

## On Being Double-minded

Two men who lived in a small village  
Got into a terrible dispute  
They could not resolve.

So they went to the village chief.

The first man went to the chief  
And told his version of what happened.

When he finished, the chief said  
*"You're absolutely right."*

The second man, then, called on the chief  
And told his side of the story.

The chief responded, *"You're absolutely right."*

Afterward, the chief's wife scolded her husband.

*"Those men told you two different stories  
And you told them they were absolutely right."*

*"It's impossible they're both absolutely right."*

To which the chief replied,  
*You're absolutely right!*

James, in our first scripture lesson,  
Describes a double-minded person

As one who is tossed around like a wave by the wind.  
Unstable in all ways.

I learned that this word "double-minded"  
Was actually coined by James, the brother of Jesus

## **On Being Double-minded**

The author of the book of James.

The word in Greek is “dipsychos,”

It appears in the Bible only twice  
And only in James,  
Here in 1:8 and again in 4:8.

By definition, a double-minded person is at odds  
In his thoughts, his actions, and his behavior.

He or she is like a weathervane  
Pointing in whichever direction  
Even the slightest breeze turns it.

He or she is conflicted  
As to whom or what deserves their allegiances.

They are whimsical and easily persuaded.

They'll follow a crowd because they want to belong  
Even if it goes against their better judgment.

They will compartmentalize their beliefs and actions  
According to what best suits  
Their selfish desires and sinful tendencies.

We see this kind of behavior today  
As did James during his time  
As did Joshua with the people of Israel.

~~

Our Old Testament passage,  
Holds one of the most treasured verses in the OT.

## **On Being Double-minded**

It's the kind of verse Christian book stores  
Inscribe on refrigerator magnets.

It's found here in verse 15:

**Choose this day, whom you will serve . . . .**  
**As for me and my house,**  
**We will serve the Lord.**

My Grandfather Whitten  
Was an ordained minister in this district  
For over 60 years.

I keep a shoebox full of his sermons in the pastor's study.

I look through them on occasion  
To see what Gramps might have thought  
On any given subject.

This passage seems to have been  
My Grandfather "signature" Bible verse  
A perfect 3-point-sermon:

1. *Choose*
2. *This day*
3. *Whom you will serve.*

He preached from this passage several times  
At the Saunders Grove,  
Jeters Chapel,  
And Terrace View congregations.

~~

The passage is taken from the last chapter  
Of the book of Joshua.

It is Joshua's farewell sermon.

## On Being Double-minded

And in his sermon

He recounts God's mighty acts of deliverance!

Joshua begins all the way back

To Abraham's journey from Ur

To the land of Canaan.

He lists the patriarchs of the faith; Isaac and Jacob.

He describes the story of Moses and Aaron in Egypt

And of their escape through the Red Sea.

He ends his account with the events

Leading up to the surrender of the city of Jericho

And entrance into the Promised Land.

Joshua reminds the Israelites

That this was God's doing . . . not theirs!

And then he turns to the people of Israel

And he challenges them

To serve the LORD in sincerity and faithfulness

To do away with things that detract and distract.

But . . . he says, if serving the LORD is undesirable

Choose today whom you will serve!

~~

God's church struggles with similar issues.

There is a double-minded standard in church today.

What should come first in life?

## On Being Double-minded

Our country?

Our family?

Our occupation?

Our political affiliation?

When it's convenient

When we have time

When it's on our terms

When it makes us feel good

When it might better serve our purposes

We might seek to serve the Lord.

We declare we serve God in sincerity and faithfulness,

But you know . . . it's just not going to work today . . .

Today, we have something else planned.

~~

Double-mindedness divides the heart.

A part of the heart seeks to serve God

While the other part seeks to serve self.

When you divide the heart what do you?

Half-heartedness!

God has something to say about that!

~~

For example

Later in the history of Israel

Elijah gives the people of Israel the same ultimatum:

It occurs during the showdown between the priests of Baal

And Elijah the spokesperson for God.

## On Being Double-minded

***1 Kings 18:21 How long will you go limping between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people did not answer him a word.***

~~

Half-heartedness or double-mindedness,  
Either way you look at it,  
It's all the same!

Jesus has something to say about double-mindedness too  
In the Sermon on the Mount:

***Matthew 7:24 No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.***

~~

And again in Matthew 12:30:

**Matthew 12:30 Whoever is not with me is against me**

••••

For Jesus, it's an either or.

Back in our OT lesson today

The Israelites stand at the brink of God's fulfillment  
And God tells them to make a choice.

In their impatience, their need for instant gratification

Their insatiable greed

They have become double minded and half-hearted.

And Joshua asks, "What'll it be folks?"

~~

Following Jesus is an all or nothing kind of thing.

It's not something you do on Sunday morning

## On Being Double-minded

And then concentrate on something else  
The rest of the week.

It's a 24/7 sort of thing.

God demands single mindedness  
Anything less is not enough.

The great preacher Haddon Robinson once said,  
*"You will invest your life in something,  
Or you will throw it away on nothing."*

Joshua strikes at the heart of the issue  
With his timeless truth  
The choice is ultimately ours.

How will we choose to live our lives?

~~

One day a man was asked,  
If he thought ignorance and complacency,  
Played a part in the demise of Christianity.

And he answered, *"don't know and don't care."*

Speaking of not caring  
I still can't figure out why the first lady  
Chose to wear what she wore to Texas.

~~

To be sure the world sees Christianity's  
Double-mindedness and half-heartedness!

And if actions speak louder than words,  
Than the world can read us like a book.

In the book by Philip Yancey,

## On Being Double-minded

Entitled, “Vanishing Grace:  
What Ever Happened to the Good News?”

Yancey writes:

*Unless Christians demonstrate truth with our lives, what we say about what we believe will sound like empty advertising slogans ... When a poll of college students asked, "Write the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word 'Christianity,' the most common answer was, "People who don't practice what they preach."*

Other comments from various studies and polls  
Reveal much the same:

A common description of Christians are  
That they lead a double-standard life.

What they believe and how they behave incongruous.

~~

It doesn't have to be that way!

Yes, we're sinners in constant need of God's grace.

Yes, we're constantly making terrible choices.

But the Bible's contention is that  
With the help of God's Holy Spirit  
We CAN CHOOSE to become better people!

~~

Billy Graham once said, *the strongest principle of life and blessings lies in our choice. Our life is the sum result of all the choices we make, both consciously and unconsciously.*

Look at it this way . . .

## On Being Double-minded

And if you don't take anything else away  
From today's sermon . . . remember this:

*We make choices . . . and those choices make us!*

What we're talking about here is living a life of integrity.

Choose to integrate your belief in Jesus  
Into a lifestyle compatible with the way of Jesus!

Everything you say, everything you do  
Is a result of a choice  
Whether it's done consciously or unconsciously.

Everything you say, everything you do  
Moves you in one of two directions  
Either towards or away from God.

Moses in Deuteronomy says it this way:

***Deuteronomy 30:19-20a This day I call heaven and earth as witness against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life . . . .***

Your choice  
Your life  
Your destiny

Which will it be?

As for me and my house . . . we will serve the Lord!!