## Straddling the Fence – March 31, 2020

***Choose Whom You Will Serve***

**Joshua 24:14-15 (ESV)**

***14“Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the Lord.***

***15And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”***

Joshua knew who he was and who he was going to be. He also knew where he stood as a servant for God.

When I was a kid, we used to walk or balance on the wooden fences that separated our yards.

And of course, our parents would tell us to be careful because we could fall and hurt ourselves.

But I had a plan, a plan to stay on top. And not fall!!!

I knew in my mind that I could do it.

After all, I was almost perfect, I was good at balancing. Nothing could stop me.

God’s word tells us in ***Proverbs 19:21 (ESV)***

***21Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.***

One day when I fell, I couldn’t make up my mind to which side of the fence I was going to fall. So, I tried to stay on top.

Unfortunately, I only stayed on top for a few seconds. Just long enough to hit the top of the fence before I came sliding down on one side the hard way.

Man did that hurt!!! But I did learn something that day.

***James 1:2-4 (ESV)***

***2Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.***

After that first time, when I fell and landed on the top of the fence and scraped up my leg and stomach bad. This all happened because I couldn’t make up my mind on which side of the fence I wanted to be on.

That day I learned I can’t walk the fence and if I do, I will fall and get hurt. Much like our walk with Christ, we can’t walk on the fence. We will eventually fall off and which side will we fall into? I hope we will fall on the side of God’s grace and mercy or will we fall on the side of the enemy and his lies.

***Luke 9:23 (ESV)***

***23 And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.***

The thing is, I found out the hard way, that I had to make that decision every time I took a step because life changes in mid-stream.

I never got hurt again on the fence after that. Although, I did quit walking fences shortly after.

And no, I don’t know why we do the things we do when we are kids.

***1 Kings 18:21(ESV)***

***21 And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word.***

***Matthew 6:24 (ESV)***

***24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.***

Over the years I realized if I was going to follow Christ that I needed to follow Christ.

No in between. When I tried to follow both roads. Christianity and the world, I always got hurt with no direction to go.

***Proverbs 8:17 (ESV)***

***17 I love those who love me,***

 ***and those who seek me diligently find me.***

Deut 4:29 / Jeremiah 29:13

But when I decided to serve God, and I mean serve God, I served God!

Sure, I still get hurt here and there but I have Jesus Christ to stand with me and help me through my situations.

***Proverbs 3:5-6***

***5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart,***

 ***and do not lean on your own understanding.***

***6 In all your ways acknowledge him,***

 ***and he will make straight your paths.***

God helped me walk in all the paths that I took. I didn’t understand everything, and I didn’t know what the tomorrow would bring sometimes, but I do know who holds the tomorrow!

***Deuteronomy 31:8***

***8 It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”***

God has helped me my whole life. He has healed me, my wife, my family and not to mention many friends.

***Philippians 4:13 (ESV)***

***13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.***

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit has always been with me and never left me. They have always been faithful to me and I am determined to be faithful to them and never Let My Savior down.

So therefore,

***Joshua 24:15 (ESV)***

***15And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”***

I hope you are encouraged by this reading. I pray that we don’t walk the fence and choose God.

Pastor Rick Parker

Green Bay Police Chaplain