

Fil-Am Community Church
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Life's Healing Choices Part 3

Lsn 3: The Commitment Choice

First off, I want to thank Pastor Rolly from the bottom of my heart for giving me the opportunity to deliver this very important message on Commitment for "Life's Healing Choices." It is truly a blessing to have a Pastor share his pulpit and, having been allowed that experience in speaking at numerous churches across the nation, it never gets old and is always a special blessing. Let's look at where we have been. First, in week one of Life's Healing Choices, we learned from Lesson One that we are not God, that we are powerless to control things, and that our lives are unmanageable. Who here thinks that they are God? Truly? If you do, then the word Commitment might have a very special meaning for you.

I know for certain that I am not God. For one, the weather is very bad and my golf score has not been doing so well. And, for certain, I would not submit you to this kind of weather. Not that I am complaining, because it is probably sunny somewhere all the time - Probably in Hawaii someplace. But, many times we live our lives as if we are our own God. How do we do that? We try to control other people; We try to control the marketplace; and we try to control our own destiny and future. I do relate to Paul as it states in Romans 7; I don't understand myself; I want to do what is right but instead, I do the things I hate. When I try not to do these things, I do them anyway! I want to do what is right but instead, I do the things I hate. When I try not to, I do them anyway.

In week two we learned that God exists, that we matter to him, and that he has the power to help me to change. And during life's difficulties and this Life Journey we are on, we are riddled with pain and hurt. But, I am comforted by a God who is crazy about me (regardless of my corny jokes, hang-ups, hurts, and habits.) He definitely has the power to transform me into something wonderful and beautiful and it gives me hope!

If you do not believe this, then I would submit that you to go to Mark 2, verses 5-12; Jesus, at this time, had told a paralyzed man "Your sins are forgiven." Jesus was being confronted by the people and He knew their thoughts. He told them, "Which is easier? Saying that your sins are forgiven or telling a paralyzed man to pick-up your mat and walk? Just so you know that the Son Of Man has the power and authority to Forgive Sins on earth – I tell you to pick up your mat and go home!" The man did just that; He picked up his mat and was healed. So... We must make choices; And, with Life's Healing Choices, we can be different - With God's help! So the question is – Do you want to heal your hurts, hang-ups, and habits? Do you want to experience greater joy – deeper peace – and a more enriching relationship, with

more profound wisdom? And, do you desire to live out God's potential for your life? Who wants that? I do! That answer is yes, and Amen!

Before we go to the third choice, I want to clarify for you something that may not be apparent to some of you. It wasn't to me when I first looked at this. What is wrong with me? I look at life many times through a pair of Rose Colored Glasses. And I have them right here. (Puts on glasses.) See; They look pretty good on me, don't they? My dear wife, Laura, who is a Licensed Professional Counselor, has a name for this. She confronts me all the time and tells me "You are in denial." And I always respond the same way; I say, "No I'm not!" And she goes ... "There, I told you so!"

But let's be honest. Most of us here are just plain messed up! Okay; Maybe only on this side of the room, but this other side is okay. (Please don't move over there at this time.) But how many of you would say that is true about the person you are sitting next to? (Now would not be a good time to look at them.) Absolutely!

If you have suffered pain; Serious pain, hurt in your life, please raise your hand? Look around you - You are home. There is a lot of hurt in here! This is a safe place! Now, for all our visitors I would say you can be just like me - Deny it all, and I have a desk set-up in the back where I am selling Rose Colored Glasses for \$14.95 a pair.

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!”