

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Joshua 24:15-21**.
- B. Man is a creature of volition which means he has the power of choice.
- C. We make many, many decisions each day; some important, some not so important.
- D. Joshua used his free will, and decided to follow the Lord. He then asked the Israelites to do the same. How should we use our free will?

I. HOW WE RECEIVED OUR FREE WILL.

- A. We have free will because mankind was made in the image of the Godhead. The Bible says that all three have the power of choice:
 - 1. God changed his mind at the prayer of Moses (Ex. 32:12-14).
... Turn from Thy burning anger and change Thy mind about doing harm to Thy people. "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants to whom Thou didst swear by Thyself, and didst say to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.
 - 2. Jesus choose to whom He would reveal God (Lk. 10:22).
"All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."
 - 3. The HS chose certain people to have certain gifts (1Cor. 12:11).
But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.
- B. Since the three of the Godhead have free will; and we have been created in their image (Gen. 1:26-27), we also have a free will.

II. EXAMPLES OF HUMAN VOLITION.

- A. Pilate wished to satisfy the multitude (Mk. 15:15).
And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified.
- B. A decision by the majority (Ac. 27:12).
And because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.
- C. Moses chose to endure ill-treatment (Heb. 11:25).
...choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin;

III. MAN'S FREE WILL CAN LEAD HIM TO GOOD OR LEAD HIM TO BAD.

- A. Bad--that has resulted from choice:
 - 1. Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:6).
When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.
 - 2. Those desiring great wealth fall into temptation (1Tim. 6:9).
But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.
- B. Good--that has resulted from choice:
 - 1. Joshua and his household (Jo. 24:15).
"And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

2. Peter and John chose to obey God rather than men (Ac. 5:28-29).
...saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men."

IV. MAN IS NOT UNDER COMPULSION TO SIN.

- A. Flip Wilson's, "The devil made me do it!" is not true. The devil never made anyone, do anything. A passage that shows this to be true is 1Cor. 10:13.
No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.
- B. 1Corinthians 10:13 passage shows:
 1. There are no special cases, no unique situations.
 2. There is a decision to be made when temptation is present: we can choose to give in to temptation or we can choose to take the way of escape and not sin.
- C. We are drawn to sin by our own lusts (Jas. 1:14-15).
But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
- D. Conclusion: We choose to sin, the devil doesn't make us.

V. MAN IS NOT UNDER COMPULSION TO DO GOOD (SERVE GOD).

- A. The invitation of X (Mt. 11:28) tells us what we must chose. If there was no choice of doing good, Jesus would not have needed to invite us to do good!
- B. God is NOT going to "pick us up and throw us into heaven."
- C. Jesus lays down the cost of discipleship by asking us whether we accept it (Mt. 16:24-25).
Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.
- D. God did not make us robots, which have no power of choice: We must decide for ourselves whether or not we are going to serve Him.

VI. THE VALUE OF FREE WILL.

- A. Without the power of choice there is no *specialness* (preciousness).
- B. My wife is *special* to me because I chose her above all others.
- C. See the *specialness* in the Father's attitude toward the prodigal son (who chose not to serve and then to serve) as compared to the other son who always served (under compulsion). See Lk. 15:11-32.
- D. The cross of Christ is so special for many reasons, but one is that Jesus chose to go there (Lk. 22:42).
...saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done."

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. You will exercise your free will when it comes to the question of following God.
- B. One might say they have not decided yet, but if one doesn't choose God then they have chosen against Him. There is no middle ground.
- C. On behalf of X, be reconciled to God. Choose Him today.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.