

LIFE'S HEALING CHOICES

"The Commitment Choice- Letting Go"

Matthew 5:5

Introduction

A driver of a pet store delivery truck was out making a delivery. Every time he came to a stoplight, he would get out the truck and grab a two-by-four. He would run to the back of the truck and start beating on the back doors.

This went on for several miles and none of the other drivers on the road could figure out what he was doing. Finally one guy pulled alongside him and just had to ask, "What are you doing?"

"This is only a two-ton truck," the truck driver said, "and I'm carrying four tons of canaries. I've got to keep two tons of them up in the air all the time.

How many of us are trying to live our lives that way? We are taking desperate measures, trying to keep our hurts, hang-ups and habits up in the air so they don't come crashing down around us.

We're pretending everything is okay when, in reality, everything is out of control. We're actually struggling with real issues and real pain that we're trying to ignore. We're trying to keep it all together as our world is falling apart.

The result is that we go through a **cycle of despair**. We feel **guilty** about our behavior.

We make failed attempts to change. We get **angry** at ourselves- "I should be able to change" but we can't and our anger grows.

Over time our anger turns into **fear**...we're afraid that things will never change. We begin to realize that our hurts, hang-ups and habits are controlling us.

Our fear turns into **depression**. We feel sorry for ourselves. We are filled with more guilt. The cycle of depression starts all over again: guilt...anger...fear...depression.

How do we break out of this cycle of despair? If you have followed through on the first 2 healing choices, you're already moving out of this vicious cycle.

The first healing choice is where you made **the reality choice**. You faced your failures and admitted your need for God because you can't get better on your own.

Then you made **the hope choice**. You are sorry about the hurt that you have inflicted on yourself and on others. You believe that God loves you and has the power to help you.

These first 2 healing choices deal with repentance, turning away from that which has left you hurting and broken. Now you are ready for the 3rd healing choice. This choice will start you on the pathway to renewal and recovery in your life.

The third healing choice is the commitment choice. This choice is where you make the decision to step across the line of faith. You take a step toward God and you take a step away from the old way of trying to manage your life all on your own.

The commitment choice requires that we let go. Letting go means that we consciously choose to commit all our life and our will to Christ's care and control.

Jesus invites you to make this healing choice:

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and overburdened, and I will give you rest! Put on my yoke and learn from me.

“For I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” – Matthew 11:28-30.

Jesus promises that if we will bring our problems to Him that our load will be lighter. We will find relief, release, rest and rejuvenation.

The 3rd healing choice that we need to make in order to break free from the hurts, hang-ups and habits in our lives is found in the 3rd Beatitude, found in **Matthew 5:5**.

The 3rd healing choice calls on us to let go and commit ourselves fully to the Lord. Who would hold back if they can get the help that they need? Some do. Let’s find out why as we look at.....

1. The Barriers to becoming Committed

Some people won’t fully commit to the Lord because of their.....

a. Pride

Some people think that they can manage their life all on their own. They end up mis-managing it. They fail. The Scripture says:

“A self-sufficient fool falls flat on his face.” – Proverbs 10:8

Jesus’ antidote for the poison of pride is what He calls **meekness** in the 3rd Beatitude. Many equate meekness with weakness. In reality meekness and weakness are at the opposite ends of the spectrum.

The Greek word for meekness means **“strength under control”**. ***Meekness is used to describe a wild stallion that is tamed and taught to be ridden. The stallion still has all its strength, but now its strength is under control,***

ready for its master's use. The horse's wild spirit has been broken and is under the control of its master.

Likewise, God must be allowed to break our pride and bring our will under His control. God doesn't ask us to be weak, but He does ask us to lay down our pride and be meek. Meekness involves humility. Meekness involves submitting my will to God's will. Meekness means that I surrender control of my life over to God.

Through meekness, we remove the barrier of pride that keeps us from committing to the Lord. The second barrier that will keep us from fully committing to the Lord is....

b. Guilt

Because of what we have done and how many times we have done it, we may now be too ashamed to ask God to forgive us and help us. David wrote:

"Problems far too big for me to solve are piled higher than my head. Meanwhile my sins, too many to count, have all caught up with me, and I am ashamed to look up." – Psalm 40:12

Have you ever felt that way? Have you come to the conclusion that you have too many sins to count....that the habit you are struggling with, you feel like you have committed it too many times to ever be forgiven and you just hang your head in shame...you can't look up to the Lord?

But that is exactly where you need to look and you can look to the Lord. First of all, God knows what you have done. He is not shocked by it. God knows your failures and will love you anyway. God will forgive you because there is no sin that God cannot or will not forgive. God wants to forgive your sin and take away your guilt.

