Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Things Faith Accepts and Rejects, Part 2
Scripture: Hebrews 11:26-29
Code: 1633

If you have your Bible turn to the 11th chapter of Hebrews...and I was just sitting there editing my sermon (laughter). So four pages went by (laughter) and you didn't even have to listen. How about that?

We're coming in our study, continuing along to the 11th chapter of Hebrews as we're getting close to the end of this most wonderful book. But this chapter is certainly a great climax. And through the 11th chapter of Hebrews we have been studying the great heroes of faith. Tonight is really part two of the message which we began last week on the person of Moses which really begins in verse 23 and goes through verse 29.

Now, we have seen all the different dimensions and characteristics and facets and features and so forth of faith and we come to Moses and we have titled this section The Decisions of Faith, or The Things Which Faith Accepts and Rejects. Faith is very decisive, and as we saw last time, life is made up of decisions. From the time that you awake in the morning, you begin a process of making decisions. We hit it a little bit this morning at kind of a key area there when we talked about the filling of the Spirit as opposed to the quenching of the Spirit. At every juncture of your life you are either fulfilling the will of the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit, or you are fulfilling your own will and quenching the Spirit. And so you go through life making the decision to be filled or to quench the Spirit. You go through your life deciding for the will of God or against it. And as we said this morning, when you're spiritually mature, there's no more decision because both of the wills always agree. That's real maturity.

So as we come to Moses, we are kind of zeroing in on the decisions that faith makes. When somebody really believes God...and that's all faith is...when somebody really trusts in God and believes that God honest and truly has his best interest at heart, then he will, on the basis of that trust, make certain decisions. And those decisions become the decisions that really govern his temporal existence and his eternal existence as well.

Now, the writer of the book of Hebrews has presented, for ten chapters, the new covenant. And he's presented it to people tied to the old covenant, namely the Hebrews. And he has tried to show them that they can leave Judaism, they can leave the old covenant and they can come all the way to Jesus Christ. And then he introduces the concept of faith at the end of the 10th chapter by saying, now the only way you'll ever apprehend the new covenant is by faith. And that isn't anything new because

your own prophet Habakkuk said "the just shall live"...what?..."by faith." So having introduced the fact that the only way they will ever be able to get a grip on the new covenant in Christ... which brings a man into God's presence and forgives his sin and give him eternal life...the only way you'll ever be able to hold of that covenant is by faith. Having said that, he then moves into a lengthy discussion on what faith is. You say, well, I mean, they're religious people; don't they know what faith is? No, they have been so long boxed into a legalistic, ritualistic, ceremonial system that they need a long discussion of what faith is. And so he begins with Abel and talks about the life of faith. And then he goes to Enoch and talks about the walk of faith and then he goes to Noah and talks about the work of faith. And so it is, he progresses all the way through. Abraham and the pattern of faith and then he goes to Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and talks about how faith faces death or the victory of faith. And then he takes it a step further with Moses and talks about the decisions of faith. And it's very important, friends, to realize that he uses Old Testament characters because, you see, he wants to establish in the mind of these Jews that the concept of apprehending God by faith is not some new heresy; it's old stuff. And all these Old Testament heroes lived on the basis of faith. It's a sad thing to realize when you look at human history; the generations of men throughout all of history have tried to reach God by everything but faith. They've tried to reach God by their own self-effort, by their own works, by legalistic, codified systems, which they themselves have invented, by very complicated ceremonial systems, by certain kind of strange rituals. All of these things men have used in an attempt to reach God and they never succeed because you reach God only on the basis of simple belief. That's all God asks is that you believe Him. That's all He wants. He does the work Himself. When Jesus died on the cross and said tai telesti, "It is finished," that's exactly what He meant. And then when we apprehend salvation, it's only on the basis of His work and our faith. And even our faith is part of His work.

Now, having based, then, the discussion of chapter 11 on the concept of faith, he moves to Moses and we see what faith accepts and what it rejects. Now, last time...let me review for a moment. Last time we said...we started, really, to give you the things that faith rejects. In making these most important decisions, faith has to say no to some things. If you really believe God, you say no to certain things. Now, Moses illustrated for us first of all that faith rejects the world's prestige and that we saw in verse 24...just a quick review. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years..." How old was he?...40 years. "...refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Now, when he hit 40, he hit a crisis. At that juncture in his life he had to make a decision. Either he locked in to palace life, signed up for the duration to be part of the system with all the riches and all the stuff that went with it, or else he turned his back on it, went back to Israel who were living in slavery in Egypt and became the leader that God had told him He wanted him to be. He had to make a decision. Now, faith, which really believes God, chooses right. So faith rejects the world's prestige for the place of God. And so he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, which was the highest thing in the land and which made him a prince in Egypt's court. And Egypt was the greatest power in that part of the world and so he turned his back on a lot. He rejected the world's prestige. We covered that last week in detail. Secondly, true faith rejected the world's pleasure. Verse 25: "Choosing rather to suffer

affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Now, nobody will ever make me believe sin isn't fun. Sin is lots of fun for a season, but it bites and it stings when the season is over. Sin is fun for a little while. There's a passage I read you in Luke 12:19-20. Listen to it. "And I will say to my soul, Soul..." They say it's all right to talk to yourself as long as you don't answer back. "...thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." Sounds all right...existentialism. "But God said unto him, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided." Oh, it's been fun having all of this, but the night's coming. Your soul is gonna be required of you, you fool. Sure, sin is fun for a little while. And Moses chose to reject the pleasures of Egypt that would have been his had he remained in the royal palace, to suffer affliction with the people of God. You say, why did he do that? Because God told him to do it and he believed God. Whenever a man believes God, that man avoids sin. And we talked about it last week. Remember, we said that the shield of faith is what quenches the fiery darts of Satan. As long as you put up faith, Satan can't hit you. Faith says, I'm sorry, God said no and I'm going His way. Or faith says, God says this is my direction; I'm going God's way. Whenever you sin, whom have you believed? You believed the devil's lie. You know better than that, don't you? You know he's always a liar, been a liar from the very beginning, only goes around seeking whom he may devour, only wants to chew you up, only wants to ruin your life, and yet every once in awhile, daily, you do what he do what he tells you to do, which isn't too smart. But you have a bent that way known as depravity. But when you believe God, that means sin has no place. And so even though the whole world system looked pretty alluring from Moses' vantage point, he said no to it and chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. You know it's interesting to me that when a Christian makes this kind of choice to pull out from the world _____ we talked about the fact that having to make a commitment to Christ which means it infringes a little bit on some of the worldly things that you'd like to do, you begin to realize after awhile that that stuff didn't matter much at all. And I'll tell you something, the more that you fall in love with Jesus Christ and the more that you set apart your life unto the things of God, the less and less and less that stuff means anything to you. When your faith begins to decide for God long enough, it becomes a pattern of joy and you don't really want to forsake that joy to choose the old trails. So the system held no allurement for Moses. He was willing to do what God wanted him to do rather than what he wanted to do even though it meant a sacrifice of the pleasures of sin. And you know, when you do that, the world never understands. The system thinks that, you know, we've lost our marbles somewhere along the way. And why do we want to go to church all the time and carry around big Bibles and sing real weird songs and put our money in those plates that go around and do all of that stuff. Why do we want to restrict ourselves from all the things that are fun and so forth and so on? The world never does understand the system. And it's kind of tragic. And they never are expected to understand it until they come to meet the Christ who makes it all joyous.

In I Peter 4:3 it says "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles..." In other words, the system...before we were saved, we did whatever the system was doing. Right? Whatever the system did, we did. Whatever the world was selling we bought. It's the

only store we had to shop in. "...we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine..." Lasciviousness is the most gross kind of immoral indecency that shocks decency, just no restraints at all. "...lusts, excesses of wine, revellings, carousings" which has to do with drinking parties...potos [this is the only Greek translation of word for drinking and carousing I could find] is the term..."and abominable idolatries." We used to do all that stuff. Now watch what happens. We don't do it anymore. Verse 4: "In which they think it strange that you run not with them." Isn't that right? The world doesn't understand why we don't go that way any more. But you see, God sets a new path and by faith we go His way. Every once in a while we reject faith in God and we go the other way and it only hurts. But if you live long enough in God's path going the way God wants you to go, you find out the joy is there. And once you've had a taste of the joy that only Jesus Christ can give and the joy that only God can place in your heart, it's not really worth giving up for any of the junk the world's got to offer. So Moses made a conscious choice to suffer affliction and he knew it was affliction. And believe me, people, when you identify with Jesus Christ and you hit the world head on, you're gonna have to face the flak. Now, we've talked about this in the book of Acts. When you confront the world you're going to get some resistance aren't you? "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer"...what?..."persecution." And so you make a conscious commitment of your life, I'm going God's way and I'm gonna restrict some of the pleasures that are fun for awhile, but I'm gonna do what God wants that in the long run, my life can really count for Him, see. Oh, you have to give up a few little piddly sins here and there but after all, they aren't worth having anyway. And a man never really gave up anything for Jesus Christ. Everything that you ever could possibly yield will be replaced a million fold by those things so much more valuable. And so we saw that Moses was willing to reject, by faith, the world's pleasures.

