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Moses treasured the reproach of Christ (1)

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, [esteeming] the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen."
Hebrews 11:24-27 NASB1995

And then in Acts chapter 7, Stephen testified regarding Moses. We see that Stephen was an evangelist but he was also a prophet because he prophesied these things. We see in verse 17 as he picks up the story of Moses.

"But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, until there arose another king over Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph. It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive. It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father's home. And after he had been set outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and nurtured him as her own son. Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds. But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel."
Acts 7:17-23 NASB1995

Our Father, we come to you this morning in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only did He run the race that was set before Him, but He became the model of all those who had run the race of the kingdom. We pray that you will convict, convince and inspire those who will run the race of the kingdom. That you would find some new recruits this morning among the young people. Those who might esteem the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures of this world. We ask that the Holy Spirit do His calling here. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.

I have been coming for some 30 years to this conference as well. During that time I have become totally Chinese, except for language, of course. As I look around, I see some faithful ones who have been here almost the whole time. Like me, most of them are sitting in the front row. I also think that there are many young people here. Because we notice in the United States, and perhaps around the world that the Lord is raising up another generation. We pray that they would become those willing to run the race with endurance.

This is our theme, "Running the race with endurance, looking unto Jesus". Of course, the problem I have with this whole theme with running the race is why would anyone ask me how to

run? Now brother Godwin admits that he never runs, but he is much older than me. I think maybe by six months.

My problem with running started when I was in Little League Baseball. They formed 8 teams and I was the last to be picked on the last team because I couldn't run. Nevertheless, I got picked. Wouldn't you know, I got in trouble. I couldn't run, but I could hit. I got on the All-Star team, the only one from the worst team, because I could hit. In the local newspaper, they spoke about some time when I hit so many hits in a row, how every time I went up I got a hit.

But my coach on the sidelines was getting an ulcer because I was so slow. I could hit the ball so far and it would hit the fence in the outfield and he would cry, "Run Congdon, run!" I would hear this voice shouting. They were hoping I could get to first base before they brought in the ball. I was so slow.

How can I speak on running the race? And especially how can any of us speak on running. Today is the first day of the Olympics. Now, they are runners. Even some of you skinny, pretty people run for exercise. You are not running. Not compared to those Olympic runners. There is a whole other level going on there.

But we have been asked to speak on running, even though we are not experts. There is a mystery behind this matter of running. Because this immediately alerts us that there is something more involved. Now we know that the gospel of grace is "sit, walk, stand". Running is something else. "Sit, walk, stand" is the gospel. But now we are talking about running, and we are talking about serving in the kingdom of God.

So whenever we see somebody opening the book of Hebrews, we understand that we are now being addressed by the Holy Spirit regarding the need to run towards the kingdom. And this brings us immediately towards one of the great issues of the New Testament - the incarnation.

There are 2 great books in the New Testament: the Gospel of John and Hebrews, dealing with the necessity for us to see our incarnate Lord. The Gospel of John shares testimony with us of the great I Am that we might see the Son of God come in the flesh. The book of Hebrews is written that we might see by revelation the incarnation of the Son of Man. The book of John brings us back to this revelation that our Christianity is nothing if it isn't transcendent by the fact that God became a man. John was burdened to recover that divine life back into the church. So we know that the logos - the divine Word - came down from heaven to earth, became flesh, to die for our sins to save us.

But now Hebrews is saying, "Christians, do you not see that Jesus was a man! That the Son of Man walked this earth by great suffering to die on our behalf to bring many sons to glory!" Many Christians know Christ, the Son of God. But the kingdom race involves seeing Jesus the man.

I will give you just one example, although this is not my topic. You and I need to see Jesus as our human High Priest. We all love to sing that song, "There is a man and the glory". But do you realize that Jesus is a man, now and forever? And when you meet Him face to face, He will be a man? And the Holy Spirit wants you to see Him as a man, even now on this earth. Because the book of Hebrews bids us to "draw nigh to the throne of grace, that you may receive grace and mercy in this time of need."

Now we Christians have gotten our theology a little mixed up. Somehow, because of our fuzziness of God the Father, we think that that throne is where Jesus is sitting. But no, no, no. The Jews understood this. Jesus in His gospel said, "It is my Father's kingdom, and He sits on the throne. But I want to bring you into His presence as the High Priest. Don't be afraid of the Father's throne. He is full of grace and mercy. But look, I am the High Priest. I am interceding for you. Saint, let me take you by the hand and bring you into the throne presence of God."

