

Aug 29 2010 Genesis 3

CHOICES WE MAKE & THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Last Sunday I read in the Parade magazine the girl who played in the TV hit, ‘Married with Children.’ She was proud of the fact that their program led the way in changing the morality of our country. People watched it because it pushed the envelope. They were on the cutting edge of the decline in morality on the TV, and she was proud of her part in that fall. Just look at what has happened to TV since then...as far as I’m concerned, it’s gone downhill.

The other day I saw a book I’m going to buy. It looked at the new entertainment ministries and how sometimes we entertain more than getting the truth of God’s Word across. There’s a fine line there. Chuck Swindoll said it was time to get back to the basics, time to get to the truth of the Gospel message. I think he might be on to something. We need a revival in our faith. We need to hear the truth as God intended us to hear it. Sometimes we get caught up in worldly things and forget the truth, or the truth is stretched or it is watered down. Dare I say some would even say outdated or irrelevant for today? In the movie “A Few Good Men” Tom Cruise was quizzing Jack Nicholson about what happened at his base, Jack

yelled at Tom that “You can’t handle the truth,” to which Tom Cruise yelled back, “What is the truth?”

Isn’t that what we want to know? At least I hope we want to know the truth from God’s word. I hope no one here wants to stand before God and tell him you didn’t know the truth of his word because, well you never read or studied it, and when the preacher preached you slept. That would be embarrassing, and man, you might be escorted to the one way elevators with the sign saying “DOWN.”

What is the truth? For today, the truth is God’s word is the same yesterday, as it is today, as it will be tomorrow. Not watered down. Not picked over looking for just the good stuff. God said it; I believe it, every word and phrase, every story, every example. It’s the truth that has stood the test of times. Over the years God just shakes his head and says, “Children, children, children. You better get your act together before it’s too late, for one day you will stand in front of me for your evaluation.”

So this morning we begin from the beginning to answer the age old question, “What is truth?” Our subject is **CHOICES** understanding...**THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES IN THE CHOICES WE MAKE.**

In the beginning of time God created everything in this world out of nothing. There was darkness and then there was light. God continued with his paintbrush in creating the masterpiece we now know as this world. Out of dust he created Adam, then came Eve and everything was good. We might say Adam was built like a body builder, and Eve was a 'perfect 10.' In fact, after God placed Adam and Eve in the garden, God looked at his masterpiece and said, "This is very good." God turned Adam and Eve loose in the garden to enjoy the animals, the plants, the fruit, the peace for them to enjoy. However, God had a few restrictions, well just one. In the middle of the garden there was a tree that was off limits. They could eat from all the other trees the fruit that would satisfy their longings, but that tree was dangerous, so dangerous that if they picked the fruit they would die. In fact, we read these words in "*you must not even touch it.*"

Now Adam and Eve were content. They enjoyed all God had given them. They walked around that place and discovering new things every day, new streams, new animals that Adam would name. They walked hand in hand most of the time exploring all of God's creation thinking they were blessed. They feasted from what God had provided and life was good. No work, no pains, no anger, no troubles, no heartaches, no sorrow, no death, no bad things what-so-ever. Man it was great.

Who knows how long this perfect life in a perfect place went on? They were happy because they had God and they didn't have a worry in the world.

Then one day something happened that changed this perfect picture. One day as Eve was taking her morning walk listening to country music, a little Carrie Underwood, Brad Pasley, Kenny Chesney, some Christian praise music by Sandi Patti and Casting Crowns, a little Frankie Sinatra thrown in on her iPod, out from behind a tree slithers a creature Eve had never seen. It seemed like one of them, except just a little different. If she looked close enough it looked like he had a forked tongue, and beady eyes. The creature began to have a conversation with Eve. "Nice day isn't it." "It certainly is, sir. Every day we've been here has been just wonderful. God is good! By the way, I've never seen you around here. What do you do here? How long have you been here?" The creature answered Eve, "Let's just say I just 'popped' in for a few minutes. God and I go way, way, way back. But enough about me." The creature stands by the tree in the middle of the garden, you know, the one they were told to stay away from and says to Eve, "Isn't this the best tree you have ever seen? Look at this wonderful fruit. I bet it would melt in your mouth." Eve answers, "Oh, my husband and I have been forbidden to touch that tree. God said we could have everything else, but we aren't to even touch it or we will die." The creature laughs a little laugh and says, "Oh come on now Eve, may I

