

Saturday/Sunday, August 30-31, 2008

## CHOICES

### “Choosing Freedom”

Galatians 5:1 [NOTES PAGE]

Choices, we make them all the time.

What to wear, where to live, whom to marry, what matters most.

We choose because we are created that way.

God has not made us to be robots, where we all act, talk, look and think just the same way. Or puppets, where He simply pulls our strings from some heavenly loft and forces us to go one way or the other.

Sometimes this seems really cool, especially when things are going well. Other times we might find ourselves wishing God would "interfere" and make some of the choices for us; when there is a fork in the road.

Over the next two weeks we will look at two really big deal choices God has given you and me ... this morning choosing freedom and how this choice can impact our lives in big ways.

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Over 60x “freedom or free” used in NT.

#### *The truth about freedom ...*

- *Jesus came to bring **freedom** to every person* (Gal. 5:1, Luke 4:18, set captives free, John 8:32, 36, Son will set you free; not political, economic, social but freedom of each human soul, freedom at the core of our being)
- *Every person **needs** the kind of freedom that Jesus brings* (read Eph. 2:1-3) (the truth about our captivity; dead, driven, w/o hope, need for freedom)
- *Growing in freedom is a **choice*** (1 Peter 2:16) (Jesus provides the possibility of being free, we can choose to grow in it)

*One of the first choices we make regarding this freedom has to do with ...*

#### 1. Accepting the “kind of love” that **IS** God.

*God IS love!* (1 John 4:16, Together)

Love is Who He is, What He’s like, why He acts, He can’t help Himself.

Our freedom comes from personally understanding and experiencing this kind of love.

#### *What’s this mean?*

Today many people hold to a view of God and His love like He is ...

- St. Nick; conditional, whether we’ve been naughty or nice
- 60s love; unconditional, no consequences, anything is ok, end up fine
- IRS agent; legalistic, keep the rules and regulations and you’ll be fine
- Man upstairs; no different than us, no better than us (mad all the time)

Our freedom demands good theology, study of God; Who He is, what He’s like, this is not just for a select few but for everyone who knows God.

The Bible tells us that ...

- God’s love is **affirming** (John 3:16-17, Romans 8:1-2)
- God’s love is **gracious & truthful** (Eph. 2:4-5, Jn 1:17, Wade, Jm 1:5)
- God’s love is **corrective** (Hebrews 12:6)

Question? Have you made the choice to accept God’s love as affirming and not condemning, as full of undeserved mercy and truth, and corrective?

If not, make that choice today because it is the beginning of freedom.

*We also have been given the choice of ...*

#### 2. Allowing this love to bring **HEALING** to the effects of guilt & shame. (Gen. 2:25, 3:7-10, John 1:17, Eph 2:4-5, Romans 8:37-39, 1 John 4:18)

We all mess up (sin)! When we do we experience guilt and shame.

- Genesis 2:25 (naked, no sin, no guilt, no shame, had it all, free)
- Genesis 3:7-10 (choose sin, brings guilt, shame, fear, insecurity, brokenness; leads to running, hiding, irresponsibility, blaming others)

God's love does not eliminate the feelings of guilt and shame when we mess up but it can change its controlling nature on our life and the choices we make.

God's love places Him in your mess  
 God's love helps you in your mess  
 God's love directs you out of your mess (describe John 8:2-10)

Choosing to allow God's love to invade your life brings healing to guilt and shame

- (Hebrews 10:22) *Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

Choosing to allow God's love to invade your life brings healing to a life controlled by fear.

- (1 John 4:18, read together) *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

Choosing to allow God's love to invade your life brings healing to a life plagued by deep insecurity.

- (Romans 8:38-39) *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

***Nothing you can ever do can make God love you less!***

*Choosing to accept God's kind of love; choosing to allow this love to bring healing to our guilt and shame sets us up to make the final choice in gaining and maintaining our freedom which is ...*

### **3. Refusing to “COVER- UP” when we mess up.**

(1 John 1:6-10, James 5:16, Ephesians 5:8-14, Hebrews 4:16-18)

God's effect on our guilt and shame brings a very different response; instead of hiding, blaming, running, paralyzed by fear of being found out we are free to be honest, open, vulnerable, transparent, authentically Christian in our life ... FREEDOM w/God & one another.

(1 John 1:7) *But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.*

(James 5:16) *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*

Choosing to accept God's kind of love; allowing it to bring healing to the effect of our guilt and shame and refusing to cover up when we mess up is a choice we have been given the privilege to make so that we may be free.

**[NOOMA DVD: “Lump”]**

**Closing comments**