

Fil-Am Community Church

Brother Barry Black

18 May 2014

Lesson 8

“The Sharing Choice”

Hello Fil-Am Church. My name is Barry and I am the next contestant on the Fil-Am Reality Show, “Where Is My Husband, and What Is He Doing” But, before I get started, I wanted to again thank Pastor Rolly for the opportunity to share his pulpit and preach this message. And, again, I want to thank our Cell Group Leaders Maria and Elvin for hosting the Alexandria Cell Group where we had a fantastic meeting the other night of sharing, praying and laughing. So let’s recap where we have been on this long journey through Life’s Healing Choices.

In Lesson 1, titled the Reality Choice, which is about Admitting Our Need, we found out we were not God. We were powerless to control our tendency to do the wrong thing and that Life was unmanageable. The Beatitude verse that goes with this is “Happy are those who are spiritually poor.” In Lesson 2, called the Hope Choice, we were Getting Help. Here I believed God exists; That I matter to Him; and that He has the power to help me. The Beatitude verse was “Happy are those Who Mourn.” In Lesson 3 we got to the Commitment Choice and we were “Letting Go”. I consciously chose to commit ALL my life and will to Christ’s care and control. The verses here from the Beatitudes is “Blessed are the Meek” and “Happy are those Who are humble.” In Lesson 4 we were “Coming Clean”. This was the House Cleaning choice. And the Beatitude was “Happy Are the Pure in Heart.” And about this time you were probably seeing this as a process; a toolkit to assist you with whatever hurts, habits, and hang-ups are in your life. In Lesson 5 we had the Transformation Choice as we were “Making Changes”. This is where I voluntarily submitted to every change that God wanted to make in my life and where I humbly asked Him to remove my character defects. In

Lesson Six, called the Relationship Choice, I was in the business of “Repairing Relationships”. I evaluated relationships and offered forgiveness to those who hurt me and made amends for harm done to others (except when it would harm them.) And the verse was “Happy are those who are merciful to others.” Lesson 7 was the Growth Choice and this is where we were “Maintaining Momentum”. I reserved daily quiet time with God for self examination, Bible reading, and prayer to know His will for Me and gain the power to Follow Him. And so today, we come to the end of Life’s Healing Choices with the last lesson called the Sharing Choice. And the Beatitude verse is from Matthew 5:9, which is “Blessed Are the Peacemakers.”

So God wants you to be a Peacemaker! And you are saying - What me? I am a mess. I just got on this Healing Train – I can’t share – I’m a Basket case! The pain is soooo great! I’m not a Peacemaker. I’m coming apart here. I’m about three pieces short of a Betty Crocker Holiday Basket! I can’t wait to get to Heaven - No more pain. Sickness; Tears; Sadness; No more five foot putts for Par; No problems. But, wait a minute! I’m not in heaven now; The food at Fil Am is good, but this ain’t Heaven! And so we have to deal with Pain.

You will have pain all your life. You can blame yourself, the neighbor next door; the television show you were made to watch last night; even the neighbor’s dog, Ruff. It doesn’t matter. The Bible teaches us three things about pain: It teaches us that God says I will use it for your benefit; God says I will use it for my purposes; and God says I will use it to help other people. This is this Circle of Life thing where you can almost hear Simba singing in the background “It’s Good to be the King”. God takes the pieces of our lives and gives them purpose. He transforms our problems into something good! He brings good out of bad as He takes your pain and pieces it all back together!

Yes, Blessed are the Peacemakers! God wants you to be a Peacemaker. But, before this can happen, you must have the Peace of God in you – Which is what?

Well it just so happens the objective of Recovery from Hurts, Hangups, and Habits is this: Finding the peace of God in your hearts!

Once you experience Recovery; Renewal; Revival; Spiritual Growth; and God's Peace, God wants you to pass it On! When you are accomplishing that- that is in fact the proof of being Recovered.

Think about it? I can't tell anyone about my life; I can't tell anyone about my hang-ups; My hurts; My deep, dark secrets! But – When I do—When I share-- I have graduated to the Head of the Class! Now I can not only practice this process but I can help others get over the hurts, hang-ups, and habits in their own lives as well.

A while back some 10 years ago there was a movie that many of you may have seen called “Pay IT Forward” starring a young Joel Haley Osmond. In the movie this young kid takes on a homework assignment from his teacher to do something radical to try to change the world. He develops this concept to do something nice for someone in the hope that they will pay it forward and begin to touch the lives of others in a positive way. What A Concept! And that is exactly what God is going to do with you!

