

Choosing Between the Two

Joshua 24:14-18

Introduction

- A. At the end of his life, Joshua called the people of Israel together and challenged them to be faithful to God
- B. Joshua demanded that the people make a choice between Yahweh God and the idols worshiped by the people of the land. He had already made his choice - He and his house would serve the Lord!
 1. Choices always have consequences - We must take responsibility for the decisions we make.
 2. It is eternally important that we choose wisely - The Bible offers us much wise advice about making the right decisions
- C. In this study, we intend to consider seven ways in which the choice between right and wrong is presented to us in the New Testament.

I. A Choice Between Two Plantings And Harvestings

A. Galatians 6:7-8

- B. A great many people choose to sow to the flesh.
 1. "Flesh" refers to a sinful, worldly manner of life.
 2. The attraction of sin cannot be denied. It offers temporary pleasure
 3. Moses is commended by the writer of Hebrews, because he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, [rather] than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season - **Hebrews 11:25**
 4. The apostle John outlined the three appeals of temptation in **1 John 2:16** as "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."
 5. One cannot love these worldly things and love God - **1 John 2:15**
- C. We do reap what we sow.
 1. Those who sow to the flesh reap a harvest of corruption and condemnation.
 2. Those with the wisdom to "sow to the Spirit" will reap everlasting life

II. A Choice Between Two Paths

A. Matthew 7:13-14

- B. The easy, well-traveled path leads to destruction while the narrow, difficult way leads to eternal life.
 1. If we think and act the same way most other people think and act, we will end up in the same place with them.
 2. God's people have always needed to be different
 3. The people around the Israelites worshiped pagan idols
 4. Joshua challenged them to be different and serve the living God. It is always easier to conform to the thinking of the world around us, but that isn't the wise choice.

III. A Choice Between Two Foundations

A. Matthew 7:24-27

- B. Jesus illustrated the wisdom of hearing and doing His teachings by comparing it to a wise builder constructing his house on a solid foundation

1. Such a foundation was strong and able to resist the storms, which beat against it.
- C. Every person has the choice of building on a solid foundation or building upon the sand, which is washed away in the storm.
1. God does not force us to accept His word but wise people will choose to put their lives on the solid footing of obedience to the word of God.
 2. Note that this parable of the two builders comes immediately after Jesus' teaching about the judgment:

IV. A Choice Between Two Masters

A. **Matthew 6:24**

B. Albert Barnes wrote, "Christ proceeds to illustrate the necessity of laying up treasures in heaven from a well-known fact, that a servant cannot serve two masters at the same time. His affections and obedience would be divided, and he would fail altogether in his duty to one or the other. One he would love, the other he would hate. To the interests of the one he would adhere, the interests of the other he would neglect. This is a law of human nature. The supreme affections can be fixed on only one object."

C. Mammon is an Aramaic word for "possessions" or "money."

1. A great many people today choose to make money their god. God and Christ cannot have their proper place in our lives when we are worshiping money and material things.
2. Many poor people in Jesus' time were utterly dependent on God for their daily bread. The phrase "give us this day our daily bread" was literally describing a real, daily need in their lives. The accumulation of wealth lessened the urgency of this need and, consequently, the people's dependence on God.
3. It is a very easy thing for any person, whether poor or rich, to make money into an idol more important than God.

V. A Choice Between Two Kinds Of Fruit

A. **Matthew 7:16-20**

B. "Fruit" stands for those things we produce by our actions and attitudes. The harvest will be either:

1. Grapes and figs -- good fruit
2. Thorns and thistles -- bad fruit

C. We can choose what kind of fruit tree we will be. Just like the tree, we shall be known by our fruits.

1. Christians should produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives - **Galatians 5:22-23**
2. Good fruit is not produced automatically. We must choose to bear that kind of fruit in our lives.

VI. A Choice Between Two Sources Of Authority

A. **Acts 5:29**

B. The apostles had the wisdom to understand that their greatest obligation was to obey God, no matter what consequences that action might have with men.

1. They could be persecuted because of that choice. In fact, just a short time after making this statement, the apostles were beaten - **Acts 5:41**
2. Pressures are different today but the temptation to please men can still be stronger than our sense of obligation to obey God.

VII. A Choice Between Two Eternal Destinies

A. Matthew 25:46

B. Everyone will experience one of these two destinies -- eternal life or everlasting punishment.

C. Where you will be for eternity depends on the choices you make now. Choose wisely.

Conclusion

A. How would you answer the question asked by Joshua?

B. Our prayer is that you too would choose to serve God as Joshua and his house

C. Invitation