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The Adventure of Two Minds

Text: Romans 8:3b-11

Options.

“ Never let anyone be your priority if you are only their option. Picture quotes.com

“You have many options in life, never make giving up one of them.” Austin Carlile

“There are only two options regarding commitment, you’re either in or you’re out. There is no such thing as life in between.” Pat Rily

There are only two options- make progress or make excuses.

Options.

In Romans 8, Paul says the believer has options.

Here’s an option for the living out of one’s days: One could live according

to the flesh. We call that a *carnal* life. The word *carnal* has at its root, the word for flesh or meat, as in chili con *carne* or a person being described as a *carnivore*.

Another option for the living out of one’s days is the Spirit life. It is the exact opposite of the carnal life. The word Spirit, in Greek is *pneuma,* sometimes translated *wind* or *breath.*

Two options for living: driven/motivated by the flesh OR driven/motivated by the wind of God, the breath that is the Spirit of God.

Both these options have a trajectory.

**The carnal life** has five stages.

* Set the mind on the things of the flesh (5), which leads to
* Death (6). Not literal death. Rather, it refers to estrangement from God. Cf. Ephesians 2:1- And He made you alive, who were **dead** in trespasses and sins... Isaiah 59:2- But your iniquities have **separated** you from your God...

**Illus.**

Perhaps you’ve heard the old joke:

Ma: “Homer...do you remember when we used to drive, and I would sit so close to you that from the back it looked like you were a two-headed driver?”

Homer: “Yep”.

Ma: “Homer...do you remember when we’d be driving, and you’d lay your hand on my thigh and squeeze it as we went along?”

Homer: “Yeah, Ma”.

Ma: “Homer...do you remember how you’d sometime lean over and kiss me while you were driving?”

Homer: “Yes, I do, Ma”.

Ma: “Homer...how come we don’t do that no more?”

Homer: “Ma, all I know is, I ain’t never moved”.

Beloved, if you’re estranged from God, it is always because you’ve moved. God remains where He always was.

* Enmity with God (7)
* Not subject to the law of God (7)
* Unable to please God (8)

**The Spirit life:**

* Set the mind on the things of the Spirit (5), which leads to
* Life and peace (6, 10; 5:1)
* Indwelling of God (9)

Paul says that we are going to be of one mind or the other.

After laying out the options of two different mindsets, Paul addresses the believers in Rome and says, but YOU...

YOU are Christ’s people! You are engaged in the life of adventure; the adventure of seeing the options and choosing between them.

But YOU (v.9a)

Christ’s people, people of the Spirit, experience two advantages:

1. They are Spirit-filled (9, 11). That is, the Spirit *dwells* (Greek= *oikeo* [oy-keh’-o] in us. The Spirit resides/dwells in us as one inhabits a house. He doesn’t visit us. He dwells *with* and *in* us.
2. They are alive (10, 11, 2). When one chooses the Spirt mind over the carnal minds, one lives. We embrace life and we are free from the law of sin and death (v.2).

During this Christmas season I invite us all to receive the gift of exercising options. Choose the life, the mind of the Spirit.

Both these two minds or mindsets sound enticing. Some might say, “I’ll do both. I will live the carnal, fleshly life and I will be a person of the Spirit.” However, a consideration of these two minds forces a choice. Each mind demands the whole person’s commitment.

**Illus.**

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| "When I was a boy, my father, a baker, introduced me to the wonders of song," tenor Luciano Pavarotti relates. "He urged me to work very hard to develop my voice. Arrigo Pola, a professional tenor in my hometown of Modena, Italy, took me as a pupil. I also enrolled in a teachers college. On graduating, I asked my father, 'Shall I be a teacher or a singer?'  "'Luciano,' my father replied, 'if you try to sit on two chairs, you will fall between them. For life, you must choose one chair.'  "I chose one. It took seven years of study and frustration before I made my first professional appearance. It took another seven to reach the Metropolitan Opera. And now I think whether it's laying bricks, writing a book--whatever we choose--we should give ourselves to it. Commitment, that's the key. Choose one chair." |

Choose one chair. Choose one mind.

Quite the adventure!!

Amen