And guess what? YOU DO IT in the area of your life where you feel the most comfortable? No! You do it in the area where you just came back and recovered from all the Hurt! And again, God takes the bad – He adds His special recipe of Love; Confidence; Caring; and He produces YOU as a Vessel of Honor! Standing in front of a group of people saying “This is my story!”

The Bible states that ‘God was in Christ, offering Peace and Forgiveness to the people of this world. And He has given us the work of sharing His Message about peace.’ The Sharing Choice is this: “I choose to yield myself

to God to be used to bring the Good News to others, by both my example and by my words.”

Broken people used by God to do His will and help others! Has that ever happened in the Bible?

We all know the story of Jonah; He was a good guy who ran away from God; Refused to go to Nineva and preach to them because he knew that God was going to have them repent and then save them.

And that’s exactly what God did! Paul; Another Good Guy; He only persecuted the Jews and even held the Pharisees’ coats while they stoned Stephen. Then he volunteered to round up the Jews one by one.

Know what happened? God did His thing and changed their hurts, habits, and hang-ups about who they were and what they were about and used them to bring about the deliverance of Nineva and the Jewish (and then the Gentile people) – one step at a time.

Let me share a story with you. I was in Texas a few years back and the job situation had dried up for Engineering jobs and such. I soon learned that Texas wasn’t such a big place after all. And I was in severe depression. I overcame it through Christ who had to show me a few things along the way. I couldn’t find a job so my wife told me “Why don’t you go to school to learn to be a CNA?” Well, I did and the first full time job I got as a CNA was working for a Hospice Agency. I was around death all the time; I was around hurting people all the time; I was around irate relatives who would come in and say “When is Grandpa going to go?” “Can’t you do something?” I would tell them- I am trying; I really am.

I am looking for a job at the time, any job. So amidst the bathroom follies and stuff (you Nurses know what I mean) I am working with an elderly man about 84 years old who never says anything. All he does is smile. One day in the shower He looks up at me and says “You are a job hunter!” I about fell over. I am looking at him and I am staring at Christ. And you know what – I

learned something extremely valuable; No matter what your struggles, No matter what your circumstances; God is right there in front of You – And He is there to see you through to the end; Vow in your mind to learn whatever He is showing you at the time. He wanted me to realize He had never left me or forsaken me.

Paul had a similar experience. In the Bible. Paul talks about how he was ready to give up on life; He was ready to crawl into a corner and die. He said this; “I pray that God our Father and Jesus Christ will be kind to you and will bless you with peace (heart – mind).”

God comforts us in trouble so we can share that same comfort with others in trouble. And Your greatest Ministry will flow out of Your Pain!

CR has such powerful testimonies that are powerful and encouraging. What is it that you need to speak to a group? And have them listen? A degree? Two degrees? No - You need credibility; My wife always tells me this – Tell them not what you know; Tell them where you have been.

If you seek truth you need an example! Someone who has been Abused- Raped- Molested – They are standing in front of you and telling you what it was like and how God helped them overcome it and it brings it home to that person who is squirmish about sharing their story with a Raccoon, let alone another Human Being.

Don't waste your pain! – Use It! God will Bless you for it! He will use it to demonstrate His Power and mend lives! And you are the glue. The vessel He will work with!

Point One; The Bible teaches we need to learn How to share with others how pain got our attention. Pain – Used to get our attention, causes us to change. We cry out and come to know and call on the One who can deliver us. We will not usually change when we See the Light - We Change when we feel the Heat!

Pain corrects us to Do it this way! Pain directs us along the appropriate path. And Pain perfects us as it Builds Character in us. The Number one way God uses pain is to Get Our Attention!

The Prodigal Son is an example; He was in the pit, eating literally with the Hogs and said: "This isn't good." The Bible states "He came to his senses." Why do we wait so long to come to our senses? God uses the Rod – Pain.

Elijah had a similar experience; He was told by God to take a break; Relax and rest down by the brook at Kerith. He was told the Ravens will bring you food and feed you. The brook will provide you fresh water. Elijah simply rested and got quite comfortable. One day the brook dries up. It is not so nice anymore and He says "God, don't you love me anymore?" God responds, "Certainly, I love you, but I just don't want you at the brook anymore." God knew that he had to move Elijah to another place by drying up the brook and taking away his creature comforts.

