

Choices: Jacob

His choice

There is an interesting section in the Bible about choices. Jacob and Esau are brothers. One is better at home tending the garden. The other is a skilled hunter and rugged. They are brothers but probably not the best of friends. One day in Genesis 26 Esau came home hungry and sold his birthright to his brother for food. It seems like a trivial story. How easy was it for the boys to barter with responsibility? Each of them had their place in the family line. The choices they made from then on changed the course of history.

I call it Jacobs choice because he should have respected the family line tradition over gaining the birthright. In reality it was not his to take. Sure his brother Esau carries some of the blame but when we are given a choice: make the right one. Jacob wanted what his brother had. I think he played him because he knew his brother. That food was ready beforehand to entice Esau. I believe that because just after that Jacob steals Esau's family blessing from his dad. I seriously wonder about how jealous he had been of his brother Esau.

These choices to gain something through dishonesty always come back to bite you. A choice to do right and wrong are always there. I do believe that God lays these choices down just to see what you will do. In the end we have been given things in this life. Being grateful for these things are far more important than yearning for the things we are missing. Jacob later on yearned for more than he bargained for. He wanted Rachel but was given Leah. These women in turn yearned for children over their friendship. This whole story is a lesson in humility gone wrong. What is your choice?

Our choice

I saw a cat some time ago that is really cool. There will be a day soon when my older cat dies. Am I yearning for the future or loving my cat today. Death of my animals will come several times. I think loving what has been given is more valuable than we know. My parents are still alive but my grandparents are all gone. I have great memories, but I wish I had spent more time with them. These days I am trying to spend as much time as I can with those who might not be around much longer.

Our choices like Jacob's are very real in our day. We yearn for things like never before. I have been told over and over to get a new PS4. I still like my PS3. Soon though, I will be moving on to bigger and better things. I want a new car, trip, and phone. The troubling part is life. There is life to be lived today. What I have now is good enough. What choice will I make today with the things I have. Take an inventory of all you have this week. What choices brought you to have all this stuff.

Jacob wanted Rachel and ignored Leah. Jacob wanted what Esau had over their friendship. Jacob met an uncle that was worse than him. Be careful of your hearts desires. You might find that life will bring you exactly what you love and hate. We are presented choices because God is very curious. He is fascinated by the choices we make. Are we listening to or ignoring the good path? Do we see what's going on yet try and steer life our way? There are rational, gut feeling, and common sense choices. What is before you today?

Lesson learned

There are huge implications to this Jacob story. The lesson might be to respect what you have. Sure a new car might run better, but do you need it or want it. There could be a choice between giving and getting. The church has allowed people to give far less than they should. They joke in circles that 95% of people don't give much to the church. They praise those who give 10%. I worry about the lesson in this. Is it that those who give 10% feel justified over those who don't. I worry that those who don't give think it's someone else's problem.

The lesson today is that life is all our problems. Ignoring terrorism is stupid. Being a glutton in North America while others starve in Africa is terrible. We all have a role. The Islamists might be envious or maybe they hate what we have. Maybe we hate their actions towards us. In the end, both sides are not willing to be friends. Maybe we can't, and through the years there seems to be no try. This trouble is so much like Jacob and Esau. The trouble started over a bowl of soup. Are the problems in the world today attributed to a simple incident years ago?

We are willing to bury family because you don't like them. In the end family is all we have been given. Friends come and go but family blood lines are different. Finding peace in the family will bring peace in your life. Things always go better with strong families. The lessons in the Jacob story are many. Family should matter. Our place in tradition should matter. Caring for what we have been given should matter. The disaster that Jacob endured should not be taken lightly. Choices in humility will shape you. Unfortunately, they also shape those around you too. What are your choices today?