

Whose Side Are You On?

Ex 32:26

1

26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!"

Remember the story? Moses had gone up on Mount Sinai to get the Law. As he was coming down he heard the noise and revelry coming from the people. When he gets to where he can see, he sees the golden calf that Aaron had made, he sees the people dancing around it, and he responds by throwing the stone tablets that contained the Law and shattering them. He then takes the golden calf, burns it and then grinds it up, puts it into the water and makes the people drink it. Then Moses turns to Aaron...

Ex 32:21-24

2

21 Then Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?" 22 And Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. 23 For they said to me, 'Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 24 "And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."

You've heard the saying...

"How would like to be a fly on the wall for that discussion?"

I would have loved to have been there when Moses confronted Aaron about this. We read this passage and sometimes I think the impact of it gets by us. This is not an uncommon problem with reading the scriptures, sometimes the emotion of the situation is passed by. Let's read this again and try to imagine the way Moses might have approached Aaron...

Ex 32:21-24

3

21 Then Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?" 22 And Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. 23 For they said to me, 'Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 24 "And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."

Moses was not happy with either Aaron or the people, to say the least. He chastises Aaron, and rightly so, for his weakness in the face of the unfaithfulness of the people. Aaron had made the choice to make himself a victim, remember that lesson not too long ago? Aaron blamed the people for his sin and pointed the finger at them for making him build the calf of idolatry. Here is where Moses turns his attention to the people in the passage we began with...

Ex 32:26

4

26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!"

5 Who is for the Lord? Interesting question, isn't it? What do you see implied in that question? Is it just the one who believes that there is a God? How about the one who has had a religious experience and been touched in their hearts by the Spirit? Is it the one who claims Christianity but who doesn't practice the Law and commandments of the New Testament? Now please understand something here. This is not a putdown of any of these or any others for that matter. We are trying to understand that being...

6 ***“For the Lord”***

Goes beyond the pale of what the world thinks it means. We have only to turn to the Macedonians to find out the true meaning of Moses' question...

2 Cor 8:1-5 **7**

1 Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, **2** that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. **3** For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, **4** begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, **5** and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

Who is for the Lord? Those that are willing to give themselves to the Lord, as did the Macedonians, by and through the will of God.

“Am I for the Lord” is a question that needs to be asked every day of our lives. Whose side are we on? What banner do we fly so that others might recognize us and our loyalty? The banner that should be displayed in our lives is the banner of truth. Moses called to the children of Israel crying out for those who would side with the Lord...

Ex 32:26 **8**

26 And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him.

Out of all the sons of Israel, only the Levites made the choice to rally around the banner of truth that was the Law of God.

So they are some thoughts we want to look at derived from this question...

- 9**
- 1) How to decide which side to choose
 - 2) What defines the sides
 - 3) Must we choose a side
 - 4) The results of our choice

So this first thought...

- 10**
- 1) How to decide which side to choose

This really shouldn't be that difficult of a task, and, quite frankly, the conscience of each and every one of us ought to help in its accomplishment. You see, for the most part, even little children have a sense of right and wrong. They know that telling a lie is wrong, that they shouldn't take

someone else's things, they shouldn't hit, these are instincts that seem to be inherent within each of us at birth. That's our conscience.

Suneidesis (sunei/dhsi, NT:4893) **11**

Lit., "a knowing with" (sun, "with," oida, "to know"), i. e., "a co-knowledge (with oneself), the witness borne to one's conduct by conscience, that faculty by which we apprehend the will of God, as that which is designed to govern our lives"; hence

- 12**
- a) The sense of guiltiness before God; Heb 10:2;
 - b) That process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad

While the conscience is a useful tool, unfortunately it cannot be the sole guide we go by.

1 Tim 4:1-2 **13**

1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

The conscience can be "Seared," it can be manipulated to override its natural inclinations to avoid doing wrong. Note what Paul says here, people leave the faith, leave doing what is right before God because they have overcome the teaching and commandments of God's Law, they have made the choice to ignore His Law, just as the Israelites did. The conscience needs to be trained, transformed into a guide that follows God's Word. Paul indicates that in his instructions to Timothy...