Now once you have experienced Jesus the human High Priest bringing you before His Father, you begin to run the race. Do you think Jesus is the most beautiful thing you have ever seen? Then Jesus will proudly say, "let me show you my Father. Oh I love my Father. I want you to grow up to know my Father. The Father and I are one. But He is the unseen Father, I am the seen Son. So come through the portal of the heavenly vision of me, and I will take you to my Father."

This matter of running the kingdom race involves vision. Vision that we may run. Remember how Habakkuk was asked to write the vision that he received that they who read it may run. I hope that everybody here is a born again Christian. But I hope that you will come to the place where you are running with patience the race like Moses, seeing Him who is unseen.

Now Moses met the angel in the bush, and he met the angel on the Mount where he wrote the ten commandments. But when Moses met the Father in the Holy of Holies, he dwelled in the tabernacle for 38 years. Think about that. And when he came out of the meeting, his face would be all aglow with the glory.

How we need brothers and sisters in this life to glow in the presence of the Father!

So we look at Moses as we deal with this matter. And we see here that something is very important to our running. I will make this statement: all Christians walk. Not all Christians run. But one of the keys to running instead of walking is to esteem the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures of this world. What empowers the kingdom servant to press on? Can you believe that it is bearing the reproach of Christ that gives you the divine endurance? And when we do this, all we are doing is following the path of Jesus.

You know Hebrews 12 by now, everyone has spoken on it.

"let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB1995

I am so glad you are saved. But are you interested in the kingdom? He goes on to say,

"For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."
Hebrews 12:3 NASB1995

So we will be looking at this matter of the reproach of Christ. Is that valuable to you? I know you are thankful He suffered and died for your sins. But are you willing now to bear such a reproach?

I don't know what word we use in Chinese for "reproach". In the English dictionary, to reproach is to chide, to taunt, to censure, to condemn, to revile, to upbraid, to accuse. And in these ends days, this is the lot of servants of the King.

It is in this regard, the reproach of Christ, where Moses is compared favorably to Jesus. How did Moses start running? Running the heavenly way? When you turn to Hebrews 3, you read the beginning of Moses.

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling,"
Hebrews 3:1a NASB1995

Oh, that Moses!

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end."
Hebrews 3:1-6 NASB1995

Moses did not clearly understand his heavenly calling until he met the Lord in the burning bush. From that moment on, he began to run. He ran faithfully although the cost was great. He bore the reproach of Christ in loneliness. By the rebellion of God's children, he knew hatred and sorrow, because he laid down his life to bring the children out of Egypt and to bring them to the edge of the promised land. And for all these things, he was rewarded with the reproach of Christ. He led them as the apostle through the Red Sea. He brought down the foundation of the life of Israel from Mount Sinai with the law, the Word of God. He ordered the people in their 12 tribes and set them around a tabernacle which he constructed so people could fellowship with God. And he led them through 42 stations in the wilderness, over 38 years of wandering, all the time bearing the reproach of Christ.

This is the reality of the servant of God. Now we need to understand that the reproach of Christ started long before Moses was born. The origin of the reproach of Christ was Satan himself when he rebelled against God.

Satan used to be the greatest servant of God, when his name was Lucifer, which means the bearer of light. But, as a bearer of light and a great servant, he looked at the mirror one day and he loved himself more than God. And he set upon himself a course to usurp the Father's Son and take the throne from him. For this, Lucifer was thrown out of the heavens of the heavens, down into the heavenlies, and his name was changed from Lucifer to Satan, which means the adversary. And from that time, before Adam was even created, Satan hates God, the things of God and especially, the Son of God.

So, the reproach of Christ is the hatred of Christ instigated by Satan and laid upon all who belong to Christ.

You know, we are really such silly people. We have been born again but think we are loved by everybody. The Bible tells us clearly that from the day we were saved, we entered into spiritual warfare with Satan from the heavenlies sending darts of condemnation 24 hours a day in your direction.

