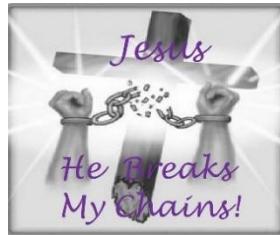


Free from the Pleasure of Sin



Set Free

Hebrews 11:23-26

Let's stand together and open our bibles to Hebrews chapter 11. We're in a sermon series this July called free in Christ. We began this month thinking about being an American citizen, and so thankful for the freedom that we have as a citizen of the United States of America, but we're trying to make the spiritual application to this truth: we are citizens of the kingdom of Heaven and God has brought to us true freedom in Christ. The first Sunday we talked about how we are free from the penalty of sin. Then we skipped a Sunday because of Vacation Bible School and talked about the evidence of having the Holy Spirit inside of us, which is the fruit of the Spirit. Then last Sunday, we went back to the series and talked about not only being free from the penalty of sin, but being free from the power of sin. I think I told you last Sunday morning that today we would talk about being free from the presence of sin, but can I be truthful? That sermon just didn't come together, and I need a little more study time on that sermon because it will talk about what will happen at the second coming of Christ when we receive a glorified body just like that of Jesus Christ. Is that going to be cool, or is that going to be cool? We had another thought this week, and that was we are not only free from the penalty of sin, and not only free from the power of sin, but we actually also free from the pleasures of sin. So if you'll allow me to change the subject this morning, we're going to talk about being free in Christ from the pleasure of sin. Open to Hebrews

chapter 11 as we look at the great hall of faith chapter. Listen to what the Bible says beginning in verse 23-26.

Scripture

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward."

(Prayer)

Father, we are excited to be here. It's the first day of a brand new week, and we love the first day of a brand new week. It's our most favorite day of the week because it's the day the family, Your body, Your church, gets to gather together in worship. Father, we thank You that at Hardin, just like at Granny Bogard's house, when the whole family got together we couldn't get everybody around the same table, and we can't get everybody around the same table here at Hardin. It's a little easier in the summer time than it is the spring and fall, but Father, because of that we get to have a 7:50 and 9:15 and 10:40 worship service, and for that we praise You. But Father, we are right now really wanting to begin our time in worship, and we've been doing it with song. We're so thankful for the Lefevres being here to lead us to Your throne, to be aware of Your presence. Wow, the songs and the manner in which they sung truly glorified You and wow, it's been an awesome time. but Father, now it's time for us to hear from You, so as we open up Your Word and think about being free in Christ, we want to not just think about the penalty of sin, not only think about the power of sin being broken, but we want to think about how we as believers, just like Moses, are free from the pleasures of sin. Father, we believe You have a big, big week ahead for us these next six days, so we want You to get us ready right now for what You are getting

us ready for. Open our eyes to see, open our ears to hear, open our hearts to receive, our minds to believe, and don't let us be hearers only, but let us be doers of Your Word. In Your precious Son's name we pray, amen.

I think many of you guys realize that sometimes after someone's career is over, we pause, analyze their career, what they've done in a certain field, and honor them as one of the all-time greats. If you're a baseball player, there's no higher honor than to be inducted into the baseball hall of fame and to know that year after year, people are going to come to Cooperstown NY and relive the accomplishments you accomplished on a baseball field. If we're a football player, our desire is one day to be inducted in that place in Canton OH. Of course, being from KY, a basketball state, there would be no higher honor to be included into the basketball hall of fame and to know that possibly our jersey, our story, would be told to future generations there in Springfield MA. I think it's kind of neat that God, just knowing the DNA of you and me, and how we like to analyze and draw strength from, actually put, not a hall of fame, but a hall of faith, in Scripture. So as we analyze this series about being free in Christ, what we've actually done this morning is we found ourselves in the hall of faith chapter in the Bible. But I want you to imagine that we're in the same locale of Cooperstown, NY, or Canton, OH, or Springfield, MA, and we walked into that hall of fame. We would come to booth after booth and there would be certain people who have been inducted into that hall of fame. They've met the criteria, they've been voted as one of the all-time greats in their particular field, particular area. Let's say we stand before Wilt Chamberlain. There's going to be a lot of things in the trophy case that will remind us of why he is there, what separated him from the rest. So I don't want to just read words on a page. See yourself right now walking through God's hall of faith. All of a sudden, we're standing in front of a man named Moses. When we look at his trophy case, if you will, we see five portraits. Each portrait is introduced by the words, "by faith," and we get a picture of the life of Moses.