David also wrote about how, when he was forgiven, that the Lord had taken away the guilt of his sin. Guilt is gone when sin is forgiven. So look

to the Lord for forgiveness and don't let guilt stand as a barrier to receiving from the Lord the help He wants to give you.

A third barrier that keeps people from fully committing to the Lord is....

c. Fear

Fear may be the biggest barrier of all because there are so many fears that we may have. First of all, we may be **afraid to trust God**.

We may be like the guy who falls off a cliff. Halfway down he grabs on to a branch, and he's hanging on for dear life. He cries out, "Somebody help!" Suddenly, he hears God's voice- "This is the Lord. Trust Me. Let go and I will catch you." The guy calls out- "Is there anybody else up there?"

We have a difficult time trusting God. We're afraid to let go and trust God. We turn to the Lord only as a last resort. But God has proven Himself faithful. You have to trust Him. You have to let go if you are going to let God help you.

Some of us may be afraid of trusting God and committing to Him because we are afraid of losing control over our lives. Wake up and smell the coffee! You have already lost control of your life. You are being controlled by your poor choices. You are being controlled by your hurts, hang-ups and bad habits. You are mis-managing your life. You need to let God manage it.

Some people won't commit because they are afraid of losing their freedom if they commit to Christ. You have already lost your freedom. You are being controlled by something. You are being addicted to something. You are not free.

True, lasting freedom is choosing to let God control your life. Jesus promised that His truth would free us. Listen to this promise of God from Isaiah:

I have swept away your sins like the morning mists. I have scattered your offenses like the clouds. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free.” – Isaiah 44:22

You and I need to commit to the Lord to receive the freedom that we could never receive on our own. Some people won't commit out of fear. So, let me ask you:

What are you afraid of? What are you holding on to that you think you can't let go of? You really need to fear what's going on in your life without God's control and commit to Him.

Some people won't commit to the Lord because of....

d. Worry

Some people are worried that they won't live up to their commitment. And they are right. You will never live up to the commitment you make to the Lord if you try to do it all by yourself, but He will help you live out the commitment once you make it.

Commitment can help ease our anxiety. Because once you commit yourself to God's care, you're not alone. Your problems aren't your problems any longer. They have become God's problems and He will help you.

The final barrier is....

e. Doubt

Have you ever thought, I want to believe, but my faith is too small? If so, maybe you can relate to a guy who brought his son to Jesus to be healed of demon-possession.

The man was struggling with his faith to believe that Jesus could heal his son. He had already asked Jesus' disciples to heal his son and they could not. He wants Jesus to heal his son. But his faith isn't real strong at this point. He approaches Jesus and says, "if you can help us". Jesus responds

by saying, what do you mean if I can? Everything is possible to him who believes. The man is honest about his believe- "I believe but help my unbelief". This man had some faith but he was struggling with his doubt . But for Jesus that was good enough. He healed the man's son.

Maybe you are like that father. You want to believe that God can help you in your life, but you have your doubts. Just be honest with God. Whatever amount of faith that you have is good enough with God. You don't have to have a big faith to decide to hand over the care and control of your life to God. You just have to have some faith. The Bible tells us that faith as small as a mustard seed is faith that God can work with.

It's not the size of your faith that matters. It's who or what you put your faith in that matters. You can have giant faith and put it in the wrong things, like money and possessions and come up empty. Or you can have a little faith and put it in our big God and get amazing results.

Don't let any of these barriers keep you from committing yourself to the Lord. Become meek and surrender the control and care of your life over to the Lord and watch what God can do in your life.

With that in mind, let's look at.....

2. The Blessing of being Committed

Jesus promised that the meek ones will inherit the earth. Does this mean that you will rule the world when you commit to the Lord? No.

First of all, this means that you will receive salvation. The initial way that anyone surrenders to the Lord is by accepting Jesus as one's personal Lord and Savior.

You then inherit the earth. That's because eternal life in heaven that we refer to isn't some existence far off in some nebulous palace in the clouds.

What we refer to as heaven will include a new earth that God will create out of the old one. Peter speaks of the new earth, the home of righteousness on which we will live one day.

In Revelation 21, the apostle John testified of seeing a new heaven and a new earth. He saw the Holy City of heaven coming down out of heaven to earth. In eternity, heaven and earth will be one. We will live on the new earth. Doesn't that make heaven sound even more exciting? That's something we can relate to, isn't it? We will live on a new earth, one that is better. One that is perfect.