1 Tim 3:8-9 **14**

8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, **9** but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

A deacon is to hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. That means they, just like all Christians, are to use the Word of God to train and teach their conscience so that it can help them to do God's will and in doing so keep their conscience clear, free from the guilt of disobedience.

Coming back to our original thought of how to choose which side, Paul gives us the definitive distinction between the only two sides that there are...

Rom 8:5-8 **15**

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, **7** because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, **8** and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Here then is our second thought...

- 16**
- 2) What defines the sides

Paul illustrates two sides, and only two...

- 17**
- A) The Flesh

B) The Spirit

Two sides, flesh or Spirit. We have to choose one. Now that is what I meant a moment ago, this shouldn't be that hard of a choice, so why is it? For so many in the world today, this decision is nigh on to impossible for them to make. They enjoy the "Flesh." They want to cling to the pleasures it offers, the lack of restrictions that it has, after all...

18

"If it feels good, do it"

Gal 5:19-21

19

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, **21** envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul addresses the things that identify the way of the flesh, now combine that with what we read in Rom. and how the way of the mind which chooses the flesh leads to death, Spiritual death. When we choose to practice these types of things, all of which oppose the law of God, then we have chosen the side of the flesh.

If what you are trying to achieve in this life is fleshly pleasure, immoral enjoyment, a life with no limits or restrictions that leads to anarchy in our lives and certain death, then the way of the flesh is the side to choose. But if the path that leads to eternal damnation in hell isn't really all that high on your bucket list then maybe it's better to choose the other side that Paul describes, the side of the Spirit. the mind set on the Spirit, read Word of Truth, leads to Life Eternal and Peace with God through Christ. Belief in God, His Son, and the truth of His Word is what guards the believer against atheism, idolatry, and disobedience. That is what Moses was saying to the Israelites, decide which side you are going to be on. Are you going to pursue the things of idolatry, the revelry, the immorality, or are you going to side with God. This, then, is our next point...

20

3) Must we choose a side

This is the crux of why so many don't come to God in faithful obedience. So many people think that they can just be neutral, they don't have to make a choice. Now follow this logic; as Paul illustrated in Romans, there are only two sides, the flesh and the Spirit, that said, since there is no other choice but those two sides, thinking that you can stay neutral is in fact a choice for one side or the other. The trick is knowing which side neutrality puts us on.

This brings us back to the discussion we were having just a moment ago. We looked at some of the characteristics of the side of the flesh. But what if we aren't engaging in those types of things, what if we are trying to be a good person? What if we try to be honest, work at being a good neighbor, employee, and friend? Doesn't that make us on the side of God? If we are not actively being a part of the world, the side of the flesh, then we must be on the side of the Spirit. In the passage we looked at in Galatians Paul goes on to contrast the side of the flesh with the side of the Spirit...

Gal 5:22-24

21

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Step one in choosing the right side is to recognize the characteristics of each side. Paul lists some of the characteristics of the side of the Spirit, but these are not all...

Gal 6:6-8 22

6 The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.
7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Siding with the Spirit means we are sowing to the Spirit, we are doing the things of the Spirit. Some of those things are the things Paul listed, but that's just the beginning, we see here that sowing to the Spirit comes from being taught of the Spirit by the Word. The things we sow must needs be the things we are taught by the Word, because the things we reap will be the result of what we sow.

There is no neutrality, we may not necessarily be actively pursuing or siding with the side of the flesh, but if we are not actively pursuing or siding with the Spirit through faithful obedience then our neutrality is the choice that we have made to not side with the Spirit which means we have sided with the flesh. Here then is our last point...

23 4) The results of our of our choice

The thing to remember is that there will be results of the choice we make. Whether to pursue the Spirit, or the flesh, even if that choice is by default through our lack of choice.

Col 3:25 24

25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

God will judge the unrighteous according to their deeds and He will do so justly. He will also...

2 Cor 5:10 25

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

We all will stand accountable for the deeds that we have done in this life. We will all be judged for the choices we make, whether for the Spirit or for the flesh.

Luke 12:4-5 26

4 "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

So in the words of Moses

27 ***"Whoever is for the Lord, come to Him now"***