Thirdly, and let's pick it up tonight at this point. His faith rejected the world's plenty...the world's plenty. The world's prestige, the world's pleasure and the world's plenty. And, you know, he had plenty. There's no question about it. I mean, this guy was living in the palace. He was loaded with anything and everything he wanted. The world had a lot to offer him, but you know something, the true man of faith doesn't want anything the world can offer. Listen to this. James 4:4, "You adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" Then this most heavy statement: "Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world"...hang onto your hat..."is the enemy of God." Now, that's pretty strong stuff. I didn't say that; James said it. "Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." You know, the world offers a lot of stuff and if you want to live your life to gain the world's plenty, you're going to find yourself butting up against God.

Look at verse 26. Here's Moses: By faith Moses "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Look at that. He was willing to turn his back on the treasures of Egypt, the world's plenty, for the reproach of Christ. I like the word "esteemed" in the Greek because it literally means "he judged." And it's a word that is not a quick decision. It's the word that is a judicial word. This is no rash conclusion. Moses laid it out, carefully considered it, finally came to the conclusion, better to be reproached and to count even that reproach riches, than to have every

treasure that Egypt has to offer. That was a calculated decision. Now, there's an interesting footnote at this point. "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season because he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches..." Now, let's just pull that phrase, "the reproach of Christ." You say, when Moses lived Christ wasn't even born yet. The term "Christ" means Messiah...esteeming the reproach of Messiah greater riches. The word "Messiah" means God's anointed one. You say, what's he talking about? Well, first of all this: At that time in the history of Israel, who was God's anointed deliverer?...Moses. So it is possible to begin with that he's referring to himself and that it shouldn't even be translated in the sense of capital "C," Christ, but christos [this is the only Greek translation of the word for Christ that I could find], which is just a New Testament form of an old word referring to Messiah, the Anointed One, and what he's really saying is he was willing to suffer reproach as the deliverer...as God's deliverer. But beyond that, and I think, perhaps closer to the truth, although that is true in itself, is the fact that Moses was, in fact, a picture of Jesus Christ, wasn't he. So there's a sense in which Moses stands in the place of Christ in type. He is a prefigure of Christ. Beyond that, even, I actually believe that Moses bore the very reproach of Messiah before Messiah came. The world has always rejected Messiah since He came, and the world was never much different before He came. The world has always been against God and against God's deliverers. And so the reproach of Messiah, as it has existed after Christ, so in a very real spiritual sense existed before Christ. For example, David says in Psalms 69:9, "The reproaches of those who reproached Thee fell on me." Now, I've been teaching you through the book of Acts that when people persecute you, who are they really getting at?...Jesus Christ. When people are angry with you for your proclamation of faith or when they're uptight about what it is that you're saying about the gospel, they're really not after you at all; they're after Christ. That's what Paul meant when he said, "I bare in my body the marks of"...whom?...Jesus Christ. People keep beating me up for Christ's sake. And in a very real sense, on the other side of the cross, people who believed God and walked in God's path and obeyed God got the flak from society that was really directed at God and at God's anointed. Even a more mystical but beautiful thought is the fact that the Messiah has always, always been identified with his people, hasn't He? So in a very real sense, when Israel suffered, Messiah suffered. When Moses suffered, Messiah suffered. In all their affliction, He was afflicted. And incidentally, friends, the same reproach is born by us. Look at Hebrews 13:13. It says, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him outside the camp"...watch it, 13th verse... "bearing"...what?..."His reproach." You see, everybody who's ever lined with God by faith, living for God, turned their back on the world's plenty and gone the way of God's direction has received the reproach that was really castigated against God and His anointed. It belongs to all who suffer for God's sake. The church bears the reproach of Christ. In Acts, chapter 5, verse 41 it says this most beautiful statement. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame"...watch these three words..."for His name." On either side of the cross, the world has been angry with God and His anointed. Paul suffered it...II Corinthians 12:10. And I believe that every believer who confronts the world is gonna suffer the reproach of Christ. I Peter 4:14: "I you be reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you." Moses took his stand with God and with God's

anointed and he rejected the treasures of Egypt.

Now, go back to verse 26 and let's pick it up there. "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Now, Egypt was loaded. It was rich. The discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen has produced some of the greatest treasures ever discovered in ancient Egypt. And we know now that Egypt was extremely wealthy. And Moses, at this point, because of who he was in Pharaoh's court had all of the wealth that the world could possibly offer and he rejected every bit of it because he had faith in God's greater and more forever riches.