call you by your name? I'm sure you misunderstood what God said. How could a fruit so good be so bad? Just look at it. This is the season when this tree gives the best fruit. God didn't mean for you not to enjoy it. After all, didn't he say you could have anything in this garden? And besides, God doesn't make bad stuff, so nothing bad could come from eating one piece of fruit from this tree." Eve looked at the tree and her eyes seemed focused on the fruit, how it was so wonderful to look at, how it glistened in the sunlight, how it even had a great fragrance that seemed to be drawing her to it. But she stood her ground. "No sir! This tree really has great looking fruit but God said to stay away from it." The creature knowing Eve had taken the bait began to reel her in like a fisherman who has latched on to big fat trout. "Now Eve, just one bite. Besides there is a side benefit to this tree that God didn't tell. Those who eat from it will be just like Him. Wouldn't you like to be like God? You know, know everything, do everything, and provide for yourself? That's why God didn't want you or Adam to eat this because you wouldn't need him. God isn't even around. In fact he hasn't been around for a long, long time. I think he left you guys to take care of this garden and he went on vacation. So you better start thinking about yourselves and how to survive in this place." Eve was a little skeptical but she just couldn't take her eyes off the fruit of that tree. It captivated her. It just seemed to beckon to "Come pick me. Come taste and see how good I

am. Come and enjoy my flavor. I'm to die for." Eve looked around to see if Adam was there to help her make a decision, but he was coming from his walk. The creature looks at Eve and says, "Oh go ahead, it isn't going to hurt. Eat, enjoy, and be like God."

Eve couldn't resist any longer. She reached up, picked the fruit and she realized she didn't die. In fact she didn't know what dying was. Then she held the fruit in her hand and admired it until the urge was so great she took a bite and it was good. When Adam approached that same tree he yelled out, "Eve what are you doing? God said not to eat that fruit or touch the tree or you will die." "But Adam, this creature over here told me it would okay. He said we would be just like God if we ate from this tree and God wouldn't really mind. Adam, we wouldn't need God if we were like him. We could fend for ourselves. And look, I touched the tree and even took a bite and nothing has happened to me. It tastes so goooooood! Here, take a bite." So Adam takes a bite, and guesses what. He doesn't die either. He thinks they are okay....for the moment... and then something awful happened... **THEIR EYES WERE OPENED....** And when they looked at each other **THEY REALIZED THEY WERE N-A-K-E-D, NAKED!** And for some reason they were ashamed because the next thing you know they picked some fig leaves and covered up those private parts that they didn't worry about before. After all this

their demeanor changed. Fear became part of their lives. You see, they heard a voice in the distance. It was God. He had come back. They could hear him calling out to them, “Eve, Adam, where are you? Eve, Adam, I want to talk to you. Eve, Adam, where are you?” And a shameful Adam and Eve went looking for a bush to hide under. They were shaking in their boots hoping God would not find them. But God roamed the garden calling their names, looking high and low for them. Finally, he came to the bush where they were hiding and said, “Well, there you are. I finally found you. Why are you hiding? Eve, what are you doing wearing fig leaves? Adam, do I see you covered with one too?” Adam peeks his head out from behind the bush and sheepishly says to God, “I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.” Eve stays behind Adam trying to cover up her body as God asks, “Who told you, you were naked? Did you eat fruit from the tree which I commanded you not to eat? Shame on both of you.” Adam says, “This **woman you gave me**, she’s the blame. She gave me the fruit.” “Eve pokes her head from behind Adam and says, “But it wasn’t **my** fault. It was that other creature **you** created that tempted me to eat it.” Meanwhile, that creature, you know that snake-in-the-grass creature, says “Hey, don’t look at me. I didn’t twist their arms to pick it. I didn’t put it in their mouths. They did those things on their own. **They made the choice to pick and eat it.**”

Friends, you all know this story well. Let me read God's truth found in

GENESIS CHAPTER 3.

