

June 28 Worship

Readers- Jason & Katie Flinkstrom

Announcements/Joys

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“He has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” 2 Corinthians 1:22*

Opening Scripture- Psalm 13(page 470)

Opening Chorus- 343- Bind Us Together

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Jesus said, “Anyone who receives you, receives me,

People: And anyone who receives me, receives the Father who sent me.”

Leader: Sisters and brothers, boys and girls: We gather together in the presence of God.

People: Who receives us with open arms, who loves us unconditionally.

Leader: And who bids us do the same to one another.

People: Let’s worship God together!

Hymn of Praise- 335- O God Our Help In Ages Past

Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer- Lord, help us to relax. Take from us the tension that makes peace impossible. Take from us the fears that do not allow us to venture. Take from us the worries that blind our sight. Take from us the distress that hides your joy. Help us to know that we are with you, that we are in your care, that we are in your love, that you are one with us. We pray as our Savior taught us, saying...*Lord's Prayer...*

“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end.
Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Jeremiah 28:5-9(page 676)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Matthew 10:40-42)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 380- Take My Life And Let It Be

New Testament Scripture- Romans 6:12-23(page 981-982)

Message

“Choose Carefully”

Each and every day we are faced with having to make choices about everything we do. How many decisions do you think we have to make in the 24 hours of each day? According to Psychology Today, a prominent magazine and online platform that serves as the world's largest mental health and behavioral science destination, the average human adult make about 35,000 decisions per day. If we take into consideration that we sleep about 7-8 hours a day, that means we make about 2,000 decisions an hour or 1 decision every 2 seconds. While these numbers may seem a bit overwhelming, most of those decisions are made without conscious thought. When we think about it we must realize that there are an unending number of events going on in our lives that require making a choice. If we were required to carefully consider each one we would probably lose whatever is left of our sanity. The majority of our decisions, by far, are mundane things that do not affect our daily comings and goings.

Those choices that we are called on to make that truly have meaning in our lives are those choices that make us have to think long and hard about the consequences of our decisions. We can get caught up in thinking that we have no choice in certain things because we cannot help how we feel, or think, or behave. There may be certain parts of our lives that we want to change or do differently but we convince ourselves that we can't help how we are or who we are for that matter. We come to the conclusion that we are powerless to make changes simply because we can't help it. Most of the important things that we need to make decisions about prove that to be true, we are unable to change by ourselves. We require a bit of help.

It takes quite a bit of strength and a certain amount of humility for us to ask for help when making decisions that change our way of thinking. We all want the world to believe that we can do it ourselves, we know what is going on and we can handle it, alone. Sometimes, usually more often than we want to admit, we need someone

with a different perspective to assist us in choosing. Who do we turn to? WE can ask a friend or family member that we trust. We can go to a professional, or here's a wild thought, we can turn to God. Many of the difficulties that we face in making a choice is because we get stuck in believing that there are "special" circumstances that will not allow us to change. We are able to find a multitude of reasons why we have no choice. We always have a choice, no matter what the circumstance. The problem is that we don't want to take the chance that doing something different may be a good thing.

I have spoken many times about our God given gift of "Free Will." When we suggest that there is nothing we can do about something, that we have no choice, we are denying one of the greatest gifts that God has given us, free will. This is what allows us to make decisions that affect our destiny. It does not matter if the decision is a great one or some simple, mundane thing that doesn't really matter, we have a choice. Now, we must accept that having free will does not allow us to violate the laws of nature. There are some things that we cannot do. For example, a man may choose to walk across a bridge or not to walk across it; what he may not choose is to fly over the bridge, his nature prevents him from flying, unless he resorts to using a plane.

The Bible is clear that we not only have the ability to choose, we also have the responsibility to choose wisely. We must accept that every choice has a corresponding response. For example; if I choose to jump off a bridge, I must know that I may get wet, or if I run when it is dark, I may hit a wall. Every action has a reaction, that is a natural law. Each of us has the right to accept or reject God's gifts. What we don't have is the right to complain if we choose wrongly.

The question of why God gave humans a free will often comes up in a discussion about the problem of evil. Someone will ask why there is so much evil in the world, and the answer is that human beings have chosen to do evil things. God is not to blame. The follow-up question is, if God knew all the evil things that people would choose to do, why would He give us free will? The "standard" answer seems to be that, for love to be real, it must not be coerced. If we did not have the ability to reject God, then neither would we have the ability to truly love Him. It has been said that human freedom is the highest good and that even God will not violate it. Genuine love and genuine good can only exist in a world where there is an opportunity for genuine rejection and genuine evil.

The major problem with this great gift is in how we use it. If left to our own base desires, we tend to use our will to satisfy our worldly desires. This is our natural instinct and it has its place. God calls on us to override our worldly ambitions and focus on His plan. This requires discipline and humility, traits that take effort. Our natural wants can and often do, lead us into conflict with God's wishes. So how

should we use our will to satisfy God?

Pleasing God is, or should be, the goal of all believers, all who call upon the name of Christ for salvation. The requirements for all who want to please God are that they must seek God by faith, walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh, and walk worthy of our calling in obedience and submission to the will of God. These things may seem impossible to do, but God wants us to please Him, and He makes it possible for us to please Him. We do these things by the power of His Spirit who lives in our hearts. The first step in pleasing God is to accept the sacrifice for sin that He provided in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Only then are we “in the Spirit” and not “in the flesh.” We do this by faith because “without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

God expects us to have confidence in Him and have faith that His Word is true. Just claiming that we know God is not enough. Saying that we believe in God is not enough. We must have faith and trust in God's promises. Pleasing God is a matter of living according to His precepts, commandments, and doing so in love. We always want to please those we love, and the New Testament is full of exhortations to righteous living and loving Christ by obeying His commandments. Jesus made this very plain: “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15).

We are required to make choices each and every day. The majority of these choices are of no real consequence. There are choices that we make that will have consequences that last for eternity. Accepting Jesus and working at following God's Laws are choices that will last forever. The choice is yours, choose carefully. Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of the People- God has set before us life and death. The choice is ours. Let us acknowledge our misuse of the liberty of choice. Let us pray. Let us ask to be forgiven for the times when we have chosen badly, opting for the easy way of habit and social convention, rather than the higher and harder ways of Jesus. Let us confess that sometimes our choices have been made from rank selfishness, with scant concern for those around us, even for those who love us dearly. Let us ask to be forgiven for putting off decisions, for avoiding making good choices until opportunity has gone by. Let us confess that we have at times made outwardly good decisions for the wrong reasons, driven by selfish motives. Holy God, Savior and Friend, we thank you that long before we face up to ourselves and frame our confessions, your mercy in Jesus is here waiting for us. We rest our mortal lives in your immortal Life, allowing your grace, mercy and peace to cleanse, refresh and straighten us. Breathe into our humanity, loving God, that we may fully live. Please breathe your Spirit in our brains, that our decision making may be pure and wise.

Breathe your Spirit on our lips, that our speech may witness to life and light and holy joy. Breathe your Spirit on our hands, that in their busyness they may serve you before all else. Breathe your Spirit on our feet, that we may tread this earth with gentleness and respect. Through Christ Jesus, our risen Lord and Savior. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 588- We Give Thee But Thine Own

Benediction- May you trust in God's promises to his people: peace, security, blessing, even when they are difficult to believe. May you know that God's news is good news, nourishing, true, even when people tell you it is not. And when you encounter doubt, may you strengthen your belief guiding you in his perfect wisdom and counsel. Go in peace to serve the Lord. Amen.