We are so silly. We don't recognise that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, that is *arché* - where arch means head, just as archangels are the head angels. And then we wrestle against *exousias* - authorities. These authorities are mighty spiritual forces that are placed over cities like Los Angeles, and New York, and Seattle, and Vancouver, and San Francisco. And anything that Christians accomplish under such *exousias* has to be done by overcome power. And then there are the world rulers of darkness - *kosmokratoras*. This is talking about men on this earth so possessed by Satan that they oppress God's people mercilessly. And then there are wicked spirits, that are demons that are always coming to upset you, to cause fear and anxiety.

Of course, the tragedy is that we didn't have to experience any of that. Man was created to take the throne above all created things, and to rule in this world. When he was created God said, "be fruitful and have dominion above all things." But John writes to us that because we are fallen in sin, the whole world lies in the grip of the evil one.

Now Satan the adversary does not own anything. But he steals stuff. He steals your soul. He steals your life. He steals your joy. It must have been something when Jesus said, "I have come that you may have life. He has come to kill, steal and destroy." Unfortunately, mankind who lives under the delusion that he can get rich and be happy, that the American dream is true, then he finds himself in bondage to things that never worked out the way he thought.

The first night our brother Timothy Kwok spoke of a brother he knew who made 7 figures a year. I know of no such brother, or no one who would admit it. I know a brother who became very prosperous but he lost his wife, his children, he became an alcoholic and he lost his health. And the multimillion dollar life did not turn out the way he thought.

The enemy loves to give us things and then take all the joy out of it. So many of us were taken for so long. But then we heard the good news that Jesus rescued us from the domain of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His beloved Son. And the Lord set us free from the burden of sin, and we began to walk in light.

John writes, "that my little children, the young Christians, they walk in light." They are not ready to run yet, but they walk in light as He is in the light. They have fellowship in Him, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

But it young men who run by the Word of God. This is probably a place where most of the young people here have to come to yet. As young Christians we walk in the light. But the enemy continues to try to hinder our Christian life. Satan has been hindering man's life down through the time of history.

There's the story set in the days of Noah. Here is man, destined to rule with Christ, but Satan's darkness in that fallen world had caused iniquity to abound so greatly that he devised a plan. The sons of God - that is, fallen angels - came down to earth and had children through women to become the giants of the earth to oppress all of mankind. So the flood was necessary to take that strategy out of the enemy's hands.

The enemy tried to lie to Abraham. His wife said, "you can have a kid by my maid". "Yes, that way I can have a kid."

But God said, "no, not my seed, not my kid."

The story goes down through history. In Esther's day, the devil came up with a scheme to destroy all of God's people so that there could be no more Jews for Jesus to be born of the tribe of Judah.

And speak about bearing reproach! What happened when Jesus was born?

How did Herod get so worried that he sent troops to Bethlehem to kill all the children? And Satan had a divine appointment with Jesus in the wilderness as he tempted Jesus to abort His destiny. And through many experiences, even as Jesus grew up, the men tried to push him off the cliff in Nazareth. When he began to serve, the leaders of the Jews became obsessed with destroying him. Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians - we got to kill this guy! What made people so anti-semitic?

Now I have nothing to say about the political situation right now in Gaza, but that anti-semitism which is now all across the United States comes from Satan.

What does the average Jew do wrong when someone wants to kill them? He is one of God's chosen people. Jesus went through such reproach. He went from town to town and preached the good news, healed many people and faced reproach from place to place.

He had to escape from Herod on occasion, and so you see, He faced that warfare all His life.

Now of course you realize that all of this was in God's plan. It is because Jesus bore this reproach - when He died on the cross, He rose again in glory, untouchable by the enemy. The gospel plan of Jesus death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification was never understood by the devil. What the devil meant for evil, God used for good.

Why do we share this gospel story? Because the average Christian is walking in this world, and they are walking in the darkness regarding the hatred and reproach of Christ. I wonder, even the disciples who went with Jesus, what they must have thought when Jesus said, "if the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you."

Do you think the disciples believed that? They learned that within a couple of years. Now the hatred and reproach of Christ had fallen on them for simply being disciples and bringing eternal life to the world.

Did you sing that song? "I've crossed the separating line and left the world behind me"? Have you experienced the reproach of Christ? Do you think all your troubles just come because you got a bad deal, your boss is crooked, or you got unlucky on your investments?

