

THURSDAY MORNING CHOOSE FREEDOM

Okay. There are a few things we know by now!! God is holy. We are sinful. We need a relationship with Him. He wants a relationship with us. Sound familiar yet? I hope so! The thing is...we still have a choice. Check out this passage from Deuteronomy 30:19-20b. God is actually talking to the Israelites, but it is just as applicable to us today:

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses 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...

We can choose life or death. We can choose the blessing of God's forgiveness or the curse of the consequences of our own sinful choices. We can make a choice to accept the forgiveness that Jesus offers us – freedom. Or we can stay bound to our sin nature and sin choices forever. The problem with that option is that we have to pay for our own sin.

Think of it like this...you order a pizza for delivery. An hour later, the guy shows up at your door with your pizza, announcing that your mom already called and paid for it. You hand him a \$20. He says you don't have to pay; it's already been paid for. You insist on paying him yourself. Confused, the man finally takes the money, gives you the pizza and leaves. You did not have to pay with your own money; mom had handled it. But you chose to.

This is (on an infinitely smaller scale) what is going on when we refuse Christ's forgiveness. He has paid for our sins. We can accept the payment he made and be forgiven; this will give us a relationship with God and the gift of eternal life (like Romans 6:23 said). We can choose life – God's life – the life Jesus died to provide us with and the blessing of eternal life that he offers us. Or, we can choose the death our own sin nature provides, separation from God, and the curse of our own sinful choices. This choice will mean eternal separation from God.

Have you ever considered this choice before? _____

Where do you stand on this issue? What decision have you made? (Keep in mind...the decision not to make a decision quite yet is a "no". You cannot stay neutral. We all must choose.) _____

Read how 2 Corinthians 5:21 describes what Jesus did for us:

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Let's break that down. Jesus was the one "who had no sin". He became sin for us; He literally took on our sin. When we accept His gift of forgiveness, He doesn't just take away our sin. He also gives us HIS righteousness (or holiness). "In Him", in Jesus, we become the righteousness of God!! That is some pretty serious righteousness. Remember, we didn't earn it. It's given to us, almost like if someone deposited money into your bank account. You didn't put it there, but it's yours now. Amazing!

If you know Christ, take a moment to reflect on the gift of His righteousness!! What does that mean for your life? _____

Today is the day to make a choice. Your time at Beach Retreat is almost over; don't go home the same way you came. You do not have to pay for your own sin! If you've never done this before, right now ask God to forgive your sins. Accept His forgiveness, and ask Him to make you into the person He wants you to be. If you make that decision today, share it with your condo leader or pastor as soon as you get the chance! You chose freedom!

If you are already a Christian, be praying for your fellow students who may not be yet. Pray that God will move in their hearts and that they will be changed – from the inside out!