In order to help others I must be honest about: 1; My feelings – You must learn to share your feelings. Paul states in 2 Corinthians 6:11 "We have spoken quite frankly to you; We have opened our hearts wide." He told his people "I didn't just teach you – I shared my feelings."

2. I also must be honest about my Faults; I have to be humble (as a Disciple of Christ I need to be clothed in Humility.) Paul again states: "Each of us must bear the faults and burdens of his own, for none of us is perfect. " (Galatians 6:5)

3. I must be honest about my Failures; Paul states in 1 Timothy 1:15 "Christ came into this world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst."

4. I must be honest about my frustrations. We have to quit saying; It is no big deal. It doesn't bother me; But we need to be Honest and, like Paul, identify the frustration. As he said in Romans 7: 18b-19, "I have the desire to do what is right, but I cannot carry it out." By being honest with frustrations you become Real; You throw away the masks; There is no masquerade. At

CR the emphasis is on being real REAL. That's how you will make a difference in people's lives – Honesty.

5 Finally, I must be honest about my Fears. Who likes to tell people about their fears? But - when you do it, it will (a). lower the level of fear in you and (b) will encourage the other person.

In 2 Corinthians 12:20 Paul states “I do admit that I have fears that when I come to you – you'll disappoint me and I'll disappoint you.” We must admit that we are all broken – Once you do that you will begin to experience a new freedom of being real with yourself - God – and others.

The second point is this; I need to learn to Share what I've learned in the process.

We all learn from experience; Do you know what is better? Learning from other's experiences. As a young boy I did this with my older brother without even knowing this. I watched him going through the rebellious years - long hair, the Beatles Invasion, etc. I saw how this angered my Dad, who was a prior Marine. These were some tough times; I vowed to not make the same mistakes as I saw the pain it caused. We learn from the Bible and its History - That is why the Bible has so many examples in it. (God wants to Share with you – and He has through His Word.)

Mentors in your Life; Spiritual Partners; Cell Groups (who are open and Real); Our cell group the other night was awesome; We laughed, we Cried, but, most of ALL, we were Real!

What have we learned? We have learned to Depend on God's Love; How do we do that? We strip away the hurts, hang-ups, and admit where we are at. We turn to God for comfort and realize we are not alone. In 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 Paul states “We were crushed and overwhelmed ... and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves, but that was good, because then we put everything in the hand of God, who alone could save us ...and He did help us!

Paul states they were ‘Crushed and overwhelmed’ but this became good as they turned to God and depended on Him.

We have learned to Follow God’s Word: God teaches us through His Word – Mostly about Himself through examples; Characters in the Bible who messed up and turned to God.

They began to learn who God is (His character) (His love) (His Power) (His care and Concern for us). His love never fails!

I also learned that I need other people. Small groups - Cell Groups – A key to the Modern Day church development. An example of this is Mark Batterson, who founded the National Theater Church in D.C.. He developed a model church that has a cell group for just about everything. And it is the Staple of the Modern Day Church.

The third point is this; God wants you to share how God can bring good out of bad. In Romans 8:28 we read “We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God.” To break this down, first, “We Know”; We are not guessing, hoping, wishing, or desiring. We know for certain/ confidently/Absolutely. We can stake our lives on it.

We know that “God causes”: Life is not an accident. There is no such thing as Random Chance ; Our path is ordered by God. For our visitors, please know that you are not here by accident. And understand that you are not an accident. We make mistakes; God does not. Everything that happens is due to choices – not chance.

The choices God makes- The choices you and I make – and will make. It’s not by chance but by choice.

God is the designer; He “causes all things” – All things? Yes; All things. What is in All things? Is My Sin in all things? Yes; Your Sin? Yes; Your genetics - DNA? Yes; Circumstances throughout history? Yes; All bad decisions other

people make and that I make? Yes; Miscarriages? Yes; Divorces? Yes; Failures? Yes. God fits all these into His Plan!

There is nothing that does not fit into the Plan. Does God cause evil to happen? No; Absolutely not. He is not the author of evil. But He causes All Things to happen to work together for Fun? No. Your desires? No. Your mama? No. He causes ALL THINGS to work together for Good!

God takes the bad/ the Evil/ the “in your face” lies, torture, contempt, back stabbing, and suffering in this world and causes it to “work together for good for Those who Love God”.

