

# THE CONSEQUENCE OF SAYING “YES.” – HEBREWS 11:24-26

## PASTOR COLIN RIEKE – JUNE 28, 2015

<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. <sup>25</sup> He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. <sup>26</sup> 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.



This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it,

A couple years ago a movie came out starring Jim Carrey. The name of the movie is “*Yes Man*.” The premise behind the story is Jim Carrey’s character is in a negative rut. He goes to a motivational seminar which dictates that he say “yes” to everything. And so he proceeds to say “yes” to every opportunity, request or invitation. Saying “yes” constantly works to his character’s advantage throughout the movie – including the dating a nice young woman.

While the movie can be funny and witty, a good lesson to take from it is to take advantage of more opportunities. Instead of always saying “no” to something, say “yes.” Certainly this doesn’t apply to every circumstance, but the lesson is there. Our Scripture lesson this morning from the book of Hebrews brings in a slight variation from the lesson learned in “*Yes Man*.” That variation is that every “yes” means saying “no” to something else. The writer to the Hebrews shows how it is not possible to say “yes” to everything, and when you try, you end up saying “no” to another. It also reveals THE CONSEQUENCE OF SAYING “YES.”

1. “Yes” to the world is “no” to God
2. “No” to the world is “yes” to God

(1)

The book of Hebrews, from which our second lesson is based, was written to Jewish Christians. These were Jewish Christians who were facing a little bit of an identity crisis. For many, they had grown up with the traditional Jewish laws and ceremonies. But they had heard about this other Jew named Jesus and they had heard how he was the Savior promised in the Old Testament. But as they grew in their Christian faith, they would constantly be questioning, with one eye looking back, wondering if they had made a mistake. Granted, their life as Jews wasn’t a bed of roses, but this whole new religion thing was tough. Was it a mistake? Should they go back to their Jewish religious roots based in the Law of Moses?

But the writer to the Hebrews insists that they shouldn’t go back to Moses, because Jesus is superior to Moses. Now here in chapter 11 of Hebrews he gives an example from Moses’ life, to show how even Moses was pointing to Christ. The lesson the author wanted his readers to learn is that following the law of Moses leads to death, while following the faith of Moses leads to life. The faith of Moses in a Savior led him to do what he did. Let’s recap the story.

**Following the law of Moses leads to death, while following the faith of Moses leads to life.**

The early life of Moses could fill a series of sermons, but for the time being here are the basics. Moses was born to a slave family in Egypt. The Egyptian didn't want male children born to the Israelites for fear that they would eventually overpower them. So Moses' mother placed him in a basket in the Nile River where he was found by the daughter of Pharaoh. And so, Moses had a connection to the house of Pharaoh, even though he was a Jew by birth.

Not only was it good to be part of the house of Pharaoh, but the Egyptian empire at the time was one of the grandest in the world. Even today we remember the glories of Egypt – not only from the Pyramids and the Sphinx, but the wealth of treasure and knowledge the Egyptians possessed. This was all at the fingertips of Moses. He was educated in all of the knowledge of the Egyptians. He was part of the royal family – probably not in line to be Pharaoh, but he had the power without the responsibility.

Yet, what did the writer to the Hebrews say happened? **“By faith Moses...refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter...He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt.”** Just think about what that means? Think about how much Moses chose to give up!

Now, let's just play the “what if” game for a moment here. What if...Moses had chosen to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter? How would that have looked? He would have looked like an Egyptian, had the wealth of the royal family, a knowledge that rivaled any in the world. And suppose he pondered, “look how much I could help my people in this position – I could maybe get them better working conditions, higher wages, make their life more enjoyable.” “I could still believe in the God of the Hebrews. There's nothing wrong with being wealthy.” And had this taken place, who knows what would have happened. But we would see THE CONSEQUENCES OF SAYING “YES” – Moses saying “yes” to the treasure of Egypt.

Had Moses said “yes” to the treasure of Egypt, he would have been turning his back on his own people, because he would have been putting himself and his desires, his comfort, before God and his people. I think we can see THE CONSEQUENCES OF SAYING “YES” today as well. But I don't know if we have a full grasp that saying “yes” to the world is saying “no” to God. Now I'm not accusing anyone here of selfishly thinking, “I'll follow God later, once I've had my fun.” But I think as Christians, we have been guilty of trying to say “yes” to the world and “yes” to God. We'll ask the question “how close can I get to the line before it's a sin?” instead of “how far can I stay away from the line of sin?” We want the fame, the fortune, the prestige, and our lives fully dedicated to God. We don't always realize saying “yes” to the fame, the fortune and the prestige limits our ability to say “yes” in other ways.