So if you will allow me this morning, under the leadership of God's Holy Spirit, according to the guidance of God's Word, let's open our minds and

hearts and ask God to give us the ability to see and ultimately understand what the writer of Hebrews is trying to tell us about here when he talks about Moses being free from the pleasures of sin. Now, we're only going to be able to look at two portraits this morning. We're not going to get to see portraits three, four, or five. We're only going to look at portraits one and two. Listen to what the Bible says in verse 23. As you look at that verse again, you're standing before Moses' exhibit and we see a baby picture of Moses. "By faith, when he was born, he was hidden for three months by his parents because he was a beautiful child and they were not afraid of the king's edict." Wow. You know what that means. Because he was a beautiful child, they did not throw him into the river with the crocodiles as Pharaoh demanded. Praise the Lord; he wasn't an ugly child! Can you imagine mom looking at him and going whoa, he's ugly, to the crocs he goes. No, the Bible says he was a beautiful child. Now guys, I've just got to be honest with you, it has always bothered me why they did what they did in hiding him for three months. I would have expected the Bible to say, by faith they hid him for three months because they loved their newborn baby. But for the Bible to say the reason they hid him for three months and didn't do what Pharaoh said to do was because he was a beautiful child, that's kind of tough.

I've spent a lot of my life wondering what in the world does that mean because to be totally honest, I've never seen an ugly baby. Have you? (I haven't seen your baby picture.) I mean, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This has never happened to me; I've never went to the hospital at the birth of a baby and when the dad, or grandparents, hand the baby to me, I've never seen them say, "Oh Bro Ricky, isn't this the ugliest baby you've ever seen?" but we love him or her anyway. No, they always hand me a baby and say, "Oh Bro Ricky, isn't this the prettiest baby you've ever seen?" I don't lie, but sometimes I don't know what to say, because beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. You know my philosophy of life: all babies look alike. Babies look like babies. I used to think this was a theory, but now I think we need to take theory away and just call it a law because let me tell you what happens. I got to the hospital, I'm holding this little baby, and inevitably, the mother of the mother will say, "Ah, she looks just like her mother." Then she will talk about the baby picture of the mother. If I

stay long enough, if the mother of the dad comes in, do you know what the mother of the dad will say? "Doesn't she look just like her dad?" then she will say she's got baby picture where she looks just like the dad. I'm standing there as the pastor holding the baby, looking at mom in the bed, dad over here, and I'm thinking they don't look a thing alike, but they both look like this baby when they were babies, which means what? Babies look like babies! Every grandmother, every momma, every daddy believes that they have a beautiful baby.

You know this story is taken from the book of Exodus chapter 3, but when you turn to Exodus chapter 3, the Bible doesn't say that Amram and Jochebed looked at their baby and thought the baby was beautiful. So therefore, by faith, they hid the baby for three months, and inevitably, couldn't throw the baby in the river with the crocs, but they built an ark and put their baby in an ark. When Moses was writing about this story himself, he doesn't say he was a beautiful baby. The Bible says he was a good baby, a fine baby. But two times in the New Testament, the New Testament writers allude back to the birth of Moses. So we stand before this exhibit and hear the writer of Hebrews saying that Moses was a beautiful baby, but again, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This is a mom and dad; this is Moses! Of course his parents thought he was beautiful. But have you ever read Acts chapter 7? You need to read that. Stephen, before he is stoned, recounts Israel's history. Because he's going to be stoned, ultimately, for believing in the hope of a Messiah, Jesus Christ, who died a death on a cross, was buried, but three days later raised victoriously from the grave, and ascended back to the Father's right hand side, when he recounts Israel's history, he also goes back to the birth of Moses. In chapter 7, verse 20, he doesn't give the perspective of Moses birth from Amram and Jochebed's perspective as parents; he says "the baby was beautiful in God's eyes." Do you agree that it is one thing if mom and dad think the baby is beautiful, and it's another thing when God thinks the baby is beautiful, amen? Has not the Bible taught us something to this point? God does not make judgment based on outside appearance, but God looks within. So God is looking at a baby and says the baby is beautiful, but what you need to know is all Greek scholars believe this word, beautiful, doesn't mean it in the way we view it; it basically means to