Can God bring good out of bad? Well, let’s look at the Crucifixion. Pretty bad, right? Our Savior was tortured; Spat upon; He was beaten; He was hung on the Cross; And He was shamed. All God did was take this situation and redeem All of Mankind – for the Salvation of the World! What a God we serve!

Now, is this verse for Everyone? No. This promise is For Those who do the following: Those who give to God the broken pieces of their lives (that, by the way, includes All of us who are definitely broken) (Don’t be in Denial.) And for those who say, “God, I love you. Please take the pieces of my broken life and put them back together?”

Do you have to want this to happen? Certainly.

An example of this is found in Mark 10:51 where Bartimaeus, a blind man, comes to Jesus and Jesus asks him, “What do you want me to do for you?” Really? Why did Jesus ask that? I used to read that verse and ask myself - Doesn’t make sense. Doesn’t Jesus already know what Bartimaeus wants? But the point is God is waiting for you to come to Him and humbly ask Him – Take the broken pieces of my life and put them back together again.

You cannot do the Burger King Theology; “Have it your way.” You must choose Christ here on earth. ; You cannot do it when you die – Standing

before a Mighty God and God says ; “You obviously did not want me in your life while on earth. Why would you want me in your life for all eternity?”

God even allowed 4 women in the Bible to play a huge part in the lives of others and, in fact, become part of the lineage in which Jesus Christ, our savior, was born. Tamar; A girl who was seduced by relatives and had sexual scandals in and thru her life. Rahab; A prostitute who did the right thing by helping Godly men escape from the enemy soldiers. Ruth; Not even a Jew, but a Moabite, who married a Jewish man – and her marriage was not even legally recognized under the law. And Bathsheba; Who had an affair with King David, who then had her husband murdered. God took these situations and turned the Bad into Good for those who came to Him and asked him humbly to do so. And each one of them became women, who were part of the lineage of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

God takes out hurts, habit, hang-ups, sin, failures, mistakes, of your life and turns them into good IF YOU WILL TURN TO HIM and (watch this) Give them to Him. In fact, He has already developed a plan to turn your frustration, mourning, distress into Joy – He is just waiting on you to ask Him.

As a follower: We don't hide our mistakes in a closet; We are open about feelings/faults/failures/and fears.

We are trophies of Grace!

Joseph, in the Bible, was born as the 11th of 12 sons; He was a Daddy's boy. His Dad loved him and blessed him beyond measure. He was given a “Coat of Many Colors”; And these actions sowed the seed of discontent and envy amongst his brothers. Joseph was sold into slavery, was accosted by Potifer's wife, and eventually was thrown into prison where he remained for 40 years; Then, through a series of events and by his God Given Dreams he was able to turn his life around and becomes the 2nd most powerful man in Egypt. Why? So he can, during a terrible famine and drought, save his own Jewish people

from famine. And when he sees his brothers – with no remorse - he states” They intended it to harm me , but God Intended it for good.”

Point 4; God Wants You to Share with Others How Jesus Gives You Hope. Hope – This was a word to my wife when she was told to write a God given book years ago called appropriately “Give Then Hope”. She wrote – And I edited – She wrote more – And I edited more. After the 200th edit, I needed Hope! And there were times when I would be at work editing away and then the printer would act up. I was going this is going to work and I was laying hands on the printer, praying God fix this thing! Well God brought us through and showed me the value of being a willing vessel in the hands of a mighty God. And He showed me How to Persevere and Overcome!

Hope! Where does it come from? God. How can you help? Be that willing vessel. Share Hope – Use your experiences - Use your suffering – Your circumstances – Your trials - Your tribulations – Your God developed character - Your hurts!

God has placed you on a path to Overcoming – He will (like a new painting He is touching up the rough edges; He will finish the painting.

Now Share It! Share It! Say, I will Share it!

Do you need to be perfect to share it? No. Do you need to be healed from all your hurts, habits, and hang-ups? No. You are a work in progress and, until you get to the other side, you will always be 1 bottle short of a six-pack. Health Issues – Marriage Issues – Financial Issues – Life out of control- Everyone needs to cope and requires Hope.

