

***Hebrews 11:24-28 By faith 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.***

Surely you've seen them, those optical illusions that look right one way but look completely differently from another perspective? If they're well done, those optical illusions leave you trying to choose which perspective is reality.

In our text for today, we see with Moses through the eyes of faith. Only, as we look, we find that we're not always dealing with reality. As we consider this, please join me in prayer.

Dear Christian Friends,

Reality is often times harsh and often times hard to deal with. And so, if given a choice, most of us would rather not deal with reality. The thing is, you know how people are, the things they say about those not dealing with reality or those who have their own version of reality.

But few have had a wackier reality than Moses. Just to recap a bit, consider that Moses should have had his life ended at birth. The Pharaoh in Egypt had ordered that all the Hebrew baby boys be thrown into the Nile. His parents felt differently, perhaps even recognizing his future. Moses ended up in a basket instead, in the Nile, only to be picked out by the daughter of that same murderous Pharaoh. He went on to a life of luxury and education in the palace of the most powerful nation on earth. Yet, mindful of his birth, his heritage, and his Lord, we're told that Moses ***when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.***<sup>25</sup> ***He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.***<sup>26</sup> ***He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt.***

Most people would have asked if Moses was dealing with reality. I mean come on, give up the ease and pleasures of palace life to join the Hebrew slaves? Moses, look at what you're doing. You're not seeing the reality of this situation!

And that would be right. Moses was not seeing reality. He was seeing something else. ***He was looking ahead to his reward. He persevered because he saw him who is invisible.*** And so ***By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.***<sup>25</sup> ***He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.***<sup>26</sup> ***He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt.***

What an inspiration, right? Moses, the greatest of the prophets, leader of God's people, defender of the faith, so upright as to choose disgrace and hardship rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for even a short time. I mean, is there a clearer vista of faith in action?

But Moses didn't always see so clearly through eyes of faith. At the age of 40, Moses had been pushed to the point of taking matters into his own hands. Coming to the rescue of a fellow Hebrew slave, he killed an Egyptian slave master. Fixing his eyes on the harsh reality of execution for the murder, he fled. Rather than plead for forgiveness and trust the Lord's plans for his life, he feared for his life and hid in the wilderness of Midian. It took a burning bush and the angel of the Lord to refocus his eyes of faith some 40 years later.

As we consider Moses today, I ask you, what reality clouds your eyes of faith? So often, we have such poor vision that all we see is the harsh reality directly in front of us. We see piling bills, piling health problems and piling lists of things to do. We see deteriorating relationships, dissatisfaction with the world and even disappointment with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Like Moses, at that moment, it is easy to see the harsh reality of

sin and its consequences and the choice is easy - we choose to see the reality and not ***him who is invisible***.

But my friends, we can't run away to Midian. We can't escape the harsh reality that sin brings with it. For it brings with it, death of the body, despair of the heart, and eternal destruction of the soul. How's that for reality?

Only here's the thing, when it comes to sinners like you and me, God doesn't see reality, either. No, if God chose to see the reality of our situation, the best we could hope for is that God would destroy us quickly. Instead he nailed his own Son to a cross for you, for me, for all the world to see. Jesus willingly sacrificed his own life for yours – his innocent eyes never wavering to temptation, his innocent eyes never losing focus on his work of redemption, allowing his innocent eyes to be dimmed in death.

Can you see beyond the critics, beyond the skeptics, beyond the agnostics who would have you see a good man and nothing more? Can you see beyond your own excuses and guilt to his supreme sacrifice? Can you see beyond the lifeless body to the empty tomb and a loving gaze that invites you to see for yourself the reward of faith?

A blind squirrel may get lucky once in a while, but God knows how blind we truly are. He knows that we cannot see beyond this world and our own sinful natures. He knows that we “cannot by our own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called [us] by the gospel, enlightened us with his gifts, and now sanctifies and keeps in the one true faith.” (from Luther's explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed) The same faith that gave Moses the power to choose to serve the Lord. The same faith, the same confidence of the heart, that sees beyond the worries that are piling up, to God's powerful Word that bores through it all, to a peace beyond understanding. The same faith that brings us to the Lord's table for restoration and

renewal. The same faith that fills you with the confidence that God has and will continue to bless you with faithfulness regardless of what reality has placed in your line of sight.

And my dear fellow believers, there's no fine print on the chart that God does not want us to see. There are no expensive lenses we must purchase. There is no surgical knife we must undergo, no laser needed to cut away the build-up. The crystal clear sight of faith is a gift of God and it is yours in Christ Jesus. The strength to ***choose this day whom you will serve***, the Confidence to say with the disciples – ***You***, my Savior, ***have the words of eternal life***, the focus to ***fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen*** – all of it - is ours through Jesus Christ. Fix your eyes, not on what is seen, but on ***him who is invisible***. ***For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal***.

Moses was a changed man after he fled. He lost sight of his shield and reward. But the Lord called to Moses – the flaming glory of the Lord raising Moses from the ashes of his life to lead his people to the Promised Land. Yes, ***By faith he refused*** to see only the reality and by faith ***chose [to look] ahead to his reward***.<sup>27</sup> ***By faith he kept the Passover, By Faith he left Egypt*** leading God's people – 2 million strong, ***By faith he persevered***. Oh, just like the rest of us, Moses certainly had his faults. We know that he disqualified himself from entering the Promised Land by focusing the Israelites on himself rather than on the Lord. Yet like us, he too, stood in God's grace. Consider this: at the time of Moses' death, at the age of 120, we're told that ***“his eyes were not weak.”*** (Dt. 34:7) May our eyes of faith never grow weak, as we, by faith, look past the harsh reality of sin, to the eternal reward of God's eternal grace. Amen.