

Saying “No” to the World

Intro:

1. American culture from outside perspective - a bewildering array of choices.
2. When the world is thrown at our feet, it is hard to say “no.”

1. Great Men, Great Choices

A. Abraham - Leaves Ur for unknown destination.

1. Ac 7:2-4; Heb 11:8 - Abraham did not know where God was sending him.
2. When we move, we want to check out schools, doctors, taxes, housing, etc.
3. Abraham sacrificed all that was familiar, dependable, emotionally attached.

B. Moses - Leaves Egyptian royalty for known fate: slavery.

1. Heb 11:24-27 - Moses overcame all his upbringing, family ties, power, prestige.
2. Moses saw:
 - a. The pleasure of sin - v 25. Temptation - sin's allure, promise of enjoyment and happiness, often overpowers our judgment and reason. But Moses rightly judged these things to be temporary.
 - b. The reward - v 26. Why would anyone choose reproach and suffering over royal privilege? Because **right** was on the side of reproach. Ex: Russian dissidents, those opposed to Naziism often chose suffering.
 - c. The invisible God (by faith) - v 27.
3. This process of choice wasn't easy but involved a forty year period of humility, initial resistance to God's overtures, rejection and resentment by the Jews.

C. Paul - Leaves Judaism and opposition to Christ.

1. Gal 1:13-14; Ac 26:9-11 - Paul was wedded to Judaism by centuries of ancestry, conviction of the Law, esteemed associates, finances, family - and behavior: he was the chief persecutor of Christianity.
2. But when Christ appeared to him, Paul didn't “*confer with flesh and blood*” (Gal

1:16) but obeyed in becoming a Christian and in accepting apostleship.

3. Paul willingly sacrificed all things to gain Christ - Ph 3:7-8.

D. Jesus - Leaves heaven to live among and die for men.

1. Ph 2:5-8 - Jesus chose to leave His natural divine position and suffer the indignities and trials of human life.

2. Mt 26:36-46 shows that this choice at times involved great difficulty for Jesus.

3. Jesus shows there is great power of character in choosing a course that brings suffering in a greater good can be accomplished.

2. How Satan Urges Us to Say “Yes” to the World

A. Temptation - The attractiveness of sin.

1. Gratification of lust can drive a man to risk his career, marriage for pleasure.

2. Many men have sold their souls for the honor and praise of other humans.

B. Rationalization - Convincing ourselves that certain behavior isn't really sin.

1. We change definitions, ignore the Bible, and argue from the basis of **why** we do something rather than the nature of the act itself.

2. This is more subtle than overt immorality.

C. Distraction - Over involvement in things that are not wrong in and of themselves take up so much of our time and energy that little is left for the Lord and His work.

3. The Power to Say “No”

A. “I don't want to disappoint God.” Our actions affect God; He knows us personally. Jas 4:4 - *“friendship with the world is enmity with God.”*

B. “I don't want to be a bad influence upon others.” Our society wants to take no responsibility for its actions and their effect upon others. Rom 14:15 - *“Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.”*

C. “I want to go to heaven more than anything else.” Our eternal welfare is at stake over our involvement in worldly things. Just how close do we want to get to something that can destroy us eternally. Mt 16:26 - *“What is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”*