be special. Mom and dad give birth to a baby that they thought was special, and because this baby was special, they went against the law of the land. If we go back to Exodus, the last thing that is recorded in chapter 2 is this thought. Pharaoh is really making it hard on the Israelites, as he's made slaves out of them because they have forgotten about Joseph. The people are groaning, crying, and praying out to God, and the Bible says, "And God remembered His covenant with Abraham."

Watch this. In Hebrew chapter 11, as we've been finishing Genesis and now standing in front of the first person in the book of Exodus in the hall of faith, the last person that we just saw was Joseph, and Joseph ends Genesis. The last thing Joseph said was when you come out, do not leave my bones in Egypt. Did you catch this? Joseph believed in the covenant with Abraham that God would not leave His people in Egypt, but He would make them a mighty nation and he knew one day he was going to lead them back to the Promised Land. So now, the writer of Hebrews is trying to tell us is that Israel was waiting for a deliverer and the next thing you know in Exodus chapter 3 we have the birth of the deliverer and his name is Moses. He was the deliverer, he was special, and it was known from the time he was born that this child would be the deliverer of Israel. How did mom and dad see that? They saw it by faith. By faith, they believed God was going to lead them out of Egyptian bondage and they believed their child would be the one. Can you imagine raising the boy you believe is possibly going to be the deliverer? So they hid him as long as they could, and when they couldn't hide him any longer, they put him in the river. But when they put him in the river, I think remembering the story from the Old Testament about the flood; they built a boat, a special boat, not out of gopher wood, but bulrush bushes. They pitched it within and without, to keep what was out, out, (water) and to keep what was in, in (baby). They didn't just put him in the river. The Bible says they put him near the reeds. Do you know who they knew came down there every day? Moses' daughter. Get this picture. You've just, by faith, went against Pharaoh, and now you put your child in a place in the river where she comes to bathe, and you have his older sister watching. Sure enough, here she comes, Pharaoh's daughter. Can you imagine when she takes that little fellow out of the ark, the basket, and sees this beautiful child? The first thing she

recognized is that he is a Hebrew, which means she is supposed to end the life of the little boy. He's supposed to be thrown in the river, but she does not. About that time, his sister says hey, do you need help rearing this boy? She says I sure do. Pharaoh's daughter says would you go find someone to nurse this child for me, and we will pay really, really good. Is God good, or is God good? Mom gives her son up, and God gives the son back with wages, amen! What mom would have gladly done for free, mom now gets paid to do. This is important, you know I'm reading between the lines and using my sanctified imagination, but I just believe I'm right. if you were a mom and knew you had a child that was special in your sight and in God's sight, and he was now going to be raised in the palace of Pharaoh as the grandson of Pharaoh, and you knew you were going to have to give him up really soon, would you not do your best to lay the foundation in his life of who he really is? You would never say to your little boy, "What do you want to be when you grow up? No, you wouldn't be doing that. Do you know what you would be doing? You would be reminding him of who he is right now. You would be letting him know you might be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, but you are not an Egyptian, you are an Israelite. I can't imagine how many times she told him who he was, and I personally believe she let him know God was going to do big, big things with you, possibly using you to set your people free. Wow! Can you imagine that?

Now, let's fast-forward. The next portrait we see, he is not a baby. He is all grown up. As Christians, we know the baby Moses is the deliverer and we know what he's the deliverer of. He's the deliverer of Israel and he's going to get them out of Egypt. We know the story. So as we stand in front of this exhibit, let's hear what the Bible says when he's all grown up. "By faith, when he was grown up." If you go back to Exodus chapter 3, the first ten verses talk about baby Moses, and then in 3:11, the Bible uses the phrase in the Old Testament, "when he was all grown up." If you connect the dots and go to Acts chapter 7, Stephen puts the life of Moses into three categories: the first forty years, the next forty years, and the last forty years. So when the Bible says he's all grown up, he's about forty years of age. Can I just say to all of you forty year old men; I hope you're all grown up. I don't think the Bible is referring to just physical chronological age here. We're learning now that the brain doesn't fully develop and you're

not really mature until you're in your later twenties. The Bible says when he was grown up, when he came to full maturity, that he refused by faith to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Whoa! Please tell me you're getting this. Can you imagine in your mind knowing that all those people out there that are providing the labor for your granddad, knowing you're being groomed to lead the nation, you know you're not really Egyptian by blood, by birth; you're an Israelite, not Egyptian, and you know now.

