

9-29-19 Message
CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY, THE POWER TO CHOOSE

Joshua 24:14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Intro: The Bible is clear that men can choose to serve the Lord and do right, or they can choose not to serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15 CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY.

This concept of man's free will is a bit of a mystery. It is clear that men can freely choose but why they choose and all that is behind what they do and why they do what they do is the mystery.

I do not think we can truly understand all that is taking place in a man's heart and mind that make them decide to follow the Lord or not. Solomon the wisest man that ever lived said,

Proverbs 20:5 Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water;

Psalms 19:12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

This morning I want to talk to you about this statement that Joshua made, "CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY... WHO YOU WILL SERVE.

What are the lessons we need to learn about man's ability to make choices for good or bad?

**I. YOUR LIFE WILL CONSIST OF CLEAR CHOICES TO OBEY OR DISOBEDY
God TO DO RIGHT OR TO DO WRONG. CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY!**

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

According to the experts on human behavior in the world, men's choices are a by product of their environment, upbringing, and a host of other factors.

Where I came from there was a section of Bucks County where they took people living in slums in the Philadelphia area and relocated them in beautiful low income housing in Bucks county. The idea was that if you got these people out of a slum environment maybe it would make a difference in their lives. So they built these beautiful apartments, and community with beautiful parks and recreation buildings. After a few years, that area was known for crime and problems.

The tenants had graffiti all over the walls in the recreation buildings and people were afraid to go to that area late at night. Truth is that you can take people out of the slums but you can't take the slums out of these people. Same thing is true of third world countries. Many times third world countries are third world countries because people have a third world work ethic and mentality.

The humanistic behavioral scientists just don't understand that many times wrong behavior is a matter of a person's will and choice and not just a by product of their environment.

Now if this were not the case God would not hold people responsible for their actions. We live in a day where everybody wants to give all kind of excuses for improper behavior. Joshua says, CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY. In other words, men do have a choice.

According to the Word of God, God holds people personally responsible for their behavior. In fact even though God in his infinite wisdom knows what men are going to do He still holds them personally responsible for doing wrong.

Consider the history of mankind in regards to choosing to follow the Lord or not. The Bible records man's History of failures:

Even though God knew that Adam and Eve were going to eat from the forbidden fruit He did not prevent them from making the wrong choice. He did not put an angel with a flaming sword to keep men from the forbidden fruit. No, in fact He put the tree right in the midst of the garden, which made it easily accessible.

God will allow us to do what we want to expose our hearts. He did this in so many ways. Why did He not put an angel with a flaming sword to guard men from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil like he did after they sinned to keep them from the tree of life? The reason He did not was because He gave mankind a choice. Choose to love and obey Him or choose death and disobedience. He warned them but did not prevent them from making a wrong choice.

Did He not warn Cain about what he was going to do, yet Cain did not heed His warning and slew his brother. Again He could have prevented him from doing that but He let Cain choose wrong and we should all learn from his wrong. How it corrupted his whole line, until there was no recourse and the world became so violent and wicked that God had to destroy the world and start over again.

He told Noah and his sons to spread out and replenish the earth, instead they decided to stay together and build a city and a tower. THEY CHOSE TO BUILD THAT CITY. THEY CHOSE TO BUILD A TOWER. The fruit of disobedience has never produced anything good. The result of their disobedience was a confounding of the world's languages which produced division, and different nations, and wars and divisions.

Out of the confusion, God called out a special nation who spoke a language called Hebrew. Through Abraham, God established the nation Israel. God established a covenant with that nation promising blessings for obedience and cursing for disobedience. Again the choice was theirs. What did they choose? For the most part they suffered because of disobedience to His covenant. Again God gave men a choice! It got so bad that God sent the nation into captivity for 70 years because of their disobedience. They never once kept the Sabbath year. THEY CHOSE NOT TO OBEY GOD.

CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY.

Finally the Messiah Jesus came to present Himself to the nation and once and again the nation, through its backslidden leaders, rejected Christ. Jesus was crucified and then resurrected from the dead proving He was indeed the Messiah. The leaders of the nation still refused to repent and our Lord opened up the New Covenant to both Jews and Gentiles alike. This established a new dispensation, we call the church age. Today He is working through what He calls a foolish nation, which is not a nation at all. Our Lord now offers His Holy Spirit to anyone who trusts in Him. The gospel is now being offered to all men. Every creature now can become a citizen of Christ's heavenly Kingdom through Jesus Christ.

Now the choice is simple, choose Christ or choose the world. Love Christ or love the world. All that is required is to give your heart to the Lord and turn from the kingdom of Satan and receive Him in your heart. It could not be easier, it could not be simpler! Just love Christ and keep His commandments. So in these last days do we see men choosing Christ? NO!

I encourage you to choose this day to love and serve Christ!

These 2000 years of Church age history has been a saga of corruption. First the church married with Rome and ushered in a dark period of history we call the dark ages. Why did this happen? Because the leadership of the church wanted power that the world offered.

When we read Revelation Chapters 2-3 which describes the 7 churches of Asia, we pretty well see that the majority of churches have some serious issues.

This brings us to the present day that we live in. You are faced with choices.

History has shown that God is not going to force you to make right choices, He will not put a flaming sword in your way so you will always make right choices. All He will do is warn you. He will try to reason with you.

He will say the wages of sin is still death!
He will say be careful sin lieth at the door!!
He will say this is the way walk ye in it.
He will say come unto me, forsake the world and be blessed, I will make my abode with you.
He will say, "Whosoever will may come.."

BUT YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE. CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY, Joshua said.

Now here is the fallacy many people have, they think that if God didn't want them to do something He would stop them. Why didn't God stop Adam and Eve? Why did He not stop Balaam?