He probably knew what we know, "My God shall supply"...what?..."all your needs"...what?..."according to His riches." Remember what I taught you about "according to?"...not out of, but according to. God doesn't supply out of His riches; He supplies according to His riches. What I mean by that is this: If you have a rich man, he's got a million dollars. You say to the rich man, I need some money. I'm destitute. I want to go over here and do this, take care of my own needs and I want to start a work for God and I want to begin a mission, etc., whatever. And the guy says, my, I want to give you out of my riches, and writes you a check for $12. You say, you gave me out of your riches, not according to. If the same guy who wrote you a check for $100,000, you'd say, you gave me according to your riches. And when Jesus gives, He doesn't give out of, He gives...what?...according to. And so it is that we have everything according to His riches. Psalms 37:16 is a great verse. It says "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked." And Paul, the apostle, in writing to Timothy, warned against riches in chapter 6 in verse 6. "But godliness with contentment is great gain." You want to be really rich? Be content. Be content. "But we brought nothing into the world and it's certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare." Now it's not a sin to be rich; it's a sin to want to be rich. Get that? It's not a sin to be rich. If you work hard and do your very best and use every possible faculty God has granted to you and your goal is to glorify God in everything you do and you get rich along the way, praise the Lord. If you set your goal to get rich and you strive to get rich, you've got the wrong motives. "For the love of money is the root of all evil." It doesn't say money is the root of all evil and you can not have any of it and love it an awful lot. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness..." You want to set your goal somewhere, set it there. Say my goal for my life is to be holy and then if along the way God makes you rich, oh, how wonderful. And if God keeps you poor, oh, how wonderful and who cares anyway? He'll supply your needs. I've told the Lord a lot of times, if you give me a million dollars, I'll give it Grace Church and He never does (laughter). It's not riches of the world that mean anything; it's to pursue holiness. What did Jesus say? "Seek ye first"...what?..."the kingdom of God and His righteousness"...and what'll happen?..."all these things will be added unto you." You see, it's not a question of how much you have; it's a question of what is it you really want in your life. Attitude and motive is the thing in the Christian life.

Portia, a beautiful lady of wealth, is the heroin of Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. I don't know if you've ever seen Merchant of Venice, but this woman Portia is the heroine. And there were many suitors of noble birth and they wanted, of course, to marry her. But it had been decreed that her marriage would be determined by a particular little format. She would belong to the one who chose the right little container and she had three little containers. The winning container had her portrait in it. There was a gold container and on the gold container it said this: "Who chooseth me shall get what many men desire" and it contained a skull. Then a silver container bore the words, "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves" and it contained a fool's head. And then there was a lead container and it said, "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath" and in it was her picture. And the men came and went on the first two boxes. And finally Bassanio picked the lead one and they got married. And that's exactly how it is, I think, in the Christian life. It's being willing to forsake and hazard all you have. That's the choice God wants you to make. Moses made it, Paul made it, myriad others said "who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath" and willingly did it.

You say, well, when Moses did that back in Hebrews...when Moses did that did he crucify all of his dreams. Did he wipe out all of his hopes? No. Look at the end of the same verse, 26. "For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." What does that mean? That means he had his heart set on an eternal reward. What he was doing was choosing between getting it all here or getting it there. You remember how Jesus repeatedly kept saying to the Jewish people, "they have their reward," "they have their reward," "they have their reward." They sought it of men; they got it of men. And you "lay not for yourselves treasures"...where?..."on earth." Moses "had respect for the recompense of reward." His heart was set on eternal things. You see, faith knows that. Faith knows that nothing is lost that is worldly, that if you lay up treasure for yourself in Heaven, that's all retained forever. And so though his name was dropped off the balance sheets of Egypt; it was written on an eternal, unlimited bank account in Heaven and that's a lot better...a lot better. Paul said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Romans 8:17 he said, "...we're joint heirs with Jesus Christ." And so, you see, faith doesn't want the world's prestige and it doesn't care about the world's pleasure and it doesn't even care about the world's plenty.

Another thing faith rejects...good...verse 27...this is a powerful point. It rejects the world's pressure...the world's pressure. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king. For he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." Now apparently, Pharaoh got uptight about Moses leaving. And that would have put a tremendous pressure on Moses, but it didn't get to him. He did not fear "the wrath of the king." He didn't let the pressure get to him. And believe me, Christians, Satan will try to pressure you into conforming to the system. Do you know that? Of course you do. Satan will use all kinds of things like the pressure of friends who will say to you, What's the matter with you, man? Why aren't you getting in with it? What is all this weird stuff? Why don't you do what we do? And somebody'll say to you, Well, you know, the only way you can really stay close to those people...and you'll justify it in your mind and you'll try to rationalize it and determine that, well, we

better hang in there and do what they do in order to stay there so we can witness. And you'll get pressure at your job to do dishonest things, small little lies or just fooling around with the balance sheet a little bit or cheating on your income tax. And the pressure will come in from all different angles. And Satan will pressure you and pressure you to conform you to the world. But as Phillip's translation says in Romans 12:2, "Don't get squeezed into the world's mold." That's what Satan wants to do.