The difference between a Christian who is walking and a Christian who is running is that the Christian who is running bears the reproach of Christ. In the mystery of God's working, rather than the reproach being a disincentive, once you bear the reproach of Christ, there is a power and an anointing to run with endurance.

So the writer of Hebrews uses Moses as one who esteemed the reproach of Christ above the treasures of Egypt. Here is now he defines it in Hebrews: he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. That is an amazing thing. He bore the reproach of Christ, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

How could he bear the reproaches of Christ, because he lived at least a thousand years before Christ was born. But in fact these faithful ones of God spoken about in Hebrews 11 have been bearing the reproach of the Lamb of God who was slain from the foundation of the world.

Now Egypt was one of the 4 great empires of world history. It was as worldly as worldly could be. They deified their Pharaoh as god. They succeeded economically by taskmasters who grabbed tribes all over Africa and the Middle East and made them slaves to build their monuments and to till their fields. Science was their religion. That's why the United States is like Egypt. As far as Mammon goes, he is a taskmaster over many many people who have successful jobs but have their souls stolen from them.

Because Egypt was bent on being prosperous and making lots of money by enslaving people, a new Pharaoh who didn't know about Joseph heard about the population growth in Goshen because the Jews were having many children. "Those Jews are going to be more populous than we Egyptians who aren't having so many kids!"

Now they didn't make a rule to have a one-child population, but when a male was born in Goshen, he would have to be drowned in the Nile river. So you see, Moses was born under the reproach of Christ.

The story starts in Hebrews 11:23.

"By faith Moses, when he was born,"
Hebrews 11:23a NASB1995

When Moses was born, how much faith did he have? But you see, Moses, being in the eternal plan of God, had faith before he had faith. So when it says "Moses had faith when he was born", it really says the midwives had faith and they were not afraid to let these baby

Jewish boys live. And Moses' parents had faith, because they saw that this child was beautiful before God.

Miriam was 7 years old. She looked ok. Aaron was 3 years old when Moses was born. He looked like a religious guy, maybe not so good. "Moses, Moses, my beautiful child. There must be some reason for this child. Let's hide him for 3 months."

Now Moses could be an opera singer, because for 3 months he would cry and cry until they couldn't hide him anymore. By faith, they put him in a little basket and floated him on the Nile.

What a coincidence! Pharaoh's daughter happened to come along and saw a beautiful kid and took him out of the river, like having a puppy. "Moses" means "drawn out of the water". But that is his Egyptian name.

It just so happened that 7 year old Miriam was putting her makeup on and saw this happen. She said, "Do you want me to find somebody to take care of this baby?"

Mama came. Mama raised Moses for several years, then gave him to Pharaoh's daughter.

Now for 40 years, Moses was the darling of Egypt. How the world loves a movie star personality. According to America, Moses looked like Charlton Heston.

"Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds."
Acts 7:22 NASB1995

Moses went to engineering school and became an architect. According to Jewish tradition, not only was he an architect, he was a general in the army. Stephen says he was a "man of power in words and deeds."

Of course, God sovereignly raises up his kids in the world's best universities. So none of you, of course, went to some state university. You went to Harvard. You went to Yale. You went to Biola.

In the plan of God, when you read the Bible, God raised up Daniel in the best way of the world; and Isaiah in the court of the king. And David as well. Saul of Tarsus raised in the best learning there could be.

For 40 years, no reproach. He was loved by the world. Of course he was loved, he was part of the world. But as we know, something was stirring in his heart.

Everyone who is running in the kingdom is running as a servant. "Running" is a servant verb.

But Moses at this point, wasn't running. He was sensing a calling deep in his being. How can you tell a true servant of God? They have a burden for God's people. One day Moses

climbed into his chariot and drove down to Goshen to check on his people. He had no idea what was about to happen. Something happened to Moses by faith.

As he saw one of his Jewish brethren being beaten by an Egyptian. This mighty man in word and deed took things in his own hands, killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. He was doing the work of God. He was going to kill the Egyptians one by one until 2 million Egyptians were killed.

What a great plan that is. But by faith, through this action he crossed the separating line. When he realized that his actions were going to be reported to Egypt, he fled for his life. And from that time on, he was hated by Pharaoh, by Egypt, for denying them. They had him in the palm of their hands. "This is one of the Son of God's kids. We had him, and he escaped."

