

CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

Int.

1. Aim: To show that the choices we make about money will have eternal consequences.
2. Gal. 6:7-8 "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - a. Principle of sowing and reaping - We always reap fruit of the seed sown
 - b. Every seed produces after its kind. There are no exceptions !!!
 - c. Examples:
 - (1) We cannot sow strife and expect peace
 - (2) If we sow hate we will not reap love
 - (3) Truth does not come from lies.
 - (4) Seeds of envy do not bring forth joy
 - d. This does not fail in any sense !
3. Let us notice this principle in the use of our money.
 - a. The use we make of our money can decide our soul's destiny.
 - b. Paul said "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Tim. 6:10 NKJV
4. In this lesson we will notice two people and the choices they made about money and the consequences for their life.
 - a. Zacchaeus - Luke 19:1-10
 - b. Rich Young Ruler - Matt.19:16-26

Discussion

I. Zacchaeus the Tax Collector - Luke 19:1-10

- A. (v.2) He was chief among the publicans - "And, behold, [there was] a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich."
1. Publicans were tax collectors for the Roman Government.
 - a. These publicans were justly regarded by the Jews as apostates and traitors, and were classed with the lowest and most abandoned characters.
 - b. The Greeks regarded the word "publican" as synonymous with "plunderer."
 2. It surely also made him all the more despised by the Jewish community
 3. This must have been a position of power and privilege.
- B. (v.2) He was rich - or wealthy - had an abundance of material goods
1. This didn't make Zacchaeus evil, but it no doubt was a temptation to him to be dishonest, etc.
 2. Edersheim contrasts his Jewish name which means "the just" or "pure" with the perception that men would have of a rich, successful publican.
 3. Jericho was a thriving business community of trade agriculture and commerce - this may explain his riches.
 4. Matt. 19:23 - Hard for the rich to enter heaven "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."

C. (v.3) He was unable to see Jesus because he was too short “And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.”

1. Jericho had been filled with reports about Jesus, and great excitement existed among the people. Zacchaeus shared this excitement.
2. He climbed a tree to be able to see--he found a solution to his problem of being short.
3. This indicates he was dissatisfied--he knew he needed to see Jesus.
4. His riches did not give him satisfaction.

D. V. 5-6 “And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.”

1. Jesus looked up and saw Zacchaeus and told him to come down
2. This is the only instance where Jesus invited himself to be any man's guest.
3. He knew the feeling of Zacchaeus toward him, and hence had no doubt as to his welcome. Jesus says, "I must."
4. Zacchaeus hurried down and received Jesus with great joy.

E. V. 7-8 “And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.”

1. Some murmured and complained as they accused Jesus of being a guest with a sinner.
2. Zacchaeus explains how he is honest in his dealings with others. He gives half to the poor and if anything is taken wrongly he restores it fourfold.

F. V. 9-10

1. Salvation is come to this house
2. Though as yet Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 15:24), and was not proclaiming salvation to the Gentiles, yet he could consistently receive Zacchaeus, for, though an outcast publican, he had not so forfeited his sonship in Abraham as to bar him from this right. He was one of the "lost sheep," the very class to which Jesus was sent. The son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost.

G. When Zacchaeus met Jesus

1. What was his attitude about Jesus? He wanted to see him.
2. Why did people speak ill of Jesus when he went to Zacchaeus' house? He was a sinner or they presumed he was.
3. He discussed his riches with the Lord:
 - a. Was he generous to the poor? Yes. He gave half.
 - b. What did he do if he had defrauded anyone? Restore 4 fold.
4. Was Zacchaeus a sinner? Yes.
5. Did Jesus pardon his sins? Yes

II. The rich, young ruler (Matt.19:16-26, Mk.10:17-27, Lk.18:18-30)

- A. Matt. 19:22 - He had great possessions
 - 1. Like Zacchaeus, this was a characteristic of this person that could be a temptation and snare
 - 2. How was his attitude different toward his riches than that of Zacchaeus?

- B. Matt. 19:20 - He was a young man
 - 1. But he was an adult, not a youth, because he had kept the law "from his youth"
 - 2. Being young is neither an advantage or a disadvantage, but there is great potential in youth, both for good and for evil.

- C. Luke 18:18 - He was a ruler
 - 1. Not knowing what kind of ruler, we can at least assume that this meant he had some power or position
 - 2. This young man was undoubtedly a man of good reputation, and not at all like a publican

III. A comparison of the two men and their choices is helpful

- A. Similarities:
 - 1. Both were rich
 - 2. Both were Israelites
 - 3. Both were eager to meet Jesus
 - 4. Both talked with Jesus and were instructed by Him

B. Differences:

1. Zacchaeus was generous with his riches, the ruler chose not to be
2. Zacchaeus had a poor reputation with his country-men--the ruler apparently had a good reputation
3. Their choices in life when they met Jesus were quite different

C. Zacchaeus' choice--to repent, restore, and be blessed

1. Zacchaeus joyfully received Jesus - Lk.19:6 "And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully."
2. He indicated his repentance from any wrongdoing in money matters - Lk.19:8 "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore [him] fourfold."
3. He was blessed with forgiveness by Jesus - Lk.19:9 "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is a son of Abraham."

D. The rich young ruler's choice--to turn away in sorrow

1. He had been a keeper of the Law of Moses - Matt.19:20
2. He wanted eternal life - Matt.19:16
3. Did he still want eternal life when he left Jesus? If not, why was he sorrowful?
4. If he still wanted eternal life, why didn't he obey Jesus' command?
5. Why was this man's choice such a sad one?

IV. The choices and their consequences (and what we learn)

- A. There is a fundamental difference between the attitude the young ruler and Zacchaeus had toward their wealth.
1. Mark 10:23-24 - It is hard for those with riches to enter into God's kingdom. Is the problem the possession of riches, or the trust in riches (v.24)?
 2. I Tim. 6:17-19 - What special instructions did Paul give Timothy to command the rich? "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."
 3. I Tim. 6:6-11 - What is the end result of the love of money? 1Tim 6:10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
 4. Note that this verse is one of those often misquoted by the unknowing--it is not "money is the root of all evil", but the LOVE of money! - "all kinds of evil"
- B. Each man made his choices according to what he truly loved
1. Zacchaeus truly loved serving Jesus more than he loved his wealth, and was willing to prove it.
 2. The rich young ruler truly, though obeying the law up to this point, loved his riches more than he loved God or eternal life.
 3. Which man do you suppose regretted his choice the most in life and in eternity?
 4. Do we love the wrong things, and make choices which we, upon reflection, regret?

C. The consequences of their choices are staggering

1. The rich young ruler lost the chance to be a disciple of Christ, have peace of mind, be forgiven by Jesus
2. Zacchaeus saw salvation come to his house that day
3. We must recognize that the choices we make in life have the same effect on our lives here and destinies for eternity.
4. Which of these men are we most like in our choices?

Conclusion

1. Luke 12:15 NKJV "And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." B.B.E. And he said to them, Take care to keep yourselves free from the desire for property; for a man's life is not made up of the number of things which he has.
2. We reap according to what we sow !
3. One Sunday morning a preacher found this note on the pulpit "Please offer special prayers for a member of this congregation who is growing wealthy".
4. Paul said "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.." 1 Tim. 6:9 NKJV
- Snare = a trap (as fastened by a noose or notch); figuratively, a trick or stratagem
5. The Hebrew writer says: Heb 13:5 ASV Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.."
6. Remember Zacchaeus and the Rich Young Ruler!

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