# *NEW YEAR - MAKING CHOICES*

## *INTRODUCTION*

A. New Year - We are overwhelmed by choices.
   1. Resolutions - healthy eating, exercise, quit a vice
   2. Selection overload
      a. Row after row of cereals.
      b. Hundreds of TV channels.

B. Choices can be good and bad.
   1. There is less confusion where there are fewer choices.
   2. There is the need to set priorities.
   3. Our choices make a difference - some for eternity.
   4. Unknown, *He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place it leads to.*

## *CHOOSE WISELY*

A. God makes choices
   1. Old Testament
      a. Abram to Abraham, Genesis 18:19, *For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice...*
      b. Jeremiah, Jeremiah 1:5, *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.*

   2. New Testament
      a. Saul to Paul, Acts 9:15, *he is a chosen instrument of Mine to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.*
      b. Galatians 1:15, *He...had set me apart before I was born, and ...called me by His grace.*

   3. Today
      a. Acts 13:48, *And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*
      b. 1 Thessalonians 1:4, *For we know, brothers loved by God, that He has chosen you...*
      c. John 6:44, *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...*

B. We must make choices
   1. Character, Proverbs 22:1, *A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.*
   2. The Gospel
      a. The need to respond to the call of Christ.
      b. William James, *When you have to make a choice and don't make it, that is in itself a choice.*

   4. Can one know if he has been chosen by God?
      a. Difficulty
         1) God is sovereign - note earlier verses
         2) Man has free will
            a) Romans 10:13, *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*
            b) James Dobson, *God gave us free choice because there is no significance to love that knows no alternative.*

      b. Resolution
         1) Romans 11:33-35, *How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor*."
         2) Gary Wiley, *I have used the illustration that God's algebra is different than ours. For Him, 1 + 1 does not equal 2 but 1 + 1 equals 1 (illustrating God's view of marriage). While I was doing chores, I was thinking of election. God's geometry is different, as well. His sovereignty and man's free will are parallel lines that do cross at the heart of God. I can't fully understand election but I know that it is all about Him with my choice mixed in. Parallel lines do cross spiritually.*

C. Choices never end for believers - those called by God
   1. God justifies us through Jesus Christ but we participate with Him in sanctification.
   2. Our calling in Christ is to be holy as God is holy, Ephesians 1:4, *...He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.*
   3. Our responsibility is to make choices that honor Him
      a. Be diligent - keep choosing, Romans 12:1-2, *I appeal to you therefore, brothers,1 by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect...*
      b. Receive direction, Psalm 25:12, *Who is the man who fears the LORD? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.*
      c. Rest in God's promise, John 15:16, *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you.*

## CONCLUSION

A. Unknown, Good choices are worth the risk.

*Choose to love - rather than hate*
*Choose to smile - rather than frown*
*Choose to build - rather than destroy*
*Choose to persevere - rather than quit*
*Choose to praise - rather than gossip*
*Choose to heal - rather than wound*
*Choose to give - rather than grasp*
*Choose to act - rather than delay*
*Choose to forgive - rather than curse*
*Choose to pray - rather than despair*

B. Choosing God involves risk.
   1. Matthew 8:19, *...a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."*
   2. Matthew 11:28-30, *Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.*

C. Choosing Christ is the greatest choice you will ever make.
   1. Sins are forgiven and death is replaced by eternal life.
   2. We are united with Jesus Who loves us fully, C. H. Spurgeon, *Before we had a being in the world we had a being in His heart. When we were enemies to Him, He knew us, our misery, our madness, and our wickedness. When we wept bitterly in despairing repentance, and viewed Him only as judge and a ruler, He viewed us as His brethren well beloved, and His heart yearned toward us. He never mistook His chosen but always beheld them as objects of His infinite affection.*

D. Knowing Christ is a choice, A.W. Tozer, *Every man is as close to God as he wants to be.*