

TEXT: Hebrews 11:24-28

THEME: LOOKING FORWARD TO A BETTER REWARD

1. What Are You Looking Forward to?
2. Is It Worth When We Can't See It?

**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 pleasures of sin for a short time. 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. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. NIV84**

Dear Christian Friends:

Everyone looks forward to something. A baby looks forward to a diaper change. A child looks forward to a new toy for his or her birthday. A teen looks forward to getting the car keys and graduation. A young couple looks forward to their wedding day and the births of their children. A worker looks forward to vacation or retirement. A grandma looks forward to seeing her grandkids. Some of us simply look forward to dinner or sunny day.

Everyone looks forward to something, but that something always passes by. Diapers need to be changed again. Toys break. Special days become memories. Vacations end. Retirements get tough. Family goes home, and eventually this life ends. We look forward to lots of things, but in this life, so quickly those things come and go. Before we know it, we find ourselves looking forward to something else that comes and goes.

Moses was a man could have spent his life looking forward to the things that come and go. Even though he was born to Hebrew slaves, he was adopted by the daughter of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. He could have spent his life looking forward to the wealth and treasures of the Egyptian Empire, but the writer of Hebrews tells us that Moses **“regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”**

What was Moses really looking forward to? At some point, Moses' parents had taught him about the coming Messiah—God's Anointed One—who would come to save his people. By faith in the coming Christ, then, Moses looked forward to something greater than all the vast treasures of Egypt. Moses looked forward to his “reward” of God's grace in Christ Jesus, his “reward” of eternal life in heaven won by the blood of the promised Savior. By faith, Moses fixed his eyes on Christ and looked forward to nothing else.

So, what are you looking forward to? You look forward to God's blessings of joy and pleasure in this life, but in the end, they pass away or you do. Rather than focus on the passing pleasures of this life, fix your eyes on the reward that will never pass

away—the reward of eternal life in heaven earned for you with the precious blood of Christ.

### IS IT WORTH IT WHEN WE CAN'T SEE IT?

Yet, looking forward to something that you cannot see, that you have never seen, can be difficult. When it comes to Christianity, people often have the hardest time trusting in the unseen. After all, our Christian faith is founded on a Savior-God named Jesus Christ, who walked this earth more than 2,000 years ago. Now he is unseen, though he promises to be with us always. Unseen he rules in our hearts through his gospel and works unseen through water and the Word and bread and wine. Our Savior is real, but unseen.

In spite of that, doubt in the unseen still comes naturally for all of us. By nature, we are much quicker to believe what we can touch and taste and smell and see than simply to trust in the ancient teachings and promises of an unseen God. Unfortunately, such a skeptical view of our unseen God can quickly lead to doubt, denial, and damning unbelief.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us, **“Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1)**. In fact, the writer to the Hebrews used the phrase “by faith” twenty times in chapter 11 alone. No one understood that aspect of faith better than Moses, who had put himself in a very dangerous situation. Caught up in a raging desire to liberate his people, Moses had killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave. His efforts to cover up the murder failed, and when word reached Pharaoh, Moses had to flee for his life.

Moses, however, trusted in the unseen. In fact, you could say that by faith he could “see” the unseen. The writer to the Hebrews tells us, **By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible**. The “eyes” of faith allowed Moses to see ahead to the One who would forgive his foolish sin of murder and his selfishness. The eyes of faith enabled Moses to follow his Lord wherever he led and to trust in the Lord’s unseen strength to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

How is your eyesight when it comes to our unseen Lord? Is it clouded by skepticism, or by faith do you see what is certainly there—a Savior who loves you, who fulfills all his promises for you, and who opened heaven for you? When you see with the eyes of faith, it changes the way you look at everything. Peter explains, **“Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy” (1 Peter 1:8)**. May God grant you the vision to see the unseen clearly through Christ and because of that vision to be filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy! Amen.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord, we do believe; help us overcome our unbelief (Mk 9:24). Strengthen our often weak and flickering faith. By your grace that has worked faith in our hearts, we know that you are our gracious Father and that Jesus is our Redemption, Righteousness, and Sanctification. Strengthen this faith in us that we may never fear or fall in any trial or temptation. Let us firmly believe that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

When we are enticed by sin and the world with its sinful pleasures beckons and our own passions want to give in, help us and give us the power and will to resist. When trials, sorrow, and affliction want to rob us of this trust in you, O Lord, help us to conquer and win new victories.

Strengthen our faith in your promise that all things must work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to your purpose to be your own in time and eternity.

O almighty Lord, we know that you can, that you will, strengthen our faith. Therefore, we confidently pray, as your Son taught us:

THE LORD'S PRAYER in modern language