The title of this sermon is **CHOICES WE MAKE AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES**. A few years back country legend George Jones was driving his car down a highway and lost control and crashed and almost died. He had been drinking. In fact, he drank a lot in those days. He survived that crash. It wasn't too long after that, maybe a few days or a week or so his new album came out called "Choices" which included the title song about making choices in his life. Though it came after the fact, it struck home, and George Jones changed his habits and began to make the right choices. Listen now to his song **PLAY CD**.

We all make choices in this life. I was almost asleep the other night thinking about this sermon and I thought of the widow lady that Jesus mentions to his disciples as they entered church one day. Just before she entered, as Jesus and his merry men stood watching, a rich young man came to church, stopped at the offering plate, took out a \$50 dollar bill, and proudly for all to see placed it in the plate and went to his seat. A few minutes later a poor widow with two small kids came struggling up the way, stopped at the offering plate, scrounged around in her purse and found the last quarter she had and held it in her hand. She looked at the

plate, looked at her kids, looked at the quarter, looked to heaven and muddled a few words that just Jesus seemed to hear. “Father, this is all I have. But you can have it. I and the kids will survive somehow.” She carefully places the quarter into the plate hoping others would not be able to tell how much she put in and she nudged her children toward a few seats in the back pew. Jesus told his disciples this woman will be blessed more than the rich man because she made the right choice to give from her heart all she had and count on her God to supply all her needs for her family. One gave out of his abundance.... She gave all.

Choices. We make them all the time. We decide which TV program to watch. We decide which movie to see or book or magazine to read. We chose which team to root for. Sometimes we put ourselves in harm’s way because of those choices. We open ourselves to temptations that the tricky skunk can use to lure you into sin. He can’t twist your arm to do it, but he can certainly put all those temptations in the way and convince you everyone else is doing those things, so why not jump on the band wagon. If you don’t think so think about those of you who are on diets and you go out to eat. How many times have you seen a menu advertising “these foods will harm you?” When you’ve gone to Culvers, how many times have you looked up to check to see what they were selling and saw a picture of some ugly food dripping with so much grease it would be an instant clogged artery? Not once! They

show you the best to entice you into eating what they are selling. Do they make the choice for you? No! You decide to buy. To entice you more they ask, “Do you want to super size?”

Choices! We make them all the time. We make good choices and then we make bad choices. The good choices will never harm you. But those bad choices, well they have severe consequences. In our state as you drive down the interstate you often see the neon red sign high above the highway that states, “Click it or ticket...it’s the law!” Or another one, “You drink, you drive, and you lose.”

All these warnings and guess what. I pick up the paper and read about people who have driven drunk and lost their license or gone to jail because they drove while drinking, had an accident and killed or maimed someone. Just recently a father drove drunk to Glenarm and had an accident that killed his 2 year old son. Now he is in jail, going to face a trial, and perhaps serve lots of time in prison with the thought of the day he chose to get behind the wheel of truck after having something to drink with his child with him. He is paying the ultimate price for his choice to drink and drive.....he is responsible for his son’s death.

Choices! God’s word is full of those who have made the wrong choices and had to pay the consequence. Judas paid the consequence for betraying Jesus. The

Hebrew nation coming out of Egypt paid the consequences of wandering in the wilderness for 40 years until they all died because they made a choice not to trust God. Satan made a choice one day in heaven to rebel against God's way and was banished from the garden.

