



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

September 20, 2015

Jump Start # 1409

Hebrews 11:25 *“choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”*

Our verse today, taken from the great Hebrews 11 chapter, God's Hall of Fame, is about Moses. There are seven verses dedicated to Moses in this chapter. His section could be summarized as a life of choices. It began when his parents chose to ignore the edict of Pharaoh and chose to hide baby Moses. When he grew, Moses chose not to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to endure the ill-treatment, as our verse says, with the people of God rather than enjoy the fun that sin brings. He chose to leave Egypt as God directed. He chose to keep the Passover. He chose to trust God. A life of choices.

We live every day with choices. It starts with whether we will roll out of bed or hit the snooze button. What to wear, what to eat, what emails to read, what to pray about, what to gather up to take with us. All that even before we leave the house. Choices. Little ones. Big ones. The choice to say, "I do," is huge. The choice of careers. The choice of a college major. The choice of where to worship. Those are all big decisions and none of them ought to be made quickly nor without a lot of thought and prayer.

Our verse specifically identifies a choice of Moses. He chose ill-treatment with God's people over the pleasure of those who are not God's people. Israel or Egypt? Right or wrong? Burdens or comfort? Desert or palaces? Moses made a choice not based upon comfort, self or what was easy. He included God in his choice. His decision reflected God. Moses was going with God's people. He'd rather live in a tent in a desert with God's people, than to dwell in a palace with the Egyptians.

Our passage uses a wonderful expression, "the passing pleasures of sin." That needs some consideration on our part.

First, sin is pleasurable. If it wasn't, then we'd have no problem with it. Because it's pleasurable, it's tempting. Wrong is tempting, not because it's wrong, but because it has an appeal to it. I am not tempted to stick a fork into a light socket. I know what will happen. I know that the experience will not be pleasurable. We tend to put off and avoid what is not pleasurable. I hate returning things to the store. I put it off as long as I can. Sin is not that way. Sin is fascinating. Sin grabs our attention. Sin catches our eye. It looks good. It must be good. There is a pleasure in sin. Most return to the same sin because they enjoyed the experience the last time. That's the way sin works.

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Second, the pleasure of sin doesn't last. It's passing. Moses knew that. God knows that. Most of us, don't know that. We think that sin is the greatest event on the earth. We run head long into it. But the pleasure it gives, just doesn't satisfy. It doesn't last. It's not eternal. It's not a one and done situation. So we return. We want more. Sin, that way, becomes addictive. Drugs are that way. The high from pot doesn't last. More pot. Stronger pot. In time, pot just doesn't do it any more. Now comes the hard stuff. Porn is the same way. It's pictures at first. Then, videos. Then, the real thing. The pleasure passes. It doesn't satisfy very long. Cheating is this way. Dishonesty is this way. Lying is this way. Most sins create a craving that just cannot be satisfied. More is always needed.

What Moses sought was the eternal. He wanted a hope that doesn't drop off nor change as the days change. He wanted something that was real, not inflated. He wanted something that would satisfy. He wanted God.

Moses turned down the passing pleasures of sin. Moses turned down Egypt. Fine food. Nice comforts. Palace. People. Servants. Few rules. Do as you please. No limits. No one to say "No." Everything is in and nothing is out. Unlimited wealth, unlimited opportunities, it was the Devil's playground and the sinners delight. That living and that lifestyle only feeds selfishness. Pride follows. Arrogance is next. Indifference to others becomes a natural conclusion. Most of us have heard of the Pharaoh's. Many have heard of King Tut. But other than Tut, most couldn't name a Pharaoh, and most couldn't name a general, counselor, or daughter of Pharaoh. Gone to history. Wealth wasted. Nothing lasting came from it. No good. No eternal impressions. But we know Moses. We know Joshua. We know Caleb. We know the Judges. We know David. We know Daniel. We know the prophets. We know Rahab. We know Esther. We know Nehemiah. The list is long of God's people who walked by faith. Forgotten? Not by God. Remembered, recorded and rewarded are those faithful ones.

I wonder if the "passing pleasures of sin," was more than a historical choice of Moses. I wonder if those words were used as a road marker to help us see how vain, how shallow, and how empty sin is. It doesn't live up to all that it claims. It doesn't do what Satan wants us to believe that it does. While the pleasures of sin pass, the effects and the consequences do not. The damage of sin can devastate a family for generations. A family member in jail. A drunk in the family. A parent that quit God and now the kids may never know God. Certainly, the pleasures of sin are passing, but the effects can last a long, long time.

My good friend Don has said in sermons, Sin will take you farther than you wanted to go, sin will keep you longer than you wanted to stay and sin will cost you more than you wanted to pay. This is especially true when we consider Romans 6 where it tells us that the wages of sin is death. There is a high cost to low living. Payday is coming and many are not going to be excited to know that.

Moses, along with Abraham, Noah and several other of those heroes from Hebrews 11, had an uncanny ability to see beyond the present. They could look into the eternal. Their faith led them to making the right choices. They were truly led by faith and not their impulses, not the norm of their times, and not by others. They made their choices. Not popular. Not what most would pick. But all these years later, we see, we know that they did right.

Do you think that we could do the same? Are we so gullible to the pleasure side of sin that we do not see the consequences of sin? Could we turn down the passing pleasures? Do we turn down the passing pleasures?

Our choices affect us. Our choices affect others. Our choices influence those who come after us.

Pass on the passing pleasures...Choose God!

Roger Shouse