Now, Moses didn't get pressured. You say, what were his pressures? Number one, the comfort of the palace. How would you like to turn in the palace for living with the slaves and what finally happened to him...herding sheep in Midian?...running around the desert with a bunch of bleating sheep. You say, well, it was probably just a little while. Forty years of bleating sheep. What else was the pressure?...the pressure of pleasure. I mean, he had a happy-go-lucky kind of deal. He was really winging it in the palace. That was a pressure, the pressure of riches, the pressure of honor. He was somebody. He was fast gonna become nobody even with Israel. They rejected him when he arrived to be their leader. And then, perhaps the pressure of debt. I'm sure, back in his mind, he realized that he owed something to Pharaoh's daughter for giving him the break that he got that led him to where he was. And maybe he felt pressure there. But he had pressure. But there's a greater pressure than all of this and it's indicated in verse 27. It's simply this. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." The greatest pressure, I think, that Christians face in many, many cases is the pressure of a little word...f-e-a-r...fear. The reason that most Christians are like the Arctic River, frozen over at the mouth, (laughter), and don't readily communicate their faith is because they're afraid. They're afraid of losing their popularity. They're afraid of this, this, this, this and the other thing. They're afraid of somebody castigating them, of being an outcast, of not being accepted, of offending somebody. And that's all an ego fear. Moses didn't fear. He abandoned Egypt...kataleipo [this is the Greek translation of the word that I could find]. And what it really means is, he made a heart renunciation. It's not just a physical moving away; it's a heart renunciation. It's kind of like Matthew's...it says in the Bible that Matthew forsook all and followed Jesus. I think it's Luke, chapter 5. And so it's a literally turning his life around and going toward God. Moses just chucked Egypt as a system, as a way of life. Satan uses fear to neutralize people, but he didn't neutralize Moses. Proverbs 29:5, "The fear of man bringeth"...what?..."a snare." And, you know, it worked on Abraham. Old Abraham got scared and told a lie about Sarah. And it worked on Isaac. He was in the great heritage of his father. He got scared and told a lie about his wife, calling her his sister. Jacob was afraid and he was fleeing from Laban. Aaron was afraid and he yielded to the people and they made a golden calf. Israel was afraid and fearing to attempt the conquest of Canaan. And they sent all those people in there and they got the grasshopper complex. And they came running out and they said, Oh, we'll never be able to handle that. They're big giants in there and we're like grasshoppers. That's the grasshopper complex (laughter). Gideon's army was afraid and 20,000 of them got disqualified...dishonorable discharge. David was afraid and he ran from Absalom. The disciples were afraid in the storm at the sea. Peter was afraid and he denied Jesus. And you and I have been afraid and we've done just about all there is to do to deny Christ in fear,

haven't we? Well, maybe you haven't stood up and rejected Christ verbally, but at least you haven't said anything that could possibly connect you with Him in times when you were pressured. And so fear is a real pressure and so many Christians melt and become as water...like the threat of the loss of popularity or social status, afraid people are gonna cut them off, look down on them, call them fanatics, persecute them or whatever. And so the devil uses fear. But it didn't work with Moses.

Let's go back to look at Exodus, chapter 5 for just a moment or two. In Exodus, chapter 5 you'll see how the devil attempted to pressure Moses. And boy, he was bold. And the pressure didn't work. He didn't fear the king. I don't care what the king did or what the king said; he didn't fear him. It's a great lesson of faith. Faith, believe me, people, doesn't fold under the world's pressure. Why? Moses, it says, didn't fold because he saw him who is...what?...invisible. In other words, he knew he had an invisible means of support. He knew that no matter what happened, whatever he faced, he would be held up. He would be strong. And when you flake out on an opportunity to confront people about Jesus Christ it's because you're afraid. And you're afraid because you really don't trust the power of...whom?...of God. If you trusted the power of God, is there anything to be afraid of? That is so ridiculous. If you really believed God, you'd have nothing to be afraid of, so if you're afraid, you've stopped believing God, you've forfeited faith. Faith would say, I'll believe God and reject the world's pressure, but the Christian says, I don't know if I can believe God at this point. I'll just kind of fade. That's the wrong decision. All right, chapter 5, "Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Let My people go.'" Now, that's pretty bold stuff. He didn't worry about this guy. This was just Pharaoh, the chief ruler in all the world. "And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.' And they said, 'The God of the Hebrews hath met with us. Let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the desert and sacrifice unto the Lord, our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.'" Now, he says, Pharaoh, here's what I want to do. I want to take all the children of Israel out of here for a three-day rest...just a nice little deal out in the desert there. Do you mind? Verse 4: "And the king of Egypt said unto them, 'Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, loose the people from their works? Get you unto your burdens.'" Who's gonna carry on the brick-making? We can't have that. A halt in the production at this point would be disastrous. We've got to crank these pyramids out (laughter). So he says, no, you can't even get three days off with your gang. And, of course, he knew in the back of his mind...you can imagine letting a million Israelites go out in the desert and fat chance of ever getting them back. And Pharaoh was a little bit mad at this point. So in verse 6 it says, "Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people and their officers saying, 'You shall no more give the people straw to make bricks as heretofore. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the number of the bricks which they did make heretofore, you shall lay upon them. You shall not diminish anything thereof, for they are idle, therefore they cry saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'" He said, apparently they don't have enough work to do and they're getting all uptight on this religious thing. So in order to make sure they got enough to occupy their time, make them produce the same amount of bricks but make them hunt their own straw. Verse 9: "Let there more work be laid upon the men that they may labor therein and let them not

