

Making Right Decisions

9 July 2017 AM – Mark 3:7-19 – Mr17 – Scott Childs

- a) We must remember that God's ways are not always logical to the human mind. He sees the end, we only see the beginning. (Isaiah 55:8) "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*"
- b) The twelve were ordinary men. They were not priests, scribes or Pharisees. They had no special qualifications, no academic achievements, no social position or wealth. Note (Acts 4:13) "*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*"
- c) The twelve were a mixed bag. Impulsive Peter, ambitious James and John, shy Andrew, former tax collector Matthew, zealous Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot the traitor.

b. After the decision He resumed His normal work.

- 1) Jesus did not sit around fretting about whether he made the right decision or not. He got right back into his work. We should learn from this. When we genuinely pray for guidance and God gives direction and peace, we should not fret about the decision we make.
- 2) He went into a house. He did not stay up on the mountain top. His ministry was to people.

Conclusion: When you make decisions, do you follow the pattern laid out by Jesus? Do you get alone, pray about it until God gives you peace and then make your decision? If not you need to.

Possibly you don't feel comfortable talking to God about your decisions. There could be a couple of reasons for this. **First**, you may not truly be a Christian. Many people think they are a Christian because they are decent people. The Bible says that to become a Christian you must repent and believe that Christ died and rose again for you and receive Him as our Saviour (Jn 1:12). If you have never done that, you need to. **Second**, if you are truly a Christian, you may not be right with God. Sin in the life will put a distance between you and God. If you confess your sin, you will feel comfortable coming to God in prayer.

Song: Where He Leads Me – 384

Introduction: Life is full of decisions. What does God want me to do with my life? Should I get more education? What occupation should I pursue? Who should I marry? What car should I buy? Should I buy a house or rent? Should I change jobs? We face even more little daily decisions.

How do you make decisions? You may depend on gut feeling. You may flip a coin. Or you could do what Jesus did. Jesus left us with a good example for making decisions in our lives.

Transition: This morning we will identify three steps that Jesus followed in decision-making which we ought to follow when we make decisions.

1. He Got Alone

a. Jesus had become VERY popular (v.7-8)

- 1) He withdrew from town and went to the seaside.
 - a) Religious people were plotting to kill him.
 - b) He temporarily withdrew from that burden, but the pressure of the crowds of people increased.
- 2) Seekers came from near and far. (Use Map)
 - a) Galilee – the region around the Sea of Galilee
 - b) Judea – the region in the south of Israel
 - c) Jerusalem – 130 km south
 - d) Idumea – 180 km south
 - e) Beyond Jordan – east of the Jordan River
 - f) Tyre & Sidon – 50 -70 km north
- 3) Great multitudes came to Him
 - a) He prepared an escape if crowded (v.9). He asked that a boat be kept on standby in case He needed it.
 - b) He healed many and cast out demons (v.10-12)
 - (1) He healed those with plagues (lit. scourges, diseases because of their sin).
 - (2) The unclean spirits (demons) knew who Jesus was, but he told them to keep quiet. He did not want demonic advertisement nor was it time for others to know that he was the Messiah.

b. Jesus left and went up the mountain (v.13)

- 1) Somehow He got away without revealing where He went. Perhaps He and His closest followers left before daylight and found an isolated place up in the mountain.
- 2) Quiet time alone is good for both body and soul.
 - a) The busyness of life makes decision-making difficult. A rested quiet mind aids thinking.
 - b) Each of us needs to find a quiet place to be alone.
 - (1) It may be in the house before others are up.
 - (2) It may be in a park, or on a walk
- 3) Quiet time is needed to commune with God. If the only time you pray and read the Bible is when others are present, you lack true communion with God.

📖 *Getting alone with God is vital when making decisions.*

2. He Prayed All Night (Luke 6:12)

a. Luke adds details that Mark omitted (Luke 6:12)

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

- 1) Jesus prayed regularly
 - a) Often in Jesus' ministry we find Him on His knees in prayer. (Mark 1:35) *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."*
 - b) Jesus encourages us to pray regularly too (Lk 18:1). *"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;"* (1 Thessalonians 5:17) *"Pray without ceasing."*
- 2) On this occasion, Jesus prayed all night long.
 - a) Many people only pray when they need help.
 - b) Others recite empty memorised prayers.
 - c) Some pray often but without much thought.
 - d) Only a few really draw near to God, enjoy His fellowship, cleansing, guidance, filling and power.
 - e) Jesus prayed all night long – what an example!
- 3) What is your prayer life like?

b. Prayer is an important element in decision-making.

- 1) God truly wants us to pray when making decisions.

- a) The Lord understands our situation better than we do. (Psalms 38:9) *"Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee."* (Matthew 6:8) *"... your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."*
 - b) At the same time, God commands us to pray. (Philippians 4:6) *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."*
 - c) The Lord promises to give wisdom if we will ask. (James 1:5) *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."*
- 2) Prayer lets us share our situation with God.
 - a) Tell God the details of the decision you face.
 - b) Let Him know that you want to follow His way not your own. (Psalms 86:11) *"Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name."* **Prayer is not to get God's approval, but to get His direction. He never contradicts the Bible.**
 - 3) During prayer God can speak to our hearts.
 - a) God speaks by bringing Scriptures to our minds.
 - b) God sometimes uses godly counsel.
 - c) He gives peace or discontentment to guide.

📖 *Before you make a decision, always spend earnest time in prayer.*

3. He Made His Decision as God wanted (v.13-19)

a. Once we know God's mind on a matter and He gives us peace, we can proceed with confidence.

- 1) He called whom He would and ordained twelve (v.13)
 - a) To be with Him (listen and learn)
 - b) To go forth (teach and preach)
 - (1) To preach
 - (2) To heal the sick
 - (3) To cast out demons
 - c) This was a special calling and appointment for the apostles.
- 2) Jesus' decision was not humanly logical (v.16-19).