

ARISE..Make the CHOICE to MOVE in CHRIST! Live or Die, it's up to us!

(Pastor Wendell "Skip" Kapena Wright, KWM, 2-28-2012)

II Kings 7:3-4 tells of four lepers who made a life changing decision. Of course, some will debate that their choice was one of desperation, and yet, others will recognize that it was one of pure logic. On the one hand, if they entered the city of the enemy and if there was a famine, they would die of starvation right along with the people of the city, and yet, if they'd remained planted where they were outside of the city's gates, they'd die anyway. So, their choice, go into the city and surrender to the enemy, leaving their fates up to the enemy, but move forward and take a chance that they could actually survive and live on.

Now, those who've read this account know that nothing even remotely like that happened to them and in fact, they not only lived, but they had the entire city to themselves, including all the riches that were left behind by the Syrians who'd abandoned everything and had fled to the hills because the Lord had convinced them they were outnumbered and were about to be slaughtered if they'd stayed where they were.

The story goes on, but, my focus is on the fact that these lepers made a choice to live or die in their faith. They got up off their backsides, out of their pity party and doubt mode, and forged ahead courageously with nothing to lose but their lives. I know that sounds a bit harsh, but think about, what is it about you that is most valuable or precious? Is it your family? Is it your possessions (car, house, TV, etc.)? My thought, the precious thing that I have is my life. The most heartfelt decisions we'll ever make are the ones that will affect our life or the lives of others.

An example of this is shown very clearly by Jesus Himself as He prayed, "***O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will but as You will..O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.***" (Matt. 26:39, 42)

That was the one time in Jesus' natural life, as man, in the flesh, that we see the flesh crop up in Him, and yet, it was the greatest show of the supernatural strength and will of Jesus and the Holy Spirit within Him and upon Him, the Living Word of God, that enabled that flesh to abide faithfully in the Father's will and comply with the Father's Word, completing the task that He was ultimately sent to the world to do, not for His sake alone, but for ours and all others who would believe His Word forever more. (**John 17**)

We are commanded, in **Isaiah 60:1** – "***Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.***" In the Amplified it reads: "***Arise (from the depression and prostration in which circumstances have kept you—rise to a new life)! Shine (be radiant with the glory of the LORD), for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you!"***

We are to be like the lepers who made that decision to enter the city of the Syrians to get up from our wallowing and wondering and get moving for God, trusting Him that no matter what, the decision would be the right one in Him!

When I think of a decision that would be life changing, I think also back on three young Jewish men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who when faced with a fiery death, responded to King Nebuchadnezzar by stating no matter what he did or could think of to do to them, they would never deny their God nor worship any gods other than HE. (**Daniel 3:16-18** – *¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”*

And we all know the results of their decision, right? They not only survived, but because of their exhibition of faith, Nebuchadnezzar worshipped God, then a few chapters later in **Daniel 6**, we read of the kings' son, Darius also coming to worship and fear God because of Daniels' faithfulness and refusal to worship Darius' gods.

The reason I bring these examples up is that when we make a choice to follow Jesus Christ and obey God's Word and step up and into His calling on our lives, it will cost us something. It will require us to make life changing decisions either for Him or against Him, with Him or draw us away from Him. But, it's our choice.

Proverbs 20:25 – *“Don’t trap yourself by making a rash promise to God and only later counting the cost.”*

Luke 14:28 – *“for which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it..” [New King James]*

(“ But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it?” New Living)

Everything we do requires something of us, whether it's our time, our energy, our finances, and resources, no matter what. And, the ultimate price of making that decision is the quality of life that we will either enjoy or regret.

God chose you, as He has chosen me, in Christ Jesus, to do something very special with the life that He has given each one of us. The first choice we've made, the first quality life choice that we had to decide on and have faith in, is the choice to make Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. But, when we make that choice, remember that before we made our choice, Jesus made His choice, and that choice was each one of us.

John 15:16 – *“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name he may give you.”*

So, let's think on those lepers and remember all those who've made the choice to “Arise..” Let's get up off our “rusty-dusty's” and move onward and upward into the calling God's placed in our hearts and follow through on those visions and dreams He's given us for His glory in Jesus Christ! Amen.