



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

July 10, 2022

Pastor James Enderle

5th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Genesis 39:6b-12, 16-23](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 22

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Hebrews 11:24-26](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 9:18-24](#)

The Believer Follows Christ... Fleeting or Forever?

1. Believers are _____ and _____
2. Sinful _____ are _____
3. Jesus was _____ and _____ for you
4. Jesus gives you _____

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

You have probably been asked several times when you go to a store if you want to join their rewards program. Maybe you are part of several different rewards programs. I think of some that I have, like Kohl's and Costco. If you have a Costco one, you get the really cheap gas. There are all sorts of rewards programs out there. Some of the better ones come from credit cards. If you spend a certain amount, you get these percentage points and those travel cards, those give you a ton.

I have a friend who is moving from Kansas City and they drove all the way to Alaska. They got up there and they know they are going to be flying back home, so they asked "What are the best travel cards? Which ones give the best rewards?" A few people shared and one of the cards that someone shared had a yearly fee of about \$500. Maybe they get some pretty good rewards, but that's a pretty steep fee to pay. There are some rewards that kind of come with some attachments, some fees, or some airline rewards that you maybe had where you get this email or find out "If I don't use this in a year," what happens? The points disappear. I remember with my wife's points one year we had to buy some magazine, a magazine subscription with the points just to keep the rest of the points.

Rewards are nice to have. You can get a lot of nice things with them. But the rewards that we get sometimes have some hidden fees or different attachments, and sometimes they don't last very long.

No matter what rewards we use for credit cards or for shopping, God, in our Word today, talks about some different types of rewards. We are going to see some that are **fleeting** and some that are **forever**. When we look at Moses' life, we are going to see how he decided how he looked at the different things and said "These are **fleeting** rewards and these are the **forever** rewards" and how we can look at those and how we can see the differences. As **the believer follows Christ**, we are going to see how we can try to avoid those **fleeting** rewards that often feel good but come with some problems later and how we can look for those eternal rewards that maybe are far off or don't seem very close and don't seem very rewarding to begin with.

Our text comes from [Hebrews 11](#), and as we stated in the introduction this comes from that Heroes of Faith chapter in Hebrews. It lists all those different people from the Old Testament so you might read this and say "Hey, this is in the New Testament. It's talking all about Moses. What is that all about?" It's talking about these believers and how they had faith and how they reacted in that faith. Here we find Moses and this section actually starts a little bit earlier and talks about Moses' parents. In [Verse 23](#) it says: ***By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.*** His parents knew of this edict that Pharaoh had to kill the firstborn sons of the Israelites in Egypt but it says his parents did fear it. They wanted to keep him safe, so they hid him.

Then they did this thing that is very famous, but if you think about it, would you do that with your baby? Put your 3-month-old baby in a basket in a river and put him down? It took a lot of faith to do that and to hope and pray that Pharaoh's daughter would see him and take him in as her own. That's where it comes next in our lesson, where Pharaoh's daughter takes him in. And in [Verses 24-26](#): ***By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 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.*** So Moses grows up in this palace and he has all the riches he could want. When you look at the ancient world, Egypt was a very prosperous one and to be in Pharaoh's household, you were very wealthy. You were certainly in that 1% that people talk about today. He was upper class as far as could be and he had everything he could want. But it says he had ***refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.***

In here there is a lot of talk of how we want to be known and what we want to be connected with. He refused to be known in that family of Pharaoh but instead he chose

to be mistreated along with the people of God. He rejected that wealth and that name of being in Pharaoh's household and chose to be among God's people.

But what does it mean to be among God's people, to be a believer? Here it is telling us that believers are persecuted and suffer. This is what we are going to face. This is what Moses faced. When we follow Jesus, it doesn't mean everything is always going to go right. It means that there are going to be difficulties and problems. There is a lot of suffering in the world today. There are reasons that believers suffer. There are sicknesses. There are diseases. There are all these weaknesses and broken relationships in the world, just because there is sin in the world. We can also suffer because we sin. That's an important part of all of this. When we talk about suffering and difficulties, we kind of want to separate what it means to suffer as a Christian and what it means to suffer for sinning.