So, when Jesus says that the meek will inherit the earth, I think ultimately about the new earth that is promised to us in eternity. But I believe that inheriting the earth has a practical application. It means that your personal world that was falling apart is coming back together for you.

One Sunday afternoon a father was trying to take a nap, but his little boy kept bugging him- "Daddy, I'm bored." To keep his son occupied, the dad found a picture of the world in the newspaper. He cut it up in about 50 pieces and said, "Son, see if you can put this puzzle of the world back together."

The dad lay back down to finish his nap, thinking that trying to put the map of the world back together would keep his son occupied all afternoon. But in 15 minutes the boy woke his father up: "Daddy, I've got it finished. It's all put together."

"How did you do it so quickly?" the father asked. The boy answered, "It was easy. There was a picture of a person on the back of the map. When I put the person back together, the world looked just fine."

When you allow God to make you better, your personal world will get better. Your life will get better. Life will make sense to you once again. Life will be enjoyable for you once again. Life will have meaning and purpose to you. Life will not feel so out-of-control and unmanageable.

In this way, you will inherit the earth. So, you would like for that to happen. You have decided, "I am willing to be meek. I am ready to step across the line of faith and fully commit the care and control of my life over to God. How do I go about it? Let's look at.....

3. Making the Commitment Choice

The first thing that you need to do if you are not a Christian is to.....

a. Accept God's Son as your Savior

Admit that you need to be saved and accept Jesus as your Savior. Trust in Him to save you from your sins. Commit your life and your will to Him.

Now, remember what I have already said to you in this series. Healing is a process that happens one choice at a time. Bringing God into your life won't make your problems go away overnight. For some people, they've spent years building up their problems and addictions. But one thing is for sure, you won't get better without God in your life. You need to make Jesus Lord over your life so that He can begin the healing process in your life.

During World War II, the Marines had a battle strategy that worked every time in freeing an island in the Pacific from Japanese occupation. First, planes would fly in and drop bombs to soften up the occupied area.

Next, they would establish a beachhead, a presence on the island. It may have been only 20 yards deep and 200 yards wide, but they would get a presence on the island.

Now, just establishing the beachhead did not liberate the island. The beachhead was just the beginning. It was from the beachhead that they began to fight the battles. Sometimes they would move forward 100 yards. Sometimes they would get pushed back 50. Sometimes they won the battle, and sometimes they lost a battle.

But once they had established a beachhead, total liberation of the island was inevitable. In the history of World War II, once the Marines landed and established a beachhead, they never lost an island. It was just a matter of time until the entire island would be set free.

When you accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, this allows God to establish a “beachhead” in your life. The beachhead is His presence. And now He can move forward in your life to free you from your hurts, hang-ups and habits.

You have to first allow God into your life before He can take control of your life. If you are outside of Christ, you need to first receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Next....for all of us as Christians....we need to.....

b. Accept God’s Word as Your Standard

If our lives are messed up, it’s because we’ve been living by the wrong rules, our own rules. We need new guidelines to live by. The Bible is the manual to live our lives by. Paul wrote:

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the faith and correcting error, for re-setting the direction of a man’s life and training him in good living.” – 2 Timothy 3:16

We need to accept God’s Word as our standard to live by. Next.....

c. Accept God’s will as your Purpose

David wrote:

“My God, I want to do what YOU want. Your teachings are in my heart.” – Psalm 40:8

When you live life on your own terms it doesn’t work out too well. We need to commit to living life on God’s terms. When you live life on your terms it brings pain and suffering. When we live life on God’s terms, there is peace and comfort.

And the good news is that God has a purpose for your life! Every day you need to commit yourself to fulfilling that purpose. You find much of His purpose for your life in His Word. His purpose, simply put, is to worship Him, serve Him, become more like Him and tell others about Him.

So, instead of stumbling around in life lost, broken and confuse, follow God's strategy for your life. Finally.....

d. Accept God's Power as your Strength

Here is the power statement for your life:

"I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power." – Philippians 4:13

The pathway to healing and wholeness involves changing your definition of will power to this: Will power is a willingness to accept God's power in your life instead of relying on your own strength.

Healing happens one choice at a time. Make the commitment choice today and give Jesus control of your life.

Jesus invites you: ***"Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends."***

Jesus wants to come into your life. But you have to open the door and invite him in. You have to make the commitment choice.

For those of you who have not yet accepted Jesus, it starts by receiving Christ as Savior. Will you take that initial step across the line of faith today? If so, you can confess your faith and be baptized into Christ this morning.

Perhaps you have made that commitment to Christ, but you have not yet made a commitment to church membership. We'd like you to join our church family. We can encourage you in your walk with the Lord.