Look at what happened to Adam and Eve and the other creature that made bad choices. They were escorted to the gates of the city and told not to ever come back again. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit they did not die physically, but things changed. They knew the difference of good and evil and what they did was evil for sin had now entered the world. They were not only our first parents who gave birth to the world. But they were also the first to give birth to sin. The consequence of Adam's poor choice he now was going to have to work to make a living. No easy life. Now there were weeds, big boulders to move, wild animals to watch out for, wild snakes that slither on their bellies to strike their prey. He had to get his food to provide for his family. Eve, well, there would be pain in having children, and some other stuff some of you ladies would not like to talk about, all because she plucked that fruit. The creature, well we know, he was told he would crawl on his stomach. They all paid the highest consequences for the wrong they did. No second chances. No mulligan.

So think about the choices you make. You choose to be angry with someone. You choose to hold back forgiving someone. You choose to disobey God's word when he speaks to you. You chose to steal, or cheat, or spread gossip, or ruin someone's life. You chose to watch that porn on your computer while you are suppose to be working. You chose to get behind the wheel of your car after having been drinking. You chose to take that drug that you are offered because you want to be like your friends. You choose to flirt with someone though both of you are married. You chose to walk close to the edge of a cliff, thinking you will never slip and fall. Many have felt like that, and many have fallen into the trap. When you get to heaven, if you make it, ask David about those temptations.

The list could go on. The truth of all this is this: right choices lead to blessings.....wrong choices lead to bad consequences. When you stand before the judgment seat you won't be able to lie your way out of the choices you made. You won't be able to be like Adam who passed the buck to Eve, who passed the buck to the serpent and they all passed the buck back to God. Who do you think you're going to pass the buck too? Shall we all blame God? No, no, no, God will say. "All I created was very good; you spoiled it all by your choices." God tells us that there isn't any temptation in this world that he doesn't give you a way out. Don't take

that first drink. Don't be enticed by that x rated movie. Don't hang around with those who are taking drugs.

Man I'm telling you it is a tough life. But we all need to know this....we need to know the truth. And this morning the truth is this **THE CHOICES YOU MAKE ALL HAVE CONSEQUENCES.**

It doesn't matter how much money you have. Ask Tiger Woods. Look at what has happened because of his many choices to have affairs after his marriage. He has lost sponsors. He has lost the respect of his fellow players. He has lost millions of dollars. He has lost his wife. He has lost being with his two kids all the time. He has lost the gift of being a great golfer, all because of his wandering eyes and a few moments of ecstasy from the forbidden fruit.I'll just leave it at that. He may still be the number one golfer in the world but I am here to tell you it won't be long before he will be knocked from his perch. Is it possible he is about to pay for all that stuff? Yes, the Tiger has been caught by his tail.

Many prisons and jails are filled with people who have made poor choices. The saying is "if you do the crime is prepared to do the time."

So let me come back to this....know the truth of God's word and follow it. Make the right choices. Don't be blinded by you know who. Remember, he can put

that stuff in your path, but it is you who makes the final decision. And you must be ready to pay the consequences of that choice. It could be a life and death choice, and you make it because God has allowed you to choose. Either chose life...or you will chose death.

Now the good news. The truth is this....Grace is offered to those who will repent. The truth is this....God loves you and offers you Jesus to clean the slate of those poor choices you've all made. The cross of Calvary, the blood of the lamb has set you free from the bondage created from bad choices.

Adam and Eve were clothed by God and banished from the place where they thought it couldn't get any better. We can blame them for allowing sin to enter this world. But knowing what sin is, God offers a way not to sin as much. It's receiving his son and walking by faith, knowing God will lead the way on the narrow road less traveled.

Before the people entered the Promised Land Joshua warned them of the temptations that would cross their paths. He said they needed to remain faithful. Then he closed with these words, "Today you must choose who you are going to serve. Will you serve the gods that beckon you to come? Or will you follow the

God who brought you through the wilderness into paradise. As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord God of Israel.”

Your choice....life...death... there is no other offer....and time is running out.

God’s truth for God’s people today. God’s truth that will set you free.