Someone who has been there – done that – has credibility. Do not tell people what you Feel – Tell them how God rescued you from the Pit of Despair. Bad lessons of Life are experiences God has taken us through. Paul- Peter- John shared experiences of Life. No wonder Paul had such credibility; He was trained by Gamaliel, went from (his own words) the “worst of all Sinners” to a man who set the world on fire; Had a Roman

Birthright; a Citizen of Rome; Beaten; Persecuted; Struck Blind; Bitten by a poisonous snake; Humbled; Stoned; and he overcame all to Share.

Be a hope dispenser - "Always be proposed to give an answer to everyone who asks you for the Hope you have." Your job - Your mission - is to share Hope; Witnessing on what Christ is doing to you and through you.

In closing, I want to ask you; Are you learning from your mistakes? Are you learning to depend on God? Are you trusting in God's power to make changes you want to see? Will you allow God to use your mistakes to help others this week?

Let us pray: And as we do, and the choir closes in song, I would ask anyone who needs a touch from God to come forward - for Salvation - Rededication - or renewal of their life in Christ Jesus.

Thank you God for loving me enough to get my attention. Thank you for taking the Bad and turning it into Good. I want to totally depend on You Father! I'm willing to follow Your steps to recovery from here on out. Help me to be honest with you - myself - and others. Use me to encourage others, to share, and to Give them Hope. Amen.

We try to cover up our pain and we get pretty good at it. We hide our pain and hurt and there is a counseling term that goes along with this. It is called "Stuffing." Thank you, Laura. We develop habits and they tend to quiet our pain. Many of you might see these habits manifest themselves and you might just say "That is a character weakness. They just have a Bad Habit!"

Where did the habit come from? What causes it? That bad habit is really the hurt - it is really the pain screaming out - "I am hurting!" The habit is really a disguise.

Your habit could be that you spend too much money. It could be drinking, shopping, too much television, lying, or overeating. But the habit will not stop until you get to the root of the hurt. You must Deal With IT!

We cannot just know God is God, Know that He cares, and that He has the power to change me. We must Plug-In to His Power!

That is why we have this third choice – a critical choice - the choice to “Consciously commit all my life and will to Christ’s care and control.” And you will deal with this third choice over the next 5 weeks and will build on this choice whether you make a commitment today or not.

Let’s go back to the Sermon On The Mount in the bible at Matthew 5. Here it reveals how Jesus preached to the crowds using the 8 Blessed Statements written there; He said, “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.” “Blessed are those who mourn.” “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst.” “Blessed are those who are poor in spirit.” “Blessed are those who are merciful.” Eight Blessed statements were used - And the real meaning for “Blessed” is “Happy.” He said, “Happy are/Blessed are” which means “Full, Effectiveness.” When Jesus said, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” the people thought “So what? What is the big deal?” But, when you look back at what was happening you see a clear parallel. You see, Moses, in Deuteronomy 33:29, made a statement, a profession to the people of Israel; and it was the only time that the word “Blessed” was used by Moses. He told them prophetically “You are a blessed people. Who is like you? You are a people saved by the Lord, who will protect you. He will lay your enemies out before you and you will tread on their backs! And you will be inheriting the land promised by the Lord to your father Abraham.” When Jesus, the Second Moses, was preaching the Sermon on the Mount, He was saying “Blessed are the meek, Happy are the meek; for they will inherit the earth.” He was saying “You will have a full life if you are meek.” The people thought, “Okay, no big deal, the disciples are inheriting the Kingdom/the land of our father Abraham.” What Jesus was actually saying was the blessing that the people would be inheriting was the future Kingdom of Heaven - not the Promised Land of Abraham. He was talking about the future Kingdom of God in Heaven! The people, a very prideful people, were looking for a Messiah to deliver them from the Roman Government and their oppressors.

They were looking for a Macho Jesus, a RAMBO Jesus, an Abrams Tank! They wanted a physical revolution - not a Spiritual Revolution. And Jesus said”Blessed are the MEEK.”

They didn’t understand this concept in the First Century. We don’t understand this concept today. Or maybe we do understand it, but we don’t want to embrace it. Guys, do you remember when you were dating your beautiful wife and you just knew you had found the one who you wanted to spend your life with? You were dating this gal and said “She is it.” She is everything you could ever want! You take her out to a fine restaurant, and you are waiting to pop the question when she looks over at you with those big beautiful eyes and says, “I love how Meek you are.” You drive her home; You go home yourself and open up your refrigerator and take out this big piece of cheese; You say to yourself, “I should love this because this cheese Looks just like me – Meek.”