regard vain words." Don't stand around talking. This guy's a real slave driver. Well, verse 10. "The taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and spoke to the people saying, 'Thus saith Pharoah, I will not give you straw. Go ye, get you straw where you can find it, and yet not any of your work shall be diminished.' So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw." They picked up what they could. Incidentally, the straw itself is not so much a binding agent, but the chemical decay in the clay releases an acid. It's like a glutamic acid if you know what that is. And it gives a greater plasticity to the clay to make it into bricks. That's the footnote...three for nothing. But anyway, they needed the straw to bring about that kind of plasticity in forming the bricks. Well, this kind of pressure could really have scared Moses off. Because, you see, Moses was vying, at this point, to be the leader of Israel. And here he came back and he started unloading these orders on Pharaoh and the more he said, the worse it got for Israel. That's a pretty precarious place for the leader to be in, right. I mean, if you're gonna lead the people, you want them to believe in you, and every time Moses opens his mouth, it gets worse for us, see. But he wasn't afraid. He wasn't afraid of his people. He wasn't afraid of the king. He believed God and he spoke what God told him to say. Verse 13: "The taskmasters hasted them saying, 'Fulfill your works, your daily tasks, as when there as straw.' The officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded. 'Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today as heretofore?'" The process got slowed down so they beat the leaders of the Jews that they had elevated to be foremen. "Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, 'Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants and they say to us, Make brick. And, behold, they servants are beaten, but the fault is in thine own people.' But he said, 'Ye are idle, ye are idle. Therefore, ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.'" You want to go out and worship. You don't have enough work to do. "'Go therefore now, and work for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the number of bricks.' And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not diminish anything from your bricks of your daily task. And they met with Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh. And they said unto them, 'The Lord look upon you and judge because ye have made us offensive in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.'" Moses, you're messing up everything. "And Moses returned unto the Lord and said, 'Lord,'...I think that was his tone of voice (laughter)...'Wherefore hast thou so badly treated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me?'" What are You trying to do to me, Lord? "For since I came to Pharoah to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people, neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all." You see, he has a little pressure there. It was tough, but he continued to believe God. And if you start in chapter 6 and just keep going right on through, he did what God said. He kept going back and saying, "Let my people go," "Let my people go," and the plagues started and one after the other, the river of blood, the frogs, the dust and the gnats, the flies, the death of domestic animals, the ashes, dust, boils, hail and fire, locusts, darkness, finally, the death of the firstborn. And all through this Pharaoh was mad, Pharaoh was angry and Moses never feared him for a moment. You say, how come he didn't fear

Pharaoh? Because he saw One who was invisible, One infinitely more powerful than Pharaoh. Moses was the kind of man he was because he chose to focus his sights on God rather than on some petty puny little monarch, banging around in Egypt. Believe me, people, when we are afraid of the world, when we are afraid of what people will say, we are exposing ourselves to condemnation for a gross lack of faith. Who is our God? You really believe that He can do it? Men of faith have always believed God and not worried about men. Well, Moses was like that and he endured as seeing One who is invisible. That's what faith rejects. It rejects the world's prestige, pleasure, plenty and pressure.

