliberated With Respect To Eternity

Listen to Hebrews 11:26. Moses *"regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because* ***he was looking ahead to his reward."***

(Definition) Note that word, ***look***. In the Hebrew language, it's a combination of two words. It merges a word that means to "look away from," with a word that means to "look toward." Thus, it means that Moses looked away from Pharaoh's kinship and kingship. He looked away from Egypt's affluence and power. And he gazed toward something of far greater reward—heaven. Egypt's treasures are real, but they are temporal—you have to enjoy them right now. That's why Jesus said, *"What does it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul?"*

There are three criteria worldly people employ to make most of their decisions. One, What's in it for me?; two, What's in it for me?; and three, What's in it for me? Here's the major distinction between spiritual and unspiritual choices—*the fear of God!* Spiritual people understand that God is not only their loving Redeemer; He is their impartial Judge, and that means He will hold us accountable!

You and I should keep something in mind at all times with every decision we make. It's this: *When we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, how will we give account for our decisions?* We will be held accountable!

The spiritual person doesn't make determinations based on, What's in it for me? Spiritual people make determinations based on, What is God's will? How will this affect me in light of eternity? And like Moses, we need to know when to make decisions of renunciation:

> We need to know when to reject a shady offer to make a quick buck and accept our profits the old-fashioned way.
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> We need to know when to bear Christ's reproach rather than running with the wrong crowd.
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> Sometimes it's God's plan for us to be in the Bronx and not the Bahamas.
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> Sometimes it's the projects, not the tropics.
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> Sometimes it's the Sahara, not the Riviera.

Just remember, God will always reward you for complying with His will. You may not fully receive your reward in this life, but this world isn't the primary place we're rewarded. Heaven is where the real payoff is! Jesus said in Matthew 9:29, *"Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life."*

Conclusion

There are people here today who have decisions to make. Some are minor, while others are of the magnitude that will affect the remainder of your life. My prayer for you today is that you will make the right choice.

I want to ask everyone here to make one great decision today. That is, you will agree to be Christ's disciple.

> That decision means you're submitting all your choices to the will and glory of God.
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> It means that, as much as God requires of you, you will disconnect from Egypt and fully connect to God.
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> It means you'll serve God when it's uncomfortable, unfashionable, and whatever the cost.

This decision means when the world spins away from God, you'll still face Him.

Discipleship costs! It *may* cost your ambitions, it *could* cost your standard of living, but it will *definitely* cost your place in eternity. Just remember, Heaven is where your greatest payoff is.