I heard people actually say that God made them the way they are and that is the excuse for their improper behavior. You hear this from people all the time. They say, well God made me this way.

I hear a people make excuse for their immorality saying God made me this way.

The fact is it is just the opposite:

Ecclesiastes 7:29 Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

God did not make any man this way. God made men upright according to the Bible, but he sought out many inventions. An invention is an experiment and for the most part men have experimented with sin. These are the inventions the Bible is talking about.

When they sought out many inventions it means they CHOSE NOT TO FOLLOW THE LORD.

CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHO YOU WILL SERVE.

II. MOST MEN WILL CHOOSE TO DISOBEY AND SUFFER FOR IT:

Men left to their own devices generally will do wrong. It would be nice if this were not true but sadly it is.

Why are we surprised when men do not choose to do the right thing?

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Joshua 24:16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

Joshua 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

Joshua 24:20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

Joshua 24:21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

Joshua 24:22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

Joshua said, you cannot do right, you won't choose the Lord! They said yes we will.

It is sad but true, that most people do not choose to do the right thing. Why are we surprised at this. I am not shocked when people do wrong, I am shocked when they do right.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible shows a history of men choosing to do wrong and what happens to them when they go astray.

III. GOD, THROUGHOUT HISTORY, HAS ALLOWED MEN TO SUFFER BECAUSE OF THEIR WRONG CHOICES AND DECISIONS.

This is one of the hardest things for people of the world to believe.

If you read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, you will read a history of the failures of mankind and a History of God dealing with men and letting them experience the heartaches of those failures.

From Adam being ousted from the garden of Eden, to God destroying the world in a great flood in the days of Noah, to the destruction of the nation Israel, all the way to God bringing great tribulation to the world in the book of Revelation.

We are living in a day where men do not like to believe that there is a God in heaven that will allow us to suffer for our wrong choices. The thing is that God wants us to make right choices. Throughout the Bible He says,

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

God finds no pleasure at all in punishing people for their sins, His desire is that men would repent and come to Him and be saved. However, men cannot be saved unless they acknowledge their sin and turn from their evil ways and live.

Here is the dilemma that we have today. We want to believe in a God who tolerates anything. We want to believe in a God who does not judge sin. We want to believe in a God who never lets anyone suffer and is this wishy washy being who just winks at everything.

Look, what we would like to believe and what reality is, are two different things.

Truth is that though we are redeemed and saved we suffer in the flesh as sinners and each of us are going to experience physical death someday if the Lord tarries. Now why is this? It is because in the flesh we have sinned and the wages of sin is death.

Yes our spirit and souls are saved, but in the flesh we suffer for our disobedience.

Did not Ananias and Sapphira suffer punishment for lying to the Holy Ghost?

Did not Judas suffer for his betrayal of the Lord?

On and on we can give examples of people who were chastened because of sinful choices in their lives.

Read in the book of Revelation what the Lord said he would do to the churches who were disobedient to His Word.

These are all examples for our learning that we might fear and seek to do right and serve the Lord.

III. FOR THE FEW THAT CHOOSE TO SERVE THE LORD HE PROMISES TO BLESS THEM.

What greater way can God show Himself but to exhibit His blessing on those who choose properly and seek to serve Him.

Life is full of choices. God wants to bless you and me for making right choices. We ought to fear to make wrong choices, but seek to exalt Him by making right choices.

This is the real power to choose. We can choose to serve the Lord and be blessed.

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, **choose you this day** whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Joshua is now coming to the end of his journey. But at the beginning of his ministry he told him what the key was to being blessed. He said,

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

God has not changed, though his workings with men may have changed through the centuries. What I mean is that Pre-flood He worked through families, post flood He worked through nations and especially Israel. Today He is working through His Church. However, in each economy it is the same. Those who choose to serve the Lord are blessed, those who choose the world and the god or god's of this world will experience His wrath.

This is the power of choosing. Who will you choose to serve?

IV. GOD IS DESIROUS OF RECRUITING SERVANTS HE CAN BLESS FOR MAKING RIGHT CHOICES.

Here is the conclusion of the whole matter. The Bible ends with a challenge to make a right choice.

Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Will you choose to come to the Lord? Will you choose the Lord?

CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY!

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Joshua said, I am going to choose the Lord.

Life is a series of choices.

You can choose to serve the Lord or you choose to serve the world.

This is the power to choose. It is up to you.

In the flesh you will never choose to do right. If you walk in the flesh you will choose wrong every time. Paul said,

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

I Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Paul himself said in the flesh he would choose wrong. He had to keep his body in subjection.

Joshua 24:15 choose you this day whom ye will serve;

I remember years ago I was visiting a couple of young single mothers who had visited our church on our bus. I went there and two single ladies were living in a run down apartment. There were dirty diapers lying in garbage cans. Empty beer bottles strewn around. The odor was horrendous. There were flies all over the place. The apartment was filthy, run down. Old ripped up furniture, dirty dishes in the sink.

I began to share the gospel with them. I shared how Christ wanted to give us a better life. In Christ we can be set free from sin and the bondage of sin. Jesus came to set us free. I shared how the choice was ours. He invites us to come to him. Ephesians 5 says, that He wants us to be His spiritual bride so to speak. He is the King of kings and Lord of Lords. I said imagine if Christ were to drive up in a royal limousine inviting you to be His bride. Willing to take you from this place to His royal palace in heaven. He gives this invitation for you to come to Him what would you say? With flies, hovering over their heads, the smell of dirty diapers, and empty beer bottles strewn every where, on that hot summer day, they said, "WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS? WE'RE HAPPY WHERE WE ARE." Jesus said,

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

How sad it is that Jesus wants to give us something better, but we would rather be miserable.

THE CHOICE IS CLEARLY YOURS. WHO WILL YOU CHOOSE TO SERVE?