Are You Making The Right Choices? (Part I)

Intro:
- illus.: before his death, Joshua called on Israel to make a “choice” (Josh. 24:14-15)
  - believe in God and serve Him, or serve pagan gods and idols of earth
  - warned, they would have to live with the consequences of their decision

- we have to make choices in life, and each one effects our salvation and eternal home in some way

We choose to have joy or sadness – joy (a feeling of happiness), rejoice, choose how we feel
- Ja. 1:2-4 count it all joy, various trials, testing of faith produces endurance which has it’s perfect result, complete, lacking nothing
  - we choose to be joyful (feeling happy) during hard times, because of benefits

- Phil. 4:4-7 rejoice in the Lord, gentle spirit, not anxious, prayerful, peace of God
  - we choose to rejoice during hard times, because of God’s power in our life, and blessings
  - illus.: a lot of things we don’t have a choice (parents, where born, etc.), but we always have a choice about our attitude

- there is always a reason to be happy (rejoice in the Lord), but sometimes we have to look a little harder

- as Christians, we are joyous and rejoicing all the time because of the strength and blessings God gives us
  - living testimonies to His power in our lives
  - choices
choose: happy or sad

➤ We choose our attitude toward self and others – reflected in all we say and do
  - choose a positive or negative attitude
    - Phil. 3:13-15a attitude, forget behind, press toward goal of the upward prize
    - Phil. 4:12-13 positive attitude, confident, excel in every circumstance in Christ
    - illus.: David against Goliath and the Philistines vs. Israel – paint picture, everyone negative but David
      - positive attitude and brave leadership makes us leaders of men – boy David vs. adult Israelites
  
➤ - choose an attitude that builds people up or tears them down
    - Rom. 15:2-3 please, edify neighbor, as Christ did for us
    - Col. 4:6 speech with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so know how to respond
      - Eph. 4:29 speak words good for edification, according to need of the moment
    - every word and every action impacts people around is, for good or bad (family, friends, brethren)
      - our choices help people get to heaven or hell
  
➤ - choose an attitude that leads people to Christ or to Satan
    - 1 Pet. 3:13-17 attitude and actions required to lead people to Christ through His word
      - vs. 13 zealous for what is good
      - vs. 14 not fear or be troubled by people who persecute us
      - vs. 15 sanctify Christ in our hearts
      - vs. 15 ready to make a defense – studied, practiced
      - vs. 15 to everyone who asks – not prejudice, talk with everyone
      - vs. 15 answer with gentleness and reverence
      - vs. 16 keep a good conscious at all time, even when being slandered
    - 1 Pet. 2:21 following in the steps of Christ, honoring God at all times, even when suffer

- as Christians, we are positive about God, the church, our lives, and positive spiritual leaders in our communities
  - have an attitude that builds people up, rather than tears them down
  - have an attitude that leads people to Christ, rather than Satan
  - choices
We choose whether to be a friend or an enemy – good neighbor or bad
- Matt. 5:43-45a Jesus, love enemies, feed and care for them – be friends to our enemies

- loving our neighbor sums up the law
  - Rom. 13:8, 10 owe nothing to anyone except to love one another, for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law - love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law

- illus.: parable of the good Samaritan – good Samaritan chose to be a good neighbor, priest and Levite didn’t

- illus.: Student at Kamiakin Junior High (Seattle, Washington) raise money for baby’s bone marrow transplant
  - Spring, 1992, told his baby had cancer - Michael needed a bone marrow transplant
    - Michael's 6-year-old sister was a perfect match for the transplant
  - Jeff’s insurance wouldn’t pay for it - he had to work 1 year before would cover transplants
    - needed $200,000 - had 2 months to raise it
  - a teacher (Joe Kennedy) told his class about Mr. Leeland’s baby
  - Dameon, a seventh grade boy who walked with a limp and struggled in special education classes, heard about Mr. Leeland's son, Michael, and made a visit to Jeff's house.
    - "Mr. Leeland, don't make a big deal out of this…if your baby's in trouble, I want to help out."
    - Dameon, the kid others teased, reached out his hand and stuffed 12 five-dollar bills into the hand. — his life’s savings
  - Word got out about "Dameon's gift.
    - Some kids organized a walk-a-thon.
    - Others contacted a local newspaper.
    - Others held a car wash.
    - the kids' wave of compassion poured out across Seattle.
      - On Friday, May 22nd, a man walked into the bank with a check for ten thousand dollars.
        - One week after Dameon's gift, Michael's fund grew to $16,000.
        - By May 29th, Michael's fund grew to $62,000.
        - On Friday, June 5th, the fund had grown to $143,000.
        - Monday, June 8th: $160,000.
        - Tuesday, June 9th: $185,000.
        - Only four weeks after Dameon's gift of $60, the Michael Leeland Fund totaled over $220,000.
  - Michael got the marrow transplant. He lived. (Adapted from Jeff Leeland, One Small Sparrow (Multnomah, 2000)
      and from a phone interview with Jeff Leeland, Sisters, Oregon; submitted by Clark Cothern, Tecumseh, Michigan)

- When is the last time you chose to be a good Samaritan? - had mercy on someone and did something for them they needed, and couldn’t do for themselves – not a friend or family

- Ja. 2:8, 12-13 judged as to whether we were good neighbors – Jesus gives example of the good Samaritan

  - as Christians, we are friends with everyone, even our enemies – good neighbors to everyone
    - God chose to be our friend while we were enemies with Him, as His children we are to love people as God loves them (Matt. 5:45a) – choices
End Part I
- **choose:** happy or sad, positive or negative, friend or enemy, good or bad reputation

- **inv.:** also **choose** whether to be a Christian or not
  - **Josh. 24:15** “choose for yourselves today whom you will serve” - “but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”
  - **illus.:** song #280, I Have Decided To Follow Jesus