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THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Weak Christians

He Made the Right Choice

Bill Brinkworth

Before Joshua's death, he gathered the people of Israel together. He reminded them again of all the great and mighty things God had done for them and their fathers. Joshua rehearsed how God took, gave, sent, plagued, brought, put, destroyed, and delivered for them in over 17 instances (Joshua 24:3-13).

With all the memories of God's helping His people, the leader also reminded them of their failures. He told them how they continued to backslide from God and repeatedly had to be rescued from the consequences of their poor choices. Many of the rescues God performed were because the people had not learned their lesson yet and were still of two opinions.

Sometimes they served God, and sometimes they served the losing side and its false gods. Trying to live for God was a constant struggle for them. Their minds were not

completely made up, or they would not have repeatedly made the same mistakes.

No matter Israel's questionable loyalty to God, it was not a hard decision for Joshua. His mind was already made up. A long time previously, he had decided who His God was and that he would be faithful in obedience to Him. It was no longer a struggle for him whom he would serve when he said: *“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. 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 24:14-15*

Israel's leader used interesting terms in describing many of the people's desires not to serve God. He used: "... if it seem evil." This wording indicated that some people thought that serving their creator and protector was physically, socially, or morally bad for them. This thinking is not unlike the thoughts today by many. Too many think serving God and obeying his commandments are unprofitable to them because:

- **They may miss all the “fun” if they follow God's commands.** Sin is only “fun” for a short time: *“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a*

season;” *Hebrews 11:25*. Sin never gives true joy, only temporary satisfaction.

- **They do not know that there is a price tag for sin.** No one gets away with sin. Sin always does damage and only gives short-lived satisfaction (*Hebrews 11:25*).

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Proverb 28:13

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23

- **His way is not the world’s way.** By following God’s way, they will appear strange and different from others. They will not fit in. Yes, God’s way is different. Yes, you will not fit in if you are obedient to God, but why do you want to be like the losing side anyway? God’s way is always better. He has raised billions of children, and His ways are the best.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:9

- **They only see the “now” and forget the eternal.** There is life after death. There is an eternity in either Heaven or Hell. What sense is there in missing an eternity in Heaven for temporal satisfaction in a relatively short time here on Earth?

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Mark 8:36

The world's excuses of the past for not serving God are not much different than those of today. The reasons come from the same rebellious and disobedient heart. No matter the times, the answer to God can be the same as Joshua's: "... *but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*" (Joshua 24:15) No matter what others think or do, we can always be different and do right!

"When God put you back on your feet, do not return to the same situation that made you fall in the past."

— Author Unknown

Baby Christians

Bill Brinkworth

In I Corinthians 3, Paul discusses spiritually weak people. He identifies this type of Christian at the church in Corinth (I Cor. 1:2) as baby Christians (I Cor. 3:1).

Because they had not spiritually matured, the preacher had to watch what he said and taught those people. He could only tell them the less demanding things of God. If he revealed to them the "harder" things of God, they would react improperly to the spiritual "meat." They were saved because Paul addressed them as "brethren" (I Cor. 3:1), but they were very carnal (I Cor. 3:3).

Noah Webster defined "carnal" as "pertaining to the flesh." The "baby" Christians' deep involvement in things of the world clouded any dealings the Spirit of God tried to have with them. They did what felt good and interested them, and were not spiritually pliable.

Today, Christianity is also weakened by those that are trying to straddle both worlds. They never grow in the things of the Lord. They try to be like everyone else and have all the pleasures this life can offer them and minimally tip their hat to God. Obedience to God is not a priority in their thinking.

Any mention of God's "harder" spiritual commandments and many today also get uncomfortable or mad. They can agree on being saved and may even be baptized. Heads will nod in agreement to Christian practices that do not require sacrifice or changes.

However, mention separation from sinful practices or from influences that could get one too close to sin, and suddenly "the preacher is fanatical." Suggest obeying the commandments recorded in the Bible, and their justification will be, "I don't think God meant it for today. That was for people a long time ago."

Show them where the Bible says that one should give God part of their income (Malachi 3:8-9), and their anger turns their face red. They stammer, "God knows I can't afford it, so he doesn't expect me to give," or "That was for Old Testament times only." Hint that they should be faithful in attending church, and you will hear more justification and excuses for their lack of commitment to the assembly of local believers.

We still have “baby” Christians today. They never “grow up” spiritually. They seldom take the steps of faith necessary to help them grow closer and be more dependent on their loving Father. Amazingly, many of them even model themselves after the early, carnal church of Corinth and ignore Paul’s rebuke of that church’s immature Christian practices.

Carnality will always be a temptation for all Christians. Encouragingly, however, there are still some that step out by faith and do whatever the Holy Spirit leads to do.

Those believers seek God’s direction. Their attitude is, “Okay, Lord, show me in your Word what you want me to do next.” Happily, those Christians do what they are shown to do and allow God to use them and work in their lives. They are the ones that have no problem digesting the “meat” that God enables them to hear. Those Christians are the ones God is looking for and uses the most.

“Everything you do is based on your choices. It’s not your parents, past relationships, job, economy, weather, argument, or environment that is usually to blame. You and only you are responsible for every decision and choice you make. Choose wisely!”

— Author Unknown

Separate

Smith Wigglesworth

The reason the world is not seeing Jesus is that Christian people are not filled with Jesus. They are satisfied with

attending meetings weekly, reading the Bible occasionally, and praying sometimes. It is an awful thing to see people who profess to be Christians but are lifeless, powerless, and in a place where their lives are so parallel to unbelievers' lives that it is difficult to tell if they are children of God.

“Middle-of-the-road Christians often get run over by both sides!” — B. B.

The Keeper's Light

Author Unknown

A traveler, visiting the lighthouse at Calais, said to the keeper, “What if one of your lights should go out at night?”

“Never! Impossible!” the keeper cried. “Sir, yonder are ships sailing to all parts of the world. If tonight one of my burners were out, I will hear from America or India in six months. They would say that the lights at Calais lighthouse gave no warning on such a night, and some vessel had been wrecked. Ah, sir! Sometimes I feel, when I look upon my lights as if the eyes of the entire world were fixed upon me. Go out? Burn dim? Never! Impossible!”

What a lesson to the Christian! It is no romance that makes the Christian a spiritual lighthouse for the world, with the eyes of the entire world upon him. Let then his example be full, bright, and clear. The moment he neglects it, and leaves his “lamps” untrimmed, some poor soul, struggling amid the waves of temptation, will be dashed upon the

rocks of destruction for lack of a good, Christian testimony to lead them to safety.