

Little Choices Big Consequences

Introduction

One thing that is a part of and parcel of everyday life is - CHOICES!!!!

We all have choices to make!!!
Decisions!

And our everyday life is filled up with a number of little decisions scattered throughout the course of the day!!!!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT -EVERY NOW AND THEN THERE ARE THOSE LITTLE CHOICES THAT COME ALONG - THAT WE MAKE - AND BEFORE WE KNOW IT - IT HAS CHANGED THE COURSE OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT!!!

Choices that at the time may have been seemingly insignificant - yet whenever time passes we realise just how significant one little choice can be!!!!

I think about it in my life - and how there were little choices that I made - and they led to big life changes!!!!

I CAN LOOK BACK AND SEE IT NOW - BUT AT THE TIME WHEN MAKING THE CHOICE - I DIDN'T THINK MUCH OF IT!!!!

For example:

*Support Bolton = lifetime of misery

*Go to single vision conference = meet my wife

*Take a gap year = finding my calling as a pastor

*Moving up to London = meeting pastor John and eventually taking over here at Chelsea

*Go on a scripture Union weekend at school = miss out on my best opportunity to go into professional football

THINGS THAT WHENEVER I HAD MADE THE CHOICE - I DIDN'T QUITE REALISE THE SIGNIFICANCE THAT THE OUTCOME OF THAT CHOICE WOULD BRING!!!!

It's important that we realise - EVERY CHOICE WE MAKE IN LIFE IS IMPORTANT!!!!

Every choice that you make - begins to write the story of your life and what it's going to be like!!!!

And therefore - It is vital that we think about the choices we make!

THE BIG ONES!

AND THE SEEMINGLY LITTLE ONES!!!!

Because it can often be the case that:

Little choices lead to big consequences!!!!

And that can be for better or for worse!!!!

Consequences that are profitable!

And consequences that are hurtful and painful!!!!

AND SO I WANT TO PREACH A MESSAGE THIS AFTERNOON ENTITLED:

Little Choices, Big Consequences

Pray!

As you think about your life - I want you to think about the choices that you have made!!!

Choices that you have led you to where you are today!

Choices that have led you into the pattern of life that you are now living

Choices that have brought you to the place that you are now spiritually - whether for better or for worse!

AND ASK YOURSELF:

With my choices - Have they led me to where I want to be?

With my choices - Have they brought me along to where I want to be spiritually in my walk with God?

OR ARE THERE SOME CHOICES THAT WE WISH WE COULD HAVE A 'DO OVER' ON?

Are there some choices that we regret?

Are there some choices that have brought about consequences that we are still paying for?

We all make choices!

And many times whenever our lives go off track spiritually - IF WE THINK ABOUT IT CAREFULLY - WE CAN TRACE IT BACK TO IT'S SOURCE - And at the source of where we got off track spiritually - There was a choice that we made - that led us in the wrong direction!

On the wrong path!!!!

LIKEWISE ON THE OTHER HAND:

Whenever we look at our spiritual life whenever it's as it should be, and we are on track - We can look at our life and realise - It is because of string of continual godly choices that I have made - THAT HAVE KEPT ME GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION!

Whatever way you look at it - THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS - CHOICES ARE IMPORTANT!

'Your life is made up of the sum of your collective decisions'

SMALL CHOICES THAT COLLECTIVELY DETERMINE AND DEFINE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR LIFE, AND YOUR LIFE AS A WHOLE!!!

And so I want you to think about the title of our message tonight as we head to the scriptures:

'Little Choices, Big Consequences'

I would say that many times the choices you make that lead to the biggest consequences in your life - AT THE TIME - THE CHOICE DIDN'T SEEM AS BIG AS IT TURNED OUT TO BE!!!!

The choice was one that didn't seem to be significant at the time - YET THROUGH ONE LITTLE CHOICE - IT'S AMAZING THE BIG CONSEQUENCES THAT THEY CAN BRING!!!!

As we come to the Bible - We can see this very principle of - Little Choices, Big Consequences!!!

In every big bible characters life - WHENEVER WE SEE BIG CONSEQUENCES THAT THEY FACE - It can always be traced back to a little choice they made.

And I want to look at both sides of the coin today:

WHENEVER YOU SEE A BIBLE CHARACTER THAT IS LIVING A GODLY, SUCCESSFUL SPIRITUAL LIFE - You can see a pattern of godly choices they made!

On the other hand:

WHENEVER YOU SEE A BIBLE CHARACTER THAT IS FACING BAD SPIRITUAL CONSEQUENCES - You can usually trace it back to a little choice they made wrongly!!!!

Little choices, big consequences!!!!

NOW - LET'S LOOK TO GOD'S WORD AND SEE THIS IN ACTION:

Little choices people made that led to big consequences:

***David choosing to stay behind from the battle**

2 Samuel 11:1 - *And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.*

Small choice - Tarrying in Jerusalem

Big consequences - Adultery, murder, a lost child, a broken home and much more!

