

MAKING POOR CHOICES

Jno.6:70-71

INTRODUCTION:

Most of us usually feel like we can often recognize poor choices that are made by others, but it's a rare person indeed who can very often identify his own! It would seem that Jesus made a poor choice when He chose Judas -- but remember, He told His disciples time and again that one of them would betray Him. WAS Judas a poor choice? Certainly not! Which one of the disciples had better characteristics for being a betrayer? It wasn't in the nature of Peter or John to do it. Judas was the man for the job!

We can search the life of Christ and find no poor choices that He made. Too bad we can't say this for ourselves. The only reason for a lesson such as this is to impress us with the care that needs to be taken when we DO MAKE CHOICES!

I. FIRST, CONSIDER SOME POOR CHOICES SOME CONGREGATIONS HAVE MADE, PARTICULARLY IN CHOOSING PERSONNEL!

A. IN CHOOSING BIBLE CLASS TEACHERS. [It seems that, in some places, the only criteria that's been used is to just try to furnish a warm body! Need to realize we're informing and influencing the souls of the students in the classrooms, and let this weigh heavily on whom we're selecting or on our being selected!]

1. We need teachers who *feel a great love for God and a compassion for teaching others* of Christ, and to fulfill the same mission the Master Teacher had when He was on earth! Mt.22:37ff; Luke 19:10.
2. We need teachers who *have manifested an active interest in all phases of the work and worship* of the church, and who *recognize the need for continued growth*, even on their parts! [Including, but not limited to attending services, serving the needs of others, friendly to both those IN/OUT of the body of Christ, giving DILIGENCE to bear one another's burdens!] Eph.5:17; 2 Pet.3:18.
3. We need teachers who'll *be in their classrooms BEFORE students* start arriving [esp. important in younger students classes], who'll *have their lessons PREPARED*, and who'll *enter into each session with exuberance and enthusiasm*, regardless of the number present! Eccl.9:10- "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might!*"
4. We need teachers who *are faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and NOT BE GUILTY of putting someone over a class just to try to get them to become faithful! [Truly, this is "the blind leading the blind"!
 - a) That's like putting a known thief in to count the collections!
 - b) Need to PROVE OURSELVES FIRST in order to be put into a position that wields a lot of influence! Luke 16:10- "*He that's faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in least is unjust in much!*"

B. IN CHOOSING PREACHERS TO WORK WITH A CONGREGATION, both full time & in meeting work!

1. I BELIEVE THAT to be worthy of being supported as a preacher by a congregation, a man needs to be a good student of the word, with a deepseated commitment to Christ and an allegiance to the truth, an ambitious involvement in a study-program of the Bible, with enough conviction and stability not to be tossed about as a wave, but enough love for the TRUTH that changes will be constant and decisive, and enough love for others to maintain a diligence in service!
 - a) Though trying not to be judgmental, I have personally known some and been aware of others who've acted like being a preacher is just one big long vacation period!
 - 1) It seems some are *too lazy* to do anything else, so they decide to become preachers!
 - 2) Many have the mistaken idea that the work of preaching is EASY!
 - b) May I impress you that a preacher's job IS A WORK? 2 Tim.2:5-"*Do the WORK of an evangelist!*" --- and anyone who's NOT DOING A WORK is just not a preacher of the Lord's!

- c) **AND WE NEED TO FEEL A DEDICATED URGENCY**, because that work is NEVER DONE! [We *haven't learned all the truth ... all the lost aren't saved ... all the troubled aren't comforted*, etc.]
- 2. **I BELIEVE THAT** in order to be "**sound in the faith**" it takes a continuous study of the Bible, a constant examination of self and of doctrine, and a lovingkindness and tender compassion for all!
 - a) And a congregation should be very careful in selecting someone who's going to be one of its most influential members, to beware of the warnings against false teachers, and to recognize that ALL OF US need to be involving ourselves in and focusing upon the DOCTRINE OF THE LORD! **2 Pet.2:1-** *"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves."*
 - b) Preachers need to be **doctrine-oriented** instead of always trying to be **issue-oriented**! **Prov.6:16-19-** *"These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren."*

