THE PROBLEM AND POWER OF PAIN
WEEK 4 • DAILY BRIEFING 1 • CHOOSE YOUR HARD

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 32:10

Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.

This week follows Sunday's sermon, "Self-Inflicted Suffering." You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I confess that I usually choose what is easy right now and pay for it later. I trade what I want most for what I want now. Give me the courage to choose the hard way that leads to life, and help me keep my eyes on the reward You have promised. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

On Sunday we ended with a simple concept: holiness and wisdom are hard, but so are the consequences of sin and folly. Choose your hard. Every road in life has something hard about it. The real question is whether you take the hard now or the hard later, and the hard later is almost always worse.

You can deny yourself while you are dating, or you can live with the consequences in your marriage. You can grind through the misery of school or an apprenticeship while you are young, or you can spend forty years in a tedious, dead-end job. You can work hard and live small for ten years, or you can work hard for fifty and still retire without enough. You can do the hard work of eating well and exercising, or you can raise your risk of diabetes and heart disease, which are much harder. None of that means every illness or hardship is someone's fault, but the unpleasant reality is that a lot of it is, in fact, self-inflicted.

The biggest version of this choice is about eternity. You can take it easy and have a good time in this life and lose eternal life in the next, or you can become everything God created and called you to be and enjoy Him forever. Jesus asked, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36).

The first passage today comes from Hebrews 11, a chapter that lists people who trusted God when it cost them something. Moses was born to Hebrew slaves in Egypt, but as a baby he was rescued and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter (Exodus 2:1–10). He grew up in the palace with the wealth and education of one of the most powerful empires on earth (Acts 7:22). Then he made a choice. The second passage is Jesus near the end of His most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount.

READ & MEDITATE

Hebrews 11:24–26

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, [25]choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. [26]He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

Matthew 7:13–14

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. [14]For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

As you read, notice what each passage says about the easy road and where it ends.

REFLECT

Answer these honestly. This is between you and God, and nobody else needs to see what you write.

Moses had every advantage Egypt could offer, and he walked away from it.

1. Fill in the blank from Hebrews 11:25: “choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the _____ pleasures of sin.”

Why does that one word matter so much?

The pleasures of sin are real, but they do not last. The consequences usually last much longer than the pleasure did.

Verse 26 tells you how Moses was able to make that choice.

2. What was Moses looking at when he chose the harder road?

Moses “was looking to the reward.” Choosing your hard requires looking further down the road than this week. People who only look at today almost always choose the easy road.

Jesus describes two roads, and only one of them is easy.

3. What does Matthew 7:13–14 tell you about Jesus and the way He talks to people He loves?

Jesus never sold anyone an easy road. He told the truth about the cost because He wanted people to reach life, not just to feel good about the trip.

Instead of choosing their path on purpose, most people wander down the easy road one small decision at a time.

4. Where in your life are you choosing easy now and setting yourself up for hard later?

What would choosing the right hard look like in that situation this week?

5. If you kept living exactly the way you are living now, where would that road lead? You can think about this in terms of this life or the next. We are saved by grace, but real faith changes the road we walk (Ephesians 2:8–10).

PRAYER

Bring what you just wrote to God. Write your prayer or pray out loud.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Psalm 32:10 from memory.