***Lot choosing the well watered plains of Sodom and Gomorrah**

Genesis 13:1-11

In this story between Abraham and Lot - Lot definitely comes off the worse - because of one little choice.

But Abraham wasn't a perfect man either!

He made his fair share of mistakes!!!!

LIKE PRETENDING SARAH WAS HIS SISTER INSTEAD OF HIS WIFE - TWICE!!!!

That was a pretty ridiculous choice!

But if you turn to Genesis 16 you will see one little choice he made which had much bigger consequences:

***Abraham choosing to sleep with his handmaiden because he was desperate for a child**

Genesis 16:1-12

So the little choice was - Abraham gave in to the pleadings of his wife to take her handmaiden Hagar!!!!

AFTER ALL - They were getting on in years - and they still didn't have any children!!!

AND AFTER ALL - God did promise that the descendants of Abraham would be more than the dust of the ground!!!!

Yet - Abraham didn't have faith in the promise of God and wait for God's perfect timing and plan!

Rather Abraham made a choice!

A little choice - that had big consequences!!!!

ABRAHAM PROBABLY DIDN'T REALISE AT THE TIME HOW BAD THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ONE LITTLE CHOICE WOULD BE!!!!

And worse than that - He wouldn't live to see the worst of it!!!!

But nonetheless:

Small choice - BIG CONSEQUENCE!!!!

Hagar gave birth to Ishmael!

AND ISHMAEL BEGAN A VERY DESTRUCTIVE LINEAGE AND DESCENDANCY!!!!

Ishmael wasn't to be that son of promise through which God would continue His covenant with Abraham!!!

NO - That would be the son he would give Abraham and Sarah - Isaac!!!!

ISHMAEL - The result of Abraham's choice to be with Hagar - LED TO BIG CONSEQUENCES!!!!

From the lineage of Ishmael - Come the Ishmaelites!!!!
AND THE ISHMAELITES!!!

You trace the location and the descendants of Ishmael - and it is believed that it is from Ishmael that many Arabic nations are birthed!!!

That is to say - Many of the Arabic nations today - would find their descendancy from the lineage of Ishmael!!!!

You think of the unrest in many Arabic countries in our world today!
You think of the violence, the terrorism, the heinous things that are going on the middle east!!!

I'm not saying that all of it is as a result of Abraham's actions back in Genesis 16 - but consider Ishmael's birth and the promise that comes along with his life and lineage:

Genesis 16:12 - *And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him;*

That is a pretty strong description and a negative one!!!

BIG CONSEQUENCE - From a little choice!
Consequences which have affected our world to this day!

***Saul choosing to keep a few things in battle and disobey God**

1 Samuel 15:1-3, 7-11, 22-23

Little choice - Disobedience and keeping back a few sheep and King Agag
Big consequences - Lost his throne

At the time in battle - it probably didn't seem like a big deal to keep a few things!
After all it wouldn't hurt to keep a few sheep!!!

HECK - He probably even justified it by thinking about sacrificing them to God!

BUT NONETHELESS:

Small choice
Big consequences

That small choice cost Saul his throne!!!!

And it wasn't long before that small act of disobedience turned into outright rebellion against everything to do with God!!!!

1 Samuel 28:6-7 - *And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that*

hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor

Just a few chapters later and:
God isn't even listening to Saul!
And Saul is going to witches and sorcerers for advice and direction!!!!

WHAT A SLIPPERY SLOPE SAUL WAS ON!!!!

One bad choice - led to another and another and another!!!!

And up to 1 Samuel 15 - King Saul was a God fearing man!
And yet - 13 chapters later - HE IS CONSULTING WITH WITCHES AND SORCERERS!!!!

From:

1 Samuel 11:6 - *And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.*

TO WHAT WE FIND IN 1 Samuel 26 - He is consulting other spirits!!!!

15 chapters!
A string of small choices!
Which led to big consequences!

And the spiritual life of this man Saul was completely diminished!!!!

FRIENDS - May Saul's life be a warning to us!!!

WE ARE INTRODUCED TO SAUL AS A GODLY MAN!!!
Yet all that we remember of his memory is his ungodly choices and his vendetta and hatred for King David!!!!

All stemming from a few choices badly made!!!!

HE IS A CASE STUDY FOR US - In the importance of good, godly decisions!!!!

The slippery slope to spiritual ineffectiveness starts with one bad choice!!!
That was what it was like with Saul!

IT COULD BE THE SAME WAY WITH US IF WE AREN'T CAREFUL!!!!

Small choices!
Big consequences!!

***Samson**

Samson's life is a train wreck of bad choices!
Small choice - Eating the honey from the lion's carcass
Small choice - Taking a foreign woman to be his wife
All of these choices led himself to be put in a position to be tricked by Delilah into revealing the source of his strength - AND EVENTUALLY ENDING UP IN BETWEEN 2 PILLARS AT THE TEMPLE WITH HIS EYES PLUCKED OUT!!!!

If you had told Samson back when he was eating honey out of the lion's carcass that it would lead to a gruesome and painful death he wouldn't have believed you!