You would never go to your football coach and say, “Put me in the game, Coach - I’m Meek!” If you look at your notes in your bulletin you will see that there is a definition of Meek; And it can be filled in by your own words. It can mean, Unmanly; WOS; No testosterone! Ladies, it also applies to you. Those of you who work in the Marketplace don’t do it to be meek! You don’t go there to float around like a bird! You go there to Swim with the Sharks!

But, As a follower of Jesus Christ, Meekness is not an option. The word for Meek is “Prais” in the original language of the Bible. And it can have different levels of meaning. On the surface it can mean “Mild or humble.” In fact, the way the world thinks of Christians, their stereotype of Christians, is Spineless”, “Wimpy”, “Someone who wears a lot of polyester.” (Now would not be a good time to look at your neighbor.) Christians say “Praise the Lord” a lot. And they are Meek. But there is a deeper meaning that we need to understand. And that is of an animal whose naturally wild spirit had to be broken by a trainer. Why? So they could become useful!

Think of a Wild Stallion; Running like the wind! Now tamed, it can be bridled, hooked up, and can plow a field. It can be made useful - This Meekness is not a weakness. It is a tamed stallion. It is the embodiment of Jesus. It is "Strength under control." It does not lack conviction - It is "Courage under fire." Strength! Conviction with a gentle spirit! It is God's infusion into your life. It is not your spirit, but is the Spirit of Jesus!

In First Peter 2: 21-23, we see what is shown here; "Christ, who suffered for you, is your example. Follow in his steps. He never sinned, and he never deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when he was insulted. When he suffered, he did not threaten to get even. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly." Jesus modeled meekness in how he lived! Why? Look at Moses again in the Old Testament. Numbers 12:3 states "Moses was a humble man more so than any man on the face of the earth." And yet, this is what separated him from the rest of the men on earth. When God looked out for a leader of his people- He said "That's the heart I want."

Now we go back to the New Testament and Jesus is delivering the most important sermon He ever gave and He said "Happy are theMeek" Jesus is calling us to rise to a different lifestyle - a different level - He is calling us to live in a way that transcends what everyone else seems to settle for. But, to embrace Meekness requires a choice. To become Meek requires that embrace humility! You don't just go to a restaurant today after church and order a Meek Sandwich. "Order up on 12; One Meek Sandwich and an order of fires!" You don't just say, "I will go home and Be Meek." You don't just flip a switch and say - "Now I'm Meek. Check me out- I'm Meek. Look at how Meek I am."

Meekness is based on God's Holiness. I must compare myself in Light of God's Holiness. I must compare myself in the Light of Who God is - Humbled by His Righteousness/ His Worthiness/His Holiness!

Meekness is also, as shown on the next slide, "A Confidence in Who I Am." I am not talking about a self-help seminar - Just be confident in Who you are

- With people being all arrogant and Proudful. This Confidence in Who I am is in light of who God is. For instance, there is Me - a sinner saved by Grace; I am not perfect; I have evil thoughts; I misuse my words at times and wound others; I have things about myself that I don't really like. A confidence in who I am - I KNOW I AM NOT God - In fact, in light of who God is, this is not me. There is a bad side - That is Me; There is a good side - That is God. Bad side - Me; Good side - God. In Deuteronomy 10: 17 it states; "God, your God, is the God of all gods, he's the Master of all masters, a God immense and powerful and awesome."

Meekness is also a confidence in whose I am. And Who Am I? I AM a Believer in Christ! I Am a Child of the King! I AM one of God's Children! I have been adopted into His family - Jesus died on a cross for me. I AM one of His!

1 John 5:1 states, " Everyone who believes Jesus is Christ is a Child of God." He has given me a new identity. There is Me - I have a Wicked side - That is Me; And I have a Wonder side - That is Jesus - Where I am a Child of The King. Now, if I am not Meek, I cannot realize my brokenness. If I don't humble myself, I cannot commit All of Myself to Jesus. I have a confident humility in Who I am and Whose I am.