What is kind of interesting with Moses is he's kind of in the middle there. When he chose not to be part of Pharaoh's house and chose to be mistreated, how did he go about that? Do you remember? He saw that Egyptian and the Israelite fighting and he killed an Egyptian. So he sinned in killing this Egyptian and then he chose to be mistreated. He had to go off and he ran away, but God used this for his good. It was connected with this sin. ^(Exodus 2:11-25) Sometimes we suffer because we haven't chosen the right things. Sometimes we are facing discipline and difficulty because of the sins we commit.

But there are other times when we suffer because we are doing the right things. It's because we are a believer and follow God. That's what we saw with Joseph. He followed Jesus' Word even though his master's wife kept saying, "Sleep with me! Sleep with me!" In that culture, that probably would have been an okay thing to do. He was property. He was a servant. And that probably happened quite often. But did you notice how many times it said that he refused and he rejected it. Then finally when he is talking, he says **"How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"** He refused to take the easy way. He rejected that. Instead, he chose to do what God said, even though that would mean suffering and difficulty for him.

So what was he also rejecting? In our text (it's speaking about Moses, but we'll see it's speaking about Joseph too), it says: ***He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.*** I think for Moses we can see and understand that he would have a lot of pleasures with the wealth he had. But think about Joseph and that **fleeting** pleasure of sin that he could have experienced. He could have easily said yes and things might have gone well, but what did he know? Even though this was a pleasurable thing and this might have been okay in the culture, it was going against God's Word and the consequences for that, even

though there might be pleasure, would be greater; to sin against God, the one who loved him and redeemed him. So he chose to be mistreated and to suffer in the same way that Moses did.

There are all sorts of things in this life that tempt us and attract us away. There is money and sex and culture and so many things in this world that tempt us with these little, little pleasures. "But the consequences; don't worry about that. Worry about the here and now." We fall into those things over and over again, not thinking about what comes from that. Even though there is a little bit of pleasure, the long-term pain might be much greater and hurt relationships with those that we hurt because of those sinful pleasures, but also that long-term relationship with God when I break His Word and when I sin against Him. Every sin is hurting our God. So we look and say we want to go away from these sinful pleasures, because sinful pleasures are fleeting.

When Moses looked and compared things, he said he didn't want that sinful pleasure. He instead looked forward to something different. ***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.*** It said ***for the sake of Christ***, which is an interesting thing to think about since he's in the Old Testament. He was looking forward and knows that something is greater. What was greater?

We suffer and face difficulties when we sin, but also we face difficulties and suffering when we do the right thing. We might say "That's not fair. How could God let these difficulties come to me? How could He let this disease or this pain when I didn't do anything to cause it?" We look to that Psalm of the Day where we read the Words ***My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*** We turn to the Gospel Lesson where Jesus explains what it meant to be Him, that He would be rejected by the people and He would be put on trial and crucified. Jesus was persecuted and suffered for you.

This is so important to see and know because when we face suffering and persecution, how do we always take it? Maybe it's with a smile or maybe with a little bit of understanding; maybe like Moses looking back after years and saying "Oh, I see how God worked this out." But when Jesus was persecuted and suffered, He faced it perfectly. He faced it without complaining, without asking why, but so often when it talks about Him going to Jerusalem knowing what is ahead, it says He set out resolutely. He had YOU in mind. Notice it didn't just say that He suffered and was persecuted, but He was persecuted and suffered for YOU.

He took upon Himself the sins of the world. The times when we fail and fall short, the times when we sin and face suffering for that, but even the times when we face suffering and we don't always do it in the best way. He did all of that perfectly for you. And upon the cross, He took the punishment that we deserve.