See, if you're thinking Moses didn't know until God called him at the burning bush that he was going to be the deliverer, you missed it. He knows now. As a matter of fact, in Acts chapter 7, giving commentary to Exodus, at forty years of age when he was all grown up, he walked out into the kingdom and he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite. Do you remember what he did? He freed the Israelite from the Egyptian by killing the Egyptian. He was doing what God wanted him to do, except he didn't do it God's way; he did it his way. That's big. Did you hear that? Then he hid the body. He looked around to make sure no one was looking. The next day he goes out to do his job, he sees two Israelites fighting, and he breaks up the fight. One of them says what are you going to do; are you going to kill us too? But when you read Acts chapter 7, Stephen said Moses didn't understand that they didn't understand that he was trying to set them free from the Egyptians. Tell me you're following. So here's Moses, wanting to do what God has put in his heart to do, but he doesn't do it God's way, he does it his way, but here's what he doesn't understand. He doesn't understand why people don't understand what he's trying to do. So now, he has to make a choice, and he makes the choice by faith. What's the choice? I'm no longer going to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated as the people of God, rather than enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin. Whoa.

Can I make a statement? Please don't forget it. You can never lead people out of what you're still in yourself. What is Moses' ultimate call? It is to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. So he's got to make a decision; am I going to continue to live in Egypt and live like an Egyptian and hide my true identity of being an Israelite, or am I going to admit I'm like them, not like us, and leave here and go over here, knowing when you get over here,

life's going to be radically different. You're now going to be mistreated. You are no longer going to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. When I researched this passage, I came to find out this word for sin here is just the general word for sin that the Bible uses most of the time. It's the Greek word, *hamartia*, which means 'to miss the mark.' It's the picture of a person who is going hunting, he draws back his bow, he releases an arrow, it travels toward the target, and it falls short every time. It's to miss the mark. The word, pleasure, means 'enjoyment.' So the Bible says there is actually an enjoyment that comes from missing the mark, but that enjoyment is fleeting; it doesn't last. It's temporal; it's for a season. Does that make sense? If we keep this in the context, what is the context? Moses has a decision to make; does he stay where he is, and by staying where he is he is not who he's supposed to be, and he's not doing what he's supposed to be doing. Or, does he hit the mark, leave Egypt, and identify with the people of God, knowing that when he identifies with the people of God, he will be on the mark, not off the mark? Stick with me.

I believe what this means when it says the fleeting pleasures of sin, here's basically what the fleeting pleasures of sin are. If you're thinking I'm going to give you a list of everything you shouldn't do and tell you what you should be doing, you've missed it. Because what is a pleasure of sin to you is not a pleasure of sin for me, and vice versa. Here is basically what this talking about. Moses now has the choice to be who he's supposed to be and do what he's supposed to do, or continue to do what he's doing. That is to have the power one day to make his own decisions. Whoa. What I want us to understand as Christians; we're not just free from the penalty of sin and the power of sin; we're actually free from this. I no longer have the desire to be lord of my life, but I'm totally where I'm supposed to be, and that's being who God wants me to be, doing what He's called me to do. Wow. See, some of us made a profession a long, long time ago, and technically, even though mom and dad didn't give us up, we got adopted by the world. I hate to say this about some of us, but you and I know some of us look more like the world than we look like a person of God. Don't say amen because you'll identify yourself. You don't live by faith; you live by sight. You understand you've been set free from the penalty of sin. You understand you've been set free from the power of sin. But in being

set free from the power of sin, what it means is sin can no longer make you do what you don't want to do, but God still gives you the choice. That choice is to follow the enjoyment of you still making your own decisions, thinking what you're doing is right because you view it from your perspective rather than living your life from God's perspective.

