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Exhortation

“Let this mind be in you . . .”

2. “I must be about my Father’s business”

Jim Wood

A FUNDAMENTAL principle in God’s system for helping in the determination of those who are worthy of sharing in the fulfilment of His plan for the earth is that of choice. At its simplest there are two options: to hearken unto God’s commandments or not to hearken; to obey Him or not to obey; to serve Him or to serve self.

It was made clear to Adam and Eve what the choice entailed: “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). They chose not to hearken.

Cain and Abel were faced with choice. They each chose differently, and “the LORD had respect unto Abel . . . but unto Cain . . . He had not respect” (4:4,5).

Moses, “looking ahead” (Heb. 11:26, NIV), “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (vv. 24,25). For this reason he is listed in Hebrews 11 as one whose actions were motivated by faith.

Joshua brought the choice of the two extremes of service before his people with the challenge: “choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood . . . [or] the LORD”. For him and his house there was no contest. The choice had been made and was firm: “we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15).

So it is for everyone. We are no different, and in this respect neither was it different for the Lord Jesus Christ. The exercise of free will, the constant element of choice, was a crucial component of every day of his life. It becomes particularly clear in the Gospel record when he remains in Jerusalem after the family visit for the feast of Passover, Mary and Joseph both believing that he too is in the homeward-bound procession. The explanation he gives to the distraught Mary and Joseph shows clearly that he is aware of the

choices to be made and that his decision has been made: “wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Lk. 2:49); or: “Wist ye not that I must be in my Father’s house?” (RV; see also RSV, NEB, NIV).

From there onwards the strong conviction and determination that his Father’s will *must* be done never wavers:

“I *must* preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God” (Lk. 4:43, RV);

“I *must* work the works of Him That sent me” (Jno. 9:4);

“other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I *must* bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (10:16);

“Nevertheless I *must* walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following” (Lk. 13:33);
“The Son of man *must* suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day” (9:22).

The statements are indicative of a mind that has considered the basic choice in life and the consequences, has become convinced as to which is in accordance with the will of God, and is now determined that nothing must be allowed to prevent him unerringly adhering to the way of God.

Here is the daily, hourly, challenge for us: to let this mind be in us; to make it our desire to be willingly subject to the principles God has decreed; to be pleased to suppress that which would give the residual Adam in us pleasure; to demonstrate a single-minded zeal for following the Lord’s example; to show a conscious, continual determination to control our lives, so that, like Paul, we declare: “For to me to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21).

Whatever we do, wherever we are, however we are circumstanced, let us make it a ‘must’ that we will be about our heavenly Father’s business and in His house.