It's easy to see how saying “yes” to staying up late with your friends on Saturday night makes it more difficult to saying “yes” to get up “early” for church the next morning. It's easy to see how saying “yes” to that new car payment makes it more difficult to say “yes” to an appropriate offering. It's easy to see how saying “yes” to the Supreme Court's definition of marriage makes it difficult to say “yes” to God's definition of marriage. But what's more difficult to see is how saying “yes” to God is more than just following a bunch of rules. Look at how Jesus put it in our gospel – the very essence of Christianity. **“Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.”**

This is the offense of Christianity, even for Christians. Christ calls for us to deny ourselves! We must deny not only the things that we do – our actions and our desires, but our very selves. Because it is

our very selves that are filled with every selfish thought and ambition. Our very selves leave no room for God and his will. Because it is not enough that God have part of you, and you can keep the rest. No! He gets all of you.

He gets all of you because he said “yes” to taking all of your place under God’s wrath. And the consequence of him saying “yes” to God was not only the infliction of the cross, but it was the wrath of God that was meant for you, being poured out on him. THE CONSEQUENCE OF SAYING “YES” was not only Christ taking all of you and your sins, but it also was a new transformation for you, as Paul talked about in Romans: **“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”**

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It is this kind of a transformation that the author to the Hebrews was speaking about when he mentioned Moses abandoning the treasure of Egypt for the disgrace that came for the sake of Christ. It wasn’t just Moses making a choice between staying in power in Egypt or disgrace among the Hebrews, it was about denying himself for the sake of Christ.

And so it is with us and THE CONSEQUENCE OF SAYING “YES.” Saying “yes” to God means saying “no” to something else. Certainly as blood-bought children of God we will want to say “no” to sins – great and small – that the world pushes on us. But we will also learn to say “no” to ourselves. That’s the whole thing about denying yourself. It isn’t about you anymore. It’s first and foremost about God – and not just about God on a Sunday morning in Church, it’s about God all the time. Next it’s about your neighbor – putting your neighbor’s needs before your own. Needless to say this would be impossible to do without Christ.



But it was Christ who demonstrated **“the greatest among you should be a servant.”** Will this lead to being taken advantage of? Yes. Will this lead to people belittling you for your beliefs? “Yes.” But these are some of THE CONSEQUENCES OF SAYING “YES” to God. But no matter what consequences may come our way, no matter what hardships we may have to endure, we endure them knowing it will all be worth it, knowing that we have heaven guaranteed for us through the blood of Christ.

A big decision was handed down by the Supreme Court this last week. They determined that same-sex marriage is legal. How is a Christian to feel? How is a Christian to act? Do the words we heard from God’s Word this morning offer any advice? Yes, as Christians, there will be consequences of saying “yes” to God, we may suffer disgrace for the sake of Christ. But let us not confuse who our enemy is. Our enemy is the devil with all his tricks and schemes, playing on the desires of sinful mankind. So our response should not be the knee-jerk reaction of many to argue complain and fight over the immorality of homosexuality. Instead, it should be to boldly confess the immorality of all sin – homosexual or heterosexual, sins of thought or of deed, sins large and small. We need to boldly proclaim our thoughts and desires cannot be trusted, because they are tainted. We must boldly confess “yes” to Christ who calls us to abandon ourselves and cling solely to him for true peace, true unity, true hope.

There will always be consequences in this world – the reaction of our actions. When we say “yes” to one thing, we are at the same time saying “no” to another. Some of the consequences of our actions will be of minor significance (relatively speaking). But nowhere is THE CONSEQUENCE OF SAYING “YES” more pronounced than when it comes to saying “yes” to God. We know that we cannot say “yes” to God on our own. The only way this can come is by God given faith. But when we do say “yes” to God it will come with consequences in how the world treats us, but also with how our God will treat us.

This is what made it worth it to Moses, when he chose to be identified as an Israelite instead of an Egyptian. This is what makes it worth it to us, when we choose to be identified as Christians instead of citizens of this sinful world. This is what makes it worth it for us to be bold in sharing the message of Christ with others, because saying “no” to God has its consequences too. Amen