I can give you an example. How many times have you been in a conversation with somebody, and you let somebody have it, so to speak? At that moment, you made the decision to let them have it because you really thought they deserved it. In that moment, you felt really good about letting them have it. How long did that last? If you're sitting here saying I've never thought another thing about it, then there's a good chance you're probably not a child of God. If you're a child of God, that missing the mark, that you taking matters into your own hands, you doing what you want to do rather than do what God wanted to God, thus testifying who you really are; it doesn't last very long. It passes. It's a short season. Does that make sense?

For Moses, it's about whether or not he does what God wants him to do from Egypt. He could have done what he's supposed to have done from Egypt. If it had been God's will, he could have authorized the freeing of the Israelites from Egypt. That wasn't God's plan. God's plan wasn't for him to lead from an office or a palace; it was for him to lead in front of the people as they left. By faith, he had a decision to make. Why did he make that decision? Because the Bible said he considered. That word, considered, means 'to reckon, to account, to add up, to weigh.' He weighed this: the reproaches of the Christ. I added 'the,' it's really the reproach of Christ, with all the treasures of Egypt. So here's what he's weighing out. He's weighing out the reproach, (the word, reproach, means 'insult') he's weighing out the insult of Christ, (the word, Christ, means 'anointed one') and over here, all the treasures of Egypt. Do you have any clue what all the treasures of Egypt would mean? Wow! When he weighed it out, here's what he believed. There was greater wealth, greater value, in the insult of being the anointed rather than staying where he was and having all the treasures this world could give him. I don't know about you, but when I read my Bible and I see the word, Christ, and it is capitalized, I always

think it's talking about Jesus. Can I be honest with you? Moses didn't know Jesus. Fair? But he did know who the anointed one was. Do you know who the anointed one was? It was him. He had been anointed by God to be the deliverer, and with that didn't come a lot of glory, didn't come a lot of fame, didn't come much wealth, but reproach. When he weighed out God's plan for himself with all the treasures he could have if he made his own choice, when he weighed it, this was heavier than this. This had more value than this. Why? Because he was looking for the reward, the reward of making decisions right now with me in mind, verses making decisions in light of what God sees as best. When he weighed it out, there was no comparison. He knew that he had to step out of Egypt and identify with the true people of God because that's who he really was, and take his part in God's plan of setting Israel free from Egypt, and he was going to be the deliverer. Wow!

Can I just ask you a question? Have you come to realize that when you were born, God thought you were special? He knew you before you were ever conceived in your mother's womb, and He had a plan for you. Do you know what His plan involved? His plan involves delivering others, but He will not use you to deliver others until He first delivers you. When He delivers you, you have to make the choice, and that's to walk out and let the world see who you really are, and that's a child of His, and for you to do what He's called you to do. Here's what I want to encourage you with. You're free this morning. You're free from that short-term enjoyment of you calling the shots in your life and doing what you think is right and best, only to regret it later, and to see from God's perspective that the greatest reward is to be who He wants you to be, doing what He's called you to do. Why do you think He's doing what He's doing in your life? It is because He's got a plan. It may be your wife. It may be your mother. It may be your dad. It may be your children. It may be those people you work with. It may be your buddy. But Moses is not the only anointed one. Why do you think God has given us resurrection power? It is because He wants to use you and me to accomplish His purpose.

There may be someone here this morning who, by faith, needs to see what God sees, not what you see, not what the world tells you, but what God

sees. Can you see the reward? Can you see past the short-term enjoyment of you getting to be your own god and you calling the shots, you doing what you think is best and come to that place in your life that you totally come out of the world, identify with the people of God, and take your place in the kingdom of Heaven as a person who God is using to bring this freedom that you now have to others? Until you're set free and recognize you're set free from the fleeting pleasures of sin, I just don't think we'll ever live up to who God really intends us to be. But I want you to know, once you've tasted and realize you're free, you'll never want to go back to enjoying the life you think you could have had, or you can have, because the new person you are in Christ desires to be who God's called us to be: saints, set apart, holy, with a spiritual gift, with a group to identify. That group we identify with is the church. We're not all perfect, but we've all come a long way from where we used to be, so we're proud to be part of the family of God.