If you had told Samson back when he first met Delilah that it would lead to a gruesome and painful death he wouldn't have believed you!

Small choices
Big consequences

So on the one hand - With small bad choices:
COME BIG BAD CONSEQUENCES!!!!

Yet there are also many examples of:
GOOD GODLY SMALL CHOICES
LEADING TO CONSEQUENCES IN THE BEST AND GODLIEST SENSE OF THE WORD!

Even some seemingly insignificant choices that God's people made which led to incredible outcomes:

***David choosing to obey his father and take meat to his brothers**

1 Samuel 17:17-20 - *And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp of thy brethren; And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.*

Small choice - Obeying his father
Big consequences - Killing Goliath, Standing by faith for God, becoming a national champion, eventually becoming King, all from one small choice of obedience!!!!

***Daniel choosing to continue faithfully praying to his God**

Daniel 6:10 - *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

Daniel 6:25-28 - *Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*

Small choice - Continue praying as always
Big consequences - Saved from lion's den, God's name exalted, Daniel prospered!

***Paul choosing to be sensitive to the Spirit and go to Philippi**

Acts 16:6-10 - *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*

Small choice - Sensitive to the Spirit forbidding him to go to Bithynia, Sensitive to the vision of the man of macedonia
Big consequences - Gospel spreads to Europe for the first time

ALL OF THESE:

Daniel
Paul
David

Seemingly insignificant acts that changed the course of events in a massive way:

Daniel - continuing praying - led to an incredible act of God, and an honouring of His name in Babylon

David - simply obeying his father in taking food to his brothers - led to Him standing by faith for God and killing Goliath, and eventually being crowned King!

Paul - simple act of obedience and being sensitive to God's leading - And the Gospel spreads to Europe for the first time!!!!

Friends - It's amazing what simple small godly choices can accomplish!!!!

Even when they seem insignificant to us - YOU NEVER KNOW THE BIG, INCREDIBLE THINGS THAT GOD CAN DO THROUGH SIMPLE GODLY CHOICES IN OUR LIVES!!!!

Little choices such as:

Daily being in His Word

Sunday - being in God's house

Being sensitive to when God wants to use us to speak to people about him!

You never know the big outcomes and results that can come from simple, small, godly choices in our walk with God!!!!

WE COME TO OUR FINAL EXAMPLE IN THE BIBLE.

And it's a negative one to close with, but it comes with a challenge:

PROBABLY THE MOST OBVIOUS ONE OF THEM ALL IN THE BIBLE IS FOUND IN GENESIS 3:

***Adam and Eve - Eating the fruit**

Genesis 3:6-7 - *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

A small choice!!!!

As simple as reaching out and eating a piece of fruit!!!!!!

SATAN TEMPTED EVE INTO IT, AND SHE GAVE INTO THAT TEMPTATION!!!!

She disobeyed God in a simple, small act of eating the fruit that was forbidden!!!!!!

A SMALL CHOICE

BIG CONSEQUENCES!!!!!!

The biggest consequences of any choice in the Bible!!!!

THROUGH THEIR CHOICE OF DISOBEDIENCE - Sin entered into the world!!!!
And death by sin!!!!

AND NOW ALL HAVE SINNED AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD BECAUSE OF THAT ONE ACT!!!!

Because of that one choice - All mankind is born with a sin problem!
WITH A SIN NATURE!!!!

And it was a small thing!
A small act of disobedience!
A small choice to take fruit from a tree!!!!

A SMALL CHOICE
BUT SUCH BIG CONSEQUENCES!!!!

So much so - that as a consequence of that choice:
Sin entered into the world
Man was separated from God
Man is a sinner by nature
Man needed redemption and saving
Jesus had to come and die a righteous and perfect death on the cross

All as a result of one small choice!!!!

CONCLUSION:

GOD ALLOWS US TO MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS AND CHOICES
AND HOW YOU MAKE THOSE CHOICES WILL DETERMINE THE SUM OF YOUR LIFE

'Your life is made up of the sum of your collective decisions'
SMALL CHOICES THAT COLLECTIVELY DETERMINE AND DEFINE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR
LIFE, AND YOUR LIFE AS A WHOLE

As we looked at just a few Bible characters and their choices - MAY IT BE A WARNING TO US -
TO NEVER TAKE DECISION MAKING LIGHTLY!!!!

May we choose carefully whenever choices come our way!!!!

No matter how small!
No matter how seemingly insignificant!
May we strive to continually make God honouring, godly choices!!!!

KNOWING THE CONSEQUENCES THAT CAN SO EASILY RESULT FROM SMALL CHOICES!!!!

As we close:

The biggest choice you must make in your life is about Jesus!
It isn't a small choice. It is a big choice! It is only one small choice, yet it has big, lastly, eternal consequences!!
Accept Him - salvation
Reject Him - damnation

But like everything in your life - even with Jesus you have a choice to make!
God has sovereignty done everything that is necessary to purchase your salvation!
He has a desire that all choose Him and accept Him!

But ultimately that choice is left up to you - will you choice correctly today?
Choose Jesus and choose salvation!