That changes everything because we look to Him and know that we are forgiven and redeemed and we have one that suffered more than we could imagine. The hell that people talk about and know is out there, there is heaven and hell, and what did Jesus suffer? He suffered hell for you. He suffered the rejection of people. He was mocked by everyone and He was rejected. His disciples even disowned Him. And there on the cross, as people are mocking Him—I think of one of the greatest mocks where they say “If you are the Son of Man, come down.” Isn’t that crazy? He could have certainly come down and saved Himself, but why did He stay up there? It was to save you, to save all of us. He is being mocked but yet He is facing it for you.

The words that He speaks as they crucify Him, saying **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”** [\(Luke 23:34\)](#) To forgive those who persecute is something—we struggle with forgiving little sins and there He is, forgiving those who crucify Him. We know that all of this, all of the things that we face we can face differently because we have a Savior who faced things much greater than us and suffered and died for our sins.

What does that mean? It means our sins are forgiven and Jesus gives you eternal rewards. Moses talks about it here when he says **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.** He knew there would be difficulty, there were troubles, and his rewards would not be that great on this earth, and he even went to the desert hoping to get to that Promised Land and he never got into that Promised Land, until heaven, that eternal reward.

There are things in this life that we are going to face that we are going to reject and refuse to be known as something or we’re going to say “Maybe it’s okay to fall into those sins.” That’s a lot of what Moses is talking about when we read about Moses here; rejecting to be known as something, refusing to be known as something, rejecting sin and instead looking to that eternal reward.

Think of some of those things that we reject as Christians that maybe bring us difficulty but we know there is a heavenly reward, eternal reward. Think about how you spend your money. You’ve been given money by God and you can use it how you want. But we understand that it’s God’s and there are people who don’t have faith, who don’t believe in God, that just spend it how they want. But as Christians, we want to give to God and to give out of thanks. So we know that maybe our earthly reward, the way that we live might be a little bit different, but we know that eternal reward is much greater.

Think about time. How are you spending your Sunday morning? You could be spending your time in a different way, but here you are, spending your time with God. You are choosing to be known as someone who prioritizes God in your life on Sunday and hopefully the rest of your week by prioritizing time in the Word and maybe saying

no to different things so you can go to a Bible study; or to prioritize time to be in the Word, choosing to be known as that person knowing God's Word and growing because that reward is eternal. Yes, you could be known as something else, but knowing the rewards that come from being in God's Word, that eternal reward.

I think one of the best examples in our culture today is when people are dating and thinking about marriage. It's so common to live together before you're married. And if you're not, you're probably going to face ridicule. "Why aren't you doing that? You could save money by living together," and it's just what everyone does. Or you can choose to not save that little bit of money and choose to follow what God says and know that this is better for you in the long term and that this is what God says is good and right; to reject that **fleeting** pleasure of sin for what is greater.

In our world today, it's easy to be upset about different things. When we look at our authorities, it's very easy to just go along and not respect them. We don't always have to agree with our governing authorities, but can we show respect as well? It's looking at "do I want to go along with the rest of the world, or do I want to be known as one who flees from those sinful pleasures—the things that give us little pleasures but in the end, are hollow." There are so many rewards out there.

In your shopping as you go about your life, you can get different types of rewards. Some have catches and some don't. When we look at the things in our life, there are certainly some things that give rewards but they are very **fleeting**. When we look to God and His Word, when we look at what Christ has done for us, we know that He gives us great eternal rewards. He gives us this forgiveness and peace now, a taste of heaven, a taste of those eternal rewards. We can flee from those sinful pleasures knowing that it's not because of us. It's not dependent on my suffering or dependent on my works but dependent on Jesus, who was persecuted and suffered for you. When we look to Him and know of His perfection, that eternal reward doesn't have to be in doubt. We know it's sure and secure because it's given to us by grace, by faith and it's something that we have to look forward to, even if we face the most difficult things in this life.

So when you are in the midst of suffering and persecution for being known as a Christian, for doing the right thing, know that your God sees you and know that Christ has suffered for you. That eternal reward of heaven, faith, and forgiveness, His love and grace are always there. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7.\)](#) Amen.