C. **IN CHOOSING ELDERS TO TEND TO THE FLOCK!**

- 1. And again, elders **must be selected who MEET the qualifications** the Lord set, and not be appointed in order to TRY TO QUALIFY!
 - a) I've often thought of the wisdom this membership manifested when Mike/Glenn were selected/appointed to serve this congregation -- because they met the Lord's criteria!
 - b) The elders have to have a tremendous devotion **TO** the Lord, and **to** his people, a love for others, and a concern for bearing the burdens of others, a watchful and caring attitude for the safety of the flock, and a keen insight into the truth they're willing to share with others!
- 2. Elders must **stand firmly upon the Word of God**, in their lives, in their teaching, and in the teaching that is being done to the congregation they're responsible for feeding! **Tit.1:9-** *"holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict!"*
- 3. Elders must **understand the gravity of their leadership roles** in the congregation!
 - a) Everything that points out the eldership's responsibilities comes across as a WORK they are to accomplish: feed/ tend/ shepherd/ watch/ stop mouths/ et al
 - b) The elders put their souls on the line for you and me by saying, essentially, *"we'll help you try to go to heaven or we'll go to that lake of fire with you!"* **Heb.13:17.**

II. **POOR CHOICES INDIVIDUALS HAVE MADE.**

A. **MANY HAVE MADE POOR CHOICES IN THEIR MARRIAGE.**

- 1. Selecting a mate is certainly one of life's most important decisions, so why is it so often decided so emotionally, in the dark, and often with our eyes closed?
- 2. We need all the help we can possibly get in order to go to heaven! If you think it's not hard to be faithful as a christian, to be diligent in our efforts, and stedfast in our duty with the one human being we love most in the world NOT PULLING THAT LOAD WITH US, then just ask ANYONE who has experienced that! It's NOT impossible, but why would anyone CHOOSE to LIMIT HIS CHANCES to go to heaven?

B. **POOR CHOICES OFTEN MADE REGARDING OUR SELECTING A VOCATION.**

- 1. In selecting our careers, we need to make sure it won't **HINDER US** in our service to Christ! I recognize the responsibility of **1 Tim.5:8**, and I ALSO realize what JESUS said in **Matt.6:33**.
- 2. Job opportunities and/or transfers ought to be considered NOT just for a step up in the "**pecking order**" of the company, but **HOW IT RELATES TO AN INCREASED ABILITY TO SERVE THE LORD!**

C. **The category where POOREST CHOICES HAVE BEEN MADE IS CERTAINLY IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM!**

- 1. By focusing on the world even while harboring a desire to maintain a semblance of religious stability.

- a) Demas just made up his mind and left! **2 Tim.4:10.**
- b) Ananias & Sapphira chose to play a deadly game with God -- AND THEY LOST! **Acts 5:1-11.**
- c) We must “zero in” on ***SERVING GOD*** and **LET THAT BE MOST IMPORTANT IN OUR LIVES!**
- 2. By disregarding the urgency of obedience to God by thinking there’ll always be enough time later!
 - a) This was the folly of Felix in **Acts 24:25-** *“And as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you.”*
 - b) Why is it older folks often are urging the young to “not put off till tomorrow what you can get done today”? **POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN FOOLISH NOTIONS OF PROCRASTINATION!**
 - c) And Paul’s exhortation was: **2 Cor.6:2-** *“Behold, now is the accepted time, TODAY is the day of salvation!”*
- 3. Especially seen in the three narratives of Jesus in **Matthew 25:**
 - a) The five foolish virgins, the one-talent man who hid it in the ground, and those Jesus placed on His left & then told them to DEPART, because they didn’t care for the needs of others!
 - b) Christianity is a POSITIVE religion, and we must make WISE CHOICES to be acceptable in the sight of God!

CONCLUSION:

Our lives are made up of many choices every day we need to use as much discretion as possible to make sure we CHOOSE WISELY! JUST NOW you’re going to make a choice regarding the commands of Jesus Christ! B+R+C+B---RF. **ISA.7:15-** *“Refuse the evil and choose the good!”* **Josh.24:15-** *“Choose ye this day whom, ye will serve....”*