Quickly, and this is simple because we've already covered it by contrast. What does faith accept? What does it accept? First of all, it accepts the Lord's plans...the Lord's plans. Go back to verse 23. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents"... remember Amram and Jochebed, their names..."because they saw he was a"...it says here..."a beautiful child, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Here's the same kind of rejection of the world's pressure. They, too, weren't afraid. Now, you remember that Pharaoh had put out a decree that all male Hebrew babies were to be killed. And if a family didn't do that, they would be susceptible to execution themselves. That didn't bother Amram and Jochebed. They just took little old Moses for three months and stashed him somewhere in the house. They hid him. You say, well, weren't they afraid that the soldiers would find him and that they'd all lose their lives, their whole family? No, it says they never feared Pharaoh. They believed God. And the Lord's plan was regarding this little child. Now, the word "beautiful"...here's the key, I want you to get this...it is "goodly" in Exodus 2:2 and it is translated "exceedingly fair" in Acts 7 where Stephen's preaching and he says the baby was exceedingly fair. The literal Greek...listen to this...asteios to theos [this is the only Greek translation of the word for God that I could find], means this..."fair unto God." The child was fair unto God. What does that mean? It means that God had especially set His affection on this child. It doesn't mean that they hid him just because he was a good-looking kid. They're a lot of nice little babies. Everybody's baby is beautiful to everybody. And there wasn't any specific problem there. They were told by God...I believe this without a shadow of a doubt because they did it by faith and faith is always in something that God has said. And so they had been told by God, this child is fair unto Me. He is set apart for specific service. And they knew to hide the child. Now, they could have sacrificed the infant and kept their own skin. They were willing to gamble, as it were, from the world's viewpoint, with their own lives to do what God said. It was no gamble at all because God always keeps His promise. And so without fearing, they took the child, as God had told them to do, and kept the child in the house for three months. Now, it's not easy to hide a three-month-old baby. That thing gets noisy. You know that. And it may have been, finally, he got such good lungs that they had to stick him in the boat and put him in the river. That may have become the pressure. We don't know. But God must have told them about the destiny of this child, that he was fair unto Him. And so, by faith, trusting that God would preserve them and the life of little Moses, they hid him in the house three months. You remember the story? They finally put him in the little basket, put him in the river, shoved him on down the river and little old Miriam must have run down the beach all the way as the little thing floated

down. And Pharaoh's daughter came down to take a bath and she found the little basket and in it was Moses. And when Miriam just happened to be around at the time she said, You wouldn't know a Hebrew woman who could keep the child for a few years, would you? Miriam said, I just have one that I'm well aware of. (Laughter) Didn't tell her but it happens to be his mother. Scooped the little guy up and back to Jochebed. Now, you see, it took a lot of faith to keep that little child. It took a lot of faith to put the little child in the water and watch it go, but you see what God did? God honored their faith by bringing the little baby right back and giving her the privilege and the joy of nursing and loving and cherishing and raising and teaching the baby Moses. And she was the one who formed him into what he was. She was the one who taught him the Messianic hope, the promise of Abraham. She was the one who taught him everything that became fulfilled in his life as he led Israel. Now, you know something? It took a tremendous amount of faith to go out on the limb like that and to believe God, to hide the baby and shoot it down the river like that. It took a lot of faith, but she obeyed God's plan even though it seemed bizarre and like it could never work. But don't you see how important it was that Moses not only be accepted by Israel, but by Egypt, to make him into the man God wanted him to be. God has a plan, beloved, and His plan always works right if you obey it. And you don't need to try to help Him to reorganize it. Sarah tried to help God with a plan and the whole people known as the Arabs were produced from it and a thorn in the flesh of Israel ever since. Don't try to help God. Let Him work His plans and you just obey. It's like me taking a felt tipped pen and going over to try to fix up the Mona Lisa a little bit (laughter). I don't want to...that's a masterpiece. You don't need to offer God any of your service to assist His plans. One thing is needful in the Christian life, beloved. It's a word we say over and over again. It's simply the word "obey." Right? He makes the plans; we walk in them. And so the parents of Moses illustrate the life of faith accepts God's plan. Doesn't matter what it is; you accept it...you accept it. And they weren't afraid. They believed God.

True faith, secondly, accepts the Lord's provision...not only the Lord's plan, but the Lord's provision. Look at verse 28. _____ back to Moses. "Through faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." Remember the last tenth plague? God said, Now what's gonna happen here is all the firstborn of animals and people are gonna die. I'm gonna come through the land with the angel of death and every firstborn in the land is gonna die. Now, you know, a lot of people would hear that and say, oh, sure. That's going a little too far. Now, that could never happen. That's just far out. Moses believed it. God said, but there's going to be a provision for you if you'll kill a lamb and He gave them all the instructions about the lamb. Take the blood, put it on the doorposts and on the little crosspiece on the top. Put the blood there, the angel will come by, he'll see the blood and he'll pass by. You know who put the blood up there?...the people who believed God. Right? And dear ones, that became a beautiful picture of the blood of Jesus Christ, didn't it? The judgment of God sweeps over civilization and it passes by all those who are covered with the blood of Jesus Christ. You see, Moses believed God for God's provision. It seemed a screwy thing to do. It seemed a strange thing to do at that point in their life. But God said to do it and they did it. Faith always accepts God's provision. Moses didn't say, God, I've got a

