

Faithfully Refuse and Choose

Steve Murphy

May 28, 2017

First Baptist Church of Lexington

- Introduction

- In my recent personal studies of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, I ran across a passage that reminded of how the late Pastor Don Davis of Trinity Baptist Church in Cayce would always begin his sermons. A wonderful man who personified our church's mission statement "Loving and Living for God". Here's the passage...

Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. - Nehemiah 8:5

- So, will you please turn in your bibles to Hebrews 11:24-26 and stand with me in honor of the reading of God's word?

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. - Hebrews 11:24-26

- During the past 4 1/2 years I've had the privilege to serve our young adults in the college and career ministry. These guys have a ton of questions and choices in front of them. It is by far one of the most critical decision making times in anyone's lifetime. Think for a moment some of the choices that many of you made during your late teens and twenties. Every decision had or has it's pros and cons, rights and wrongs, highs and lows, and surely consequences (sometimes good and sometimes not so good). With every choice there is an opportunity for faith. A chance to be closer to God or to withdraw from Him. Look at the relationship of our decisions made in faith and not based upon these two passages.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. - Hebrews 11:6

But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. - Romans 14:23

- So let's define a few things before we get to far along
 - What is faith?

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1

- A pastor friend defines faith this way. "Faith is believing in what God has already deemed true."
- I like to think of faith like this. "Faith is choosing to believe with absolute certainty that you will arrive at the intersection of God's promise, purpose, provision, protection, and most of all His person." Because God is the Great "I am", He exists in all times and in all places.

"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" - John 8:58

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. Psalms 139:7-8

- Therefore, there is a divine appointment with an infinitely holy and righteous God who is waiting for you to arrive at the place where He has always been. Whether that is 10 seconds from now or 65 years.
 - Let me be very clear, God has, is currently, and will continue to intersect with you throughout your lifetime. The consequences of faithful choosing and refusing will underscore how these divine appointments play out. Especially, the last appointment when you see Him at judgment.
- Looking closer at our focal passage, Moses in verse 24 made a refusal and in verse 25 a choice, both of which were faithful decisions.

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. - *Hebrews 11:24-26*

- Refuse in the Greek here is “to deny” for oneself, to reject, to refuse something offered. He was offered Egyptian royalty with all its rights and riches.
- Chose in the Greek here is “to take for oneself”.
- I’ve heard it said, “to choose is to ‘turn toward’ while to refuse is to ‘turn aside’”

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. - 2 Corinthians 5:17 NASB

- Faithful refusing and choosing is said best by our King Jesus.

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. - Luke 9:23 NASB

- Oftentimes when we think about faith, it’s in the context of big decisions, big risks, and big circumstances. The reality is that faithfully refusing our old sin nature and choosing our new Christ-centeredness is necessary on a moment by moment basis. And, it’s no easy feat. What a tremendous act of faith to refuse himself the pleasures of the palace!
- Let’s look at some opportunities to faithfully choose and refuse.
 - #1 – Faithfully choose to see the **invisible** – because it is **eternal**

6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight-- - 2 Corinthians 5:6-7 NASB

while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. - 2 Corinthians 4:18 NASB

But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. - Romans 8:25 NASB

- #2 – Faithfully refuse the **world** – because it is **passing**

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS"; - 1 Corinthians 3:19 NASB

in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. - 2 Corinthians 4:4 NASB

*17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.
- Ephesians 4:17-19 NASB*

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. - James 4:4 NASB

The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

- 1 John 2:17 NASB

- #3 – Faithfully choose to **love** – because it's **paramount**

8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. - 1 Peter 4:8 NASB

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. ... 13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13 NASB

5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

- 1 Timothy 1:5 NASB

- #4 – Faithfully choose to **repent** – because it's **life** or **death**
-

32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live." - Ezekiel 18:32 NASB

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." - Matthew 4:17 NASB

- 3 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. - Luke 13:3 NASB

19 "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; - Acts 3:19 NASB

19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. - Revelation 3:19 NASB

- #5 – Faithfully choose to **believe** and **confess** – because it's **salvation**
-

8 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"--that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." - Romans 10:8-13 NASB

- #6 – Faithfully choose to **follow** – because it's **relational**

Bulletin and Slides

Scheri,

I have put the primary scripture for each opportunity, except #6. While I may adjust passages for each point over the next day or so, I think having these references/passage are pretty fixed and will be used.

All bold underlines represent fill-ins on bulletin.

Thanks,

Steve

Today, we're in Hebrews 11:24-26 to discover opportunities to be faithful in our decision making process. Moses was faithful to refuse and choose according to God's plan and purpose even when it didn't make sense. Our faith, like Moses', is required anytime God calls us to see the invisible, hear the inaudible, attempt the improbable, believe the impossible, know the unknowable, and follow the unpredictable.

Six opportunities to be faithful

#1 – Faithfully choose to see the invisible – because it is eternal

2 Corinthians 4:18

#2 – Faithfully refuse the world – because it is passing

1 John 2:17

#3 – Faithfully choose to love – because it is paramount

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13

#4 – Faithfully choose to repent – because it is life

Ezekiel 18:32

#5 – Faithfully choose to believe and confess – because it is salvation

Romans 10:8-13

#6 – Faithfully choose to follow – because it is relational