

Hebrews 11:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,
than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Analysis

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Moses made a deliberate, reasoned choice: 'choosing' (helomenos, ἐλόμενος, 'having chosen' or 'having preferred') suffering with God's people over temporary sinful pleasure. This wasn't passive acceptance but active preference, demonstrating faith's value system radically contradicts the world's priorities. He weighed eternal vs. temporal, affliction vs. pleasure, obedience vs. sin, and chose according to faith's eternal perspective.

The phrase 'pleasures of sin for a season' acknowledges sin's temporary appeal. Scripture doesn't deny that sin offers genuine pleasure—but only 'for a season' (proskarion, προσκαρίον, 'temporary' or 'brief'). Egypt's luxuries were real, but fleeting. Moses' faith calculated that brief earthly pleasure couldn't compare with eternal reward. This honest assessment avoids naive triumphalism—following Christ may mean real loss of real pleasures—but insists eternal realities infinitely outweigh temporal ones.

This illustrates the Reformed doctrine that genuine faith produces holy living through new affections, not mere behavior modification. Moses didn't grit his teeth through joyless duty; he chose affliction as superior to pleasure because faith had reordered his loves. Similarly, Christians find Christ supremely valuable (Philippians 3:8), not through self-effort but through regeneration that transforms what we treasure. Suffering with God's people becomes preferable to comfortable sin when faith perceives eternal realities.

Historical Context

Ancient Egypt offered tremendous cultural sophistication, architectural marvels (pyramids, temples), luxury goods, entertainment, and religious pageantry. As Pharaoh's household member, Moses accessed the peak of Bronze Age civilization's pleasures. In contrast, Hebrew slaves endured brutal forced labor making bricks and building cities (Exodus 1:11-14). Moses' choice was no slight preference between similar options but stark contrast: luxury vs. slavery, power vs. powerlessness, pleasure vs. affliction. That he chose affliction demonstrates faith's ability to value God's promises above tangible present realities. Early Christian readers facing persecution for leaving comfortable pagan society would find powerful encouragement in Moses' example.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What 'pleasures of sin for a season' tempt you to compromise your faith and identity with God's people?
2. How does recognizing sin's pleasure as temporary help you resist immediate temptation for eternal benefit?
3. In what areas must you actively 'choose' suffering with God's people rather than comfortable compromise?

Interlinear Text

μᾶλλον	ἐλόμενος	συγκακουχεῖσθαι	τῷ	λαῷ	τοῦ
rather G3123	Choosing G138	to suffer affliction G4778	G3588	with the people G2992	G3588
θεοῦ	ἢ	πρόσκαιρον	ἔχειν	ἁμαρτίας	ἀπόλαυσιν
of God G2316	than G2228	for a season G4340	to enjoy the pleasures G2192	of sin G266	G619

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 84:10 (References God): For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Job 36:21 (Sin): Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

Revelation 18:7 (Parallel theme): How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Job 20:5 (Parallel theme): That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?

1 Peter 2:10 (References God): Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Hebrews 11:37 (Parallel theme): They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

James 1:20 (References God): For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

James 5:5 (Parallel theme): Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

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