Now I will in a few minutes ask you for a commitment - Not to just read this choice; Oh no, I want you to make a commitment! I want you to choose to commit: Next to these words in your bulletin, next to consciously, I want you to write "It's my decision." Some of you are saying I have a Christian Heritage; I was drug to church by my parents. We are a Christian Nation and I have always been a Christian. I have a Christian bumper sticker. But remember, this is Your Choice. It is your choice and no one else's choice. You must "Consciously - choose to commit." Next to commit -I want you to place "Over and Over." Here's my story; I gave my heart to the Lord when I was 10 or 11 in Vacation Bible School. And I gave it all to Him. But that was

only the beginning. The decision is Over and Over; This is not a “Jesus Club.” This decision is 24/7/365 days a year.

I have to decide to choose my own agenda or God’s agenda – Every Day - All of the Time.

You are sitting at your computer and you are ticked off at a friend or a co-worker; you are writing down a nasty e-mail that you know will hurt them. Do you send it? It’s your choice!

You know a friend is hurting and in need. You have some resources that you could help them with but it is going to take some time to do this and you are really strapped for time. Do you help them? It’s your choice!

You are invited to attend a small cell group on “Life’s Healing Choices” and you know you need to obey God - be a part of the community – be loved and cared for and have people encouraging you, but you have at least 25 reasons for why you are too busy. Do you obey? It’s your choice!

Look at Romans 6:16; It says, “Don’t you realize that whatever you choose to obey becomes your master? You can choose sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God and receive his approval.” Now, this is a Big One; I want you to write down next to “All my will” the words “Everything!” What does it cost you to follow Jesus. Everything!

In Matthew 10:39 Jesus is speaking to his disciples and states that “whoever loves his mother or father, his son or his daughter, or who doesn’t take up his cross and follow me is Not Worthy of Me.” “ALL” means everything! Luke 14:33 states “So no one can become my disciple without giving up everything for me.” What does it cost? Everything! These are not my words but Jesus. “All my Life and Will.”

Now we have different roles in life; I am a Dad, a Husband, a Businessman, a Friend. I don’t give up these roles because I follow Jesus. These roles just take on a lesser importance and become less prominent than my relationship

with Christ. Jesus is not a Bonus or Extra; He is everything!
“Consciously Choose to Commit All My Life and Will to Christ’s Care and Control.”

Now comes the final part; Next to “Christ’s care and control” write - “He Loves Me.”

During week one, we learned He’s in Control; During week Two we learned He is crazy about me and cares for me. You need to know something now; Christ loves you! He wants to have a more intimate, authentic, and real relationship with you!

Jesus was wounded on a cross and died for YOU – He cares!

You have a relational loss for a loved one in your life – He cares!
You have a secret habit in your life and it is just killing you; You know you need help - He cares!

You are unemployed and fearful about your future - He cares!

When you commit all your life and will to the care and control of Christ – The Spirit of God enters you – It fills you with Love and a new desire. You do not have to do this alone!

You just walk on His path – Not your own.

Our memory verse this week is Matthew 11:29; “Come to me, all of you who are weary and overburdened and I will give you rest.”

Jesus says “Give Me everything!” Isn’t this a little radical and harsh – Give me everything? Then he says,

“Come to me and I will give you rest.” – Loving and nurturing. Which of these are true? Both!

Give Him everything and you can rest on the fact that He’s God and You are not.”

What are the rewards? Blessings – Blessed are the Meek – Happiness - God’s Favor - Character Transformation. The Stallion is tamed and Meekness appears!

Let’s look at the choice one last time. Are you ready? There has got to be a better way? This is what I want. How about you? Being in the Center of God’s will – Will you make this choice? You have to be Meek. Humble. Drop your pride. Say my way is not working – Pick up His love – Grace - Forgiveness – to change you.

I challenge you to make an offering today. On the card in your bulletin write the words “I will.” Place it in the offering. That’s all. Some of you may be making that decision for the first time in your life. Some of you may be making that decision for a rededication of your life. I have personally done this many times in my Life and it never gets old. Saying yes to my best friend – Jesus – He will take it from there.

As the choir sings this hymn of dedication I would love to have the opportunity to pray for each of you. Whether you are dedicating for the first time your life to Christ or rededicating your life to His care and control, make that choice.

Prayer: “Father God, we come to you today and praise you for this opportunity to hear your message. We feel your love for us and pause to say Thank You for your promise to give us rest if we give you everything. Many here are nervous saying “I will” for the first time. If it describes you in your heart, say “God, I desire a relationship with you – Come into my life – Forgive me; I acknowledge you sent Jesus to die for me on a cross. I repent and turn from my sins – my own path – to walk your way. Help me to begin this new life. Amen!”

Let us Pray...