terrific idea if you want to add something onto that. How about if we all run around the block three or four times, God?...be good. Or do four or five good deeds? Terrific! Hey, God, how about if we get all out in a vacant lot and have a whole lot of holy rigmarole or something? I've got some terrific ideas, God. We could really...we could have a real great thing out of this. God made a provision and Moses didn't add anything to it; he did it. God has made a provision for souls of men. It's the blood of Jesus Christ. Don't add anything to it; just accept it. And when, by faith, you receive Jesus Christ, you've applied the blood of Christ. And that's why the Bible says there is no condemnation to them who are...what?...in Christ, Romans 8:1. So faith accepts God's provision. You see, that's the difference between faith and works. Works tries to work up its own provision. Faith just says, God did it; I believe it. Faith always accepts God's provision as well as God's plan.

Thirdly, and last, faith accepts God's promise. I love this. Verse 29: "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians, attempting to do, were"...what?..."drowned." Now, you remember how that happened? That sea just rolled up on both sides, hundreds and hundreds of feet deep, okay. And they get down to the shore and they say, all right, we're going through. And somebody says, oh, yeah (laughter). Who says it's gonna stay? Who says that thing's gonna stay up there? Can you imagine? That took faith. And Moses said, God said it's going to stay. God said it's gonna stay (laughter). Well, could you put it in writing, God? (Laughter) Could you flash it across the sky, you know? I mean, could you, like _____ could You just do something to prove it? No, no. God said to Moses, just reach out over there and the sea will part and it rolled back. And they were afraid. And they really didn't have any choice. God often prompts your faith and He prompted their faith by the Egyptian army (laughter), you see. I mean, they were standing on the edge of the thing, but the Egyptians were coming down hot and heavy across the mountains. And it was either stay and get massacred or move on by faith (laughter). They were full of fear and they saw the water and Moses...you know what Moses said?..."stand still and see"...what?..."the salvation of the Lord." And that sea rolled up. And they didn't stick around too long. They took off. You see what faith does? Faith takes God at His word and is victorious. Presumption drowns. The Egyptians presumed and they drowned. Listen, if you're waiting for a ferryboat to live the Christian life, it'll never come. If you're waiting for calm water, it'll never come. You're going to have to walk through with it all piled up on both sides and believe God that it'll stay there cause the Christian life is a matter of believing God's promise. God says, I'll hold up everything for you to pass through in this world. Do you believe that? Do you believe anything can fall on the Christian to drown him? I don't believe. That's the choice of faith. It believes God's plans, God's provision, God's promise. And it rejects whatever the world has to offer. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You again tonight that we've been able to see what it is that You have laid out for us in terms of patterns for faith. Oh, Lord, we pray that we might truly be people of faith, that we might really believe You, that we might go through, even though it looks difficult, even though, naturally, we can't make it, that we may trust You to hold up the waters that would crush us until we pass through. Oh, God, how graphic an illustration we see of those who, by faith, went through and then those who

presumed and were drowned. God, we're glad You're on our side because we put our faith in Christ. Help us as Christians to reject the world's prestige, the world's pleasure, the world's plenty and the world's pressure and to accept Your plan, whatever it is, how strange it may seem, Your complete and perfect provision, and Your wonderful promise that You'll keep us and that You'll keep us safe till we enter into that Promised Land with You. Father, may we make the right choice.

While your heads are bowed and we close our service, if the Spirit of God has spoken in your heart tonight and you really want to make the right choice tonight, why don't you choose Christ. You say, well, how do I do it? Believe. I hope we've gotten that across. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He died for you? Do you believe He's God's only provision for sin? If you believe it in your heart, that's all God asks. And in that moment of faith, God comes into your life and changes you, forgives your sin, makes you a new creation. Oh, if you've never come to Jesus Christ in faith, believe Him tonight. You say, well, I don't know how strong my faith is. Well, just remember the man who said, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. You bring whatever faith you've got and God will meet you at that point. Others of you who are Christians and haven't been living by faith, you've been fooling around with the world's prestige and pleasure and plenty and you've been succumbing to the world's pressure. Maybe you haven't really even accepted God's plans. You've been trying to arrange your own. You haven't believed God to step out in faith. Like Dick said tonight, he believed God wanted him to go to school, he dropped everything, stepped out on faith and God met every need. Tonight's the night that you, as a Christian, ought to come before the Lord in a prayer of real commitment.

Father, as we close by singing a final hymn, we ask that it might not be final, but that it might be the birth of new things in our lives. That in some, it might be the birth of the life of faith, in others, that they might really begin to walk by faith and make the choices that faith makes. In Christ's Name. Amen.

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