This is like a lot of servants of God today. They hear the calling of God and said, "I accept, Lord!" and they immediately start going out doing things, killing people.

But Moses wasn't ready to run. He needed to walk. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to endure the ill treatment of the people of God over the passing pleasures of Egypt.

But of course he wasn't ready to run. He never met God. He had never heard God. He didn't know the ways of God. How could he serve God? That is what happens many times. He may have been trained in the house of Pharaoh, but he wasn't qualified to be one of Christ's servants.

Now this matter of the reproach of Christ can be translated easily: you must come to the place where you understand that Satan and the world hates you.

I know that is hard for young people. Because they have been taught to love everybody, even if everyone doesn't love you.

"Now Jesus my Savior walked through this world being hated by the Romans, the Jewish leaders, by Satan. But I'm going to walk through this world being loved by all the world."

Jesus walked in the world, but He was not of this world. Those Christians who are walking but not running are those Christians who are still trying to live in this world as part of this world.

There was a famous preacher in England. His name was Martyn Lloyd Jones. I like this quote in which he speaks about this matter: "the Christian is a man who expects nothing of this world. He does not pin his hopes on it because he knows the world is doomed."

Now while we live in this world, of course we must live among people. And in our subtle civilization, you are allowed to work on a worldly job and live in a worldly neighborhood, that is ok. But you remember what James says?

"You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."
James 4:4 ESV

Now I think many young people aren't convinced of that. But some of the older ones around have watched many children of God sell their souls to the world. The enemy targets a Christian, and wants to steal your soul. And if one day the curtain was drawn back, and we see all the ways the enemy is stealing God's children with media, with TikTok - it is just amazing, his strategy. It is a good thing that this generation is saying, "I am not sure I want to buy into this world." So many people believe the world's lies. And many Christians who know better have gotten too comfortable to bear the reproach. But in order to be a servant of the kingdom, you have to cross the separating line. And come to a place where you say, "I'd rather live among God's people than out there in the world and taste all its delicacies."

In the end, Moses didn't just run away.

"By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen."
Hebrews 11:27 NASB1995

How can we see Him who is unseen? Does that make sense to you? Faith sees Him who is unseen. This is the particular function of faith. It sees promises other people don't see. It sees God working where other people can't see.

Brothers and sisters, if we don't come to the fact that we realize that this race we run is not just on this earth; that there is a corresponding race in heaven that is racing at the same time.

Can you run a two-dimensional race? Can you coordinate your race on earth with that race in heaven that you are racing? Faith can grasp these mysteries.

Hebrews is not talking about running on the ground. If you follow on, it turns out he is talking about how you are running the race up Mount Zion. And there you are meeting saints gone by, you are meeting angels, and you are meeting the assembly of the righteous. You are meeting Jesus, and you are meeting the Living God.

Now not having studied in the universities of Egypt, I don't know how you can be running this way. But all I know is that if my dear brothers and sisters can have a glimpse of the goal of the Father, you will become a runner, and not just a walker.

Now the Lord does strange things, doesn't He? Many of your families migrated to the United States for the American dream. But now He is asking you to run the race to bring in His kingdom. In the early days, those who came with nothing and accumulated things, we can understand that. But if your goals at this moment are surely and truly worldly, you are on the wrong track. We don't know what is going on in our country right now, but there's a shaking. If you are spending all your energies laying stuff aside, you might be surprised of the loss you will face.

We will have to talk next time about how Moses began to run the race. It only took walking 40 years for him to get ready. And that means he was as old as Brother Godwin and me before he started running the race. I don't think we have long enough for you to get as old as Godwin and me. There is a race to run.

When you bear the reproach of Christ, there is an energy that zips you off the start line and gives you endurance to the end.

Oh Lord, we see this great kingdom matter before us. The King has come to us clothed as a man, and is now leading many sons to glory. As we follow our heavenly calling, open our eyes to see the truth of what is going on. Enable us to cross that separating line. Even as Moses got to cross the Red Sea of his death, so we want to be your servants in this world with higher purposes and plans. Do lift our limited vision in these days. May all of your precious ones come to meet the Father - Him who is unseen. We pray, knowing this is God's will through Jesus Christ, Amen