

January 6, 2019

## Decide

***"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock...But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand..."***

Matthew 7:24-27

***"Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness...But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."***

Joshua 24:14-15

A character in a movie we went to with our grandsons the other day said, 'You can be who ever you choose to be.' I really like that thought. We often think we can become whatever we want to become, but that really isn't true is it? Even if I really want to become a point guard in the NBA or the President of Microsoft, I probably can't become those things. I'm too old and not nearly tall enough to play in the NBA and I am not tech savvy enough to lead Microsoft.

But, I can absolutely choose to be the kind of person I want to be. I am convinced that our power of choice, as God intended it to be used, is a much more powerful tool than most of us will ever recognize.

In truth, most of us live out our lives simply reacting and responding to whatever happens next. We function like pinballs bouncing off whatever obstacle we happen to hit. I really am convinced that living like this is the reason most of us are so stressed and anxious.

When God created us with the power of choice he basically gave us the ability to function in a much better way. Jesus will tell us that we must choose between putting his words into practice or ignoring them. Choosing to hear and do what he commands is wise and ignoring him is absolutely foolish.

Joshua sets us a beautiful example of the power of choice. ***"...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..."*** he challenges the Israelites. He might be challenging you and me with the very same words today. As we stand here at the beginning of a new year, we face so much that is totally unknown and therefore extraordinarily fearful.

We have no idea at all what this new year will throw at us, and, if we are not careful we will simply bounce from one challenge to the next, one opportunity to the next, one crisis to the next, with little or no thought. I do not think that God desires for us to live this way.

I am convinced that God wants us to choose how we will live day by day, not just react. Joshua told the Israelites, ***"...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."*** That doesn't mean that the rest of Joshua's life was easy and uncluttered. It does not mean that there were no challenges, no new opportunities, no crises in his life. But it does mean that the premise which would guide Joshua and his family through whatever years he had left, was ***"...we will serve the Lord..."***

Imagine living tomorrow or the rest of today with that simple premise, that simple paradigm. If the fundamental rule that guided all of our choices, day in and day out, was 'I will serve the Lord', how would that change the way we live and the choices we make.

If I should face the loss of a loved one, a serious health challenge, the opportunity to take a new job, the loss of a job, a serious injury, a major household catastrophe, or a large financial windfall how will I choose to behave? Will I still choose to 'serve the Lord'? How will that choice color the way I live and the way I react to life?

In giving me the power of choice God did not put me in charge of the things that will happen to me throughout my life. But he did give me the power to choose who I will be in the face of all that happens to me in that life. As we stand here at the beginning of a brand new year or even just a brand new day, we are faced with a choice. *"...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..."*

