



DECISIONS. DECISIONS

Acts 26:1-29

LIFE IS FULL OF CHOICES isn't it? Every hour of every day, we have to make a choice about something. Because that's the nature of life.

WARDROBE we get up in the morning and have to decide what to wear. That's more difficult for some than others.

MENU Then we probably have to decide what's for dinner.

DESERT ISLAND And at this time of year, we probably have to decide where we're going to have our holidays.

FELIXSTOWE Or have a staycation!

SOME DECISIONS ARE BIGGER THAN OTHERS.. Some decisions in life are biggies

..AND WRONG DECISIONS CAN BE COSTLY. If we make a mistake then ouch.

HOUSE A house is the biggest investment that most people make. But oh dear - what about those awful neighbours. Or the huge repair jobs and all the rest of it.

JOB Or for others a career, or just finding a job we're happy in can be a problem.

MARRIAGE And there's of course marriage. Wonderful if you choose the right person - a disaster if it all goes sour. But this morning I want to ask you a question about a choice that God asks us to make. Here's the question.

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY? To most people eternity is a great mystery. It's something we don't like to think about or talk about as it involves us thinking about death and all that kind of stuff. But it's a question that's important. It's not one like "Do you want ordinary or decaff", or "Do you want that with chips and new potatoes". It's about whether we want to spend eternity with God - or not. These two people and also Paul decided about. And they have decided that they do want to know God, they do want to follow Jesus and they do want to spend eternity with Him.

When Paul spoke to King Agrippa he told Agrippa of the job God give him for the people of his day - to tell the people of God's offer to everyone to spend eternity with Him.

"I'm sending you off to present my offer of sins forgiven, and a place in the family, inviting them into the company of those who begin real living by believing in me."

On what basis does God make this offer. Because of what Jesus has done for us. Here's a few verses from Titus 3 which I'm preaching on tonight.

Our Saviour Jesus poured out new life so generously. God's gift has restored our relationship with him and given us back our lives. And there's more life to come - an eternity of life! You can count on this. Titus 3:6-8

BAPTISM IS A PICTURE OF WHAT JESUS DOES IN PEOPLE'S LIVES WHEN THEY ACCEPT HIM. These people have come to testify to what Jesus has done in their lives this morning. They have accepted Jesus into their lives. They have know forgiveness of sins and baptism is a mark of that. But God does more than that when people decide to follow Him and baptism helps us understand that.

BAPTISM IS A PICTURE OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION

We read a few moments ago that Jesus poured out new life generously. Baptism is a picture that describes what happens when people believe. Imagine this pool is a grave. When we push people under the water we show that when they trusted Jesus they died and when we bring them up, it shows that God has made them alive again in Jesus.

BAPTISM SHOWS WE HAVE BEEN RAISED TO NEW LIFE

Particularly that God has given them a new life. What does that new life mean|?

BAPTISM SHOWS THAT WE HAVE BEEN RAISED TO A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

First of all it means a new relationship with God. When they trusted Him, God ceased to be a distant being which they just kinda believed in. He became personal. He became Father. They came into a family relationship with God.

BAPTISM SHOWS WE HAVE BEEN RAISED TO AN ETERNAL HOPE

But there's more. New life isn't one of uncertainty - God had raised us up with the promise of spending not just our lives with Him here, but the whole of eternity with Him, rather than an eternity without Him.

BAPTISM PLACES A QUESTION MARK ON OUR LIVES

That is what they show us all as they are baptised this morning, but their baptism places a question mark on all of us. What about us?

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY - THERE'S A DECISION TO BE MADE.

If you've never trusted than God is saying to you this morning; what about it? Will you follow Jesus? Will you admit that you are separated from Him? That the way you've lived and what you've done have kept you separated from Him? Or will you admit you're a sinner, that you've separated yourself from Him? He offers you forgiveness, new life, new hope in Jesus, who died for you, who paid the penalty for the wrong things that you did so that you could know God and you could find the same new life that these two have found. What's your response. Like theirs - or like King Agrippa?

KING AGRIPPA *"Keep this up much longer and you'll make a Christian out of me!"* (The Message)

The words Agrippa used are a bit obscure in the Greek and here's one way it's been translated but I think the sense of it is more like this

KING AGRIPPA *"Don't think it's going to be a pushover to persuade me to become a Christian!"*

You get the gist. Agrippa was giving Paul the brush-off

WHAT IS YOUR DECISION?

That comes down to our question. Where will you spend eternity? Are you going to give God the brush-off or realise that Jesus has died to offer eternal life to you as a free gift?

Maybe you've made that decision already, then let me give you another challenge. Have you been baptised? No? Then maybe the witness of this baptism is a reminder to you that Jesus calls, commands, all who follow Him to follow His example and be baptised because it testifies to the new life that He brought to us.

Let's pray.