

"If the Lord Is God, Follow Him"
(1 Kings 18:21)

Introduction: One of the main things that cripples the church today, because it cripples professing Christians, is indecision regarding the things of the Christian faith. Though many profess to know Christ, yet in their hearts they still have profound reservations about serving Him. Maybe it is because they are really not convinced of the truth of Scripture. They think that it may be true, but they are not willing to entrust themselves to it. Maybe it is because they really are not convinced that to follow Christ demands that they deny themselves absolutely, and pick up their crosses to follow Him. They think that they may hold on to their own lives and to the world and still follow Christ. Or maybe they are aware of the price of following Christ, but they are not willing to pay it. They are willing to accept going to church in order to be called a Christian. It gives them a measure of comfort to their souls, thinking that they have escaped hell. Maybe they are affected by the anti-Lordship teaching which is so prevalent in the church today. They believe the lie that you can have Christ as your Savior, without submitting to His whole will as Lord. They can come to Christ and stay the way that they are, and never give themselves fully to His service. For whatever reason, many professing Christians today are not taking Christ and His demands seriously. This indecision in past days was a clear indication that they were not yet unconverted. Today, this is virtually the accepted norm for a Christian, with very few exceptions.

The covenant community in Elijah's day was in a very similar situation. There were those who were clearly following Baal. And there were those who were clearly following the Lord, though this last group was far smaller than the first. When Elijah thought that he was the only faithful one who was left, the Lord said to him, "YET I WILL LEAVE 7,000 IN ISRAEL, ALL THE KNEES THAT HAVE NOT BOWED TO BAAL AND EVERY MOUTH THAT HAS NOT KISSED HIM" (1 Kings 19:18). But our text tells us this morning that there was a much larger number of people who were still undecided between the two. Many of them, who professed to believe in God were wavering. The king and the queen were clearly following Baal, but their fathers had formerly served the Lord. To these who were undecided, Elijah addresses the question, "'HOW LONG WILL YOU HESITATE BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS? IF THE LORD IS GOD, FOLLOW HIM; BUT IF BAAL, FOLLOW HIM.'" They needed to make a decision one way or the other. "BUT THE PEOPLE DID NOT ANSWER HIM A WORD," which indicates that the people were aware that they were in a dangerous position. From these statements I would like us to consider that,

It is very foolish to remain undecided as to whether or not you will fully follow the Lord in whole-hearted obedience.

- I. *There Are Many People Who Remain Undecided About the Things of Christ. There are many who are still undecided as to whether they ought to embrace Christ or not. They are still outside of the church of Christ. And there are many professing Christians who are still trying to decide in their hearts whether or not they should become real Christians. They were raised in a Christian household and have had the advantage of the word read and preached to them for many years. Or they have entered into the church, but are yet unconverted. They really don't know whether they should give up all that they have to follow Christ.*
 - A. *First, There Are Some People Who Never Come to a Firm Conviction About Whether There Is Any Truth in Christianity.*

1. They have heard about Christ from their earliest days, but they have never come to a conclusion as to whether or not He is real or a fairy tale. They are not sure whether conversion, or the new birth, is real, or merely a figment of the imagination, or a game that some like to play.
 2. Some never come to any conclusion as to whether or not they should trust the Scripture.
 - a. They fear that it might be true, for then it would mean that they are lost without Christ.
 - b. Other times they doubt that its true. When they hear some good arguments for it, then they believe. But when someone raises an objection against it, they again are not sure.
 - c. Many of the Jews in Jesus' day were like this. They didn't know what to think of Christ. Sometimes they thought that He was Elijah, sometimes one of the prophets of old, and sometimes just an impostor. The Jews asked Jesus in John 10:24-25, "'HOW LONG WILL YOU KEEP US IN SUSPENSE? IF YOU ARE THE CHRIST, TELL US PLAINLY.' JESUS ANSWERED THEM, 'I TOLD YOU, AND YOU DO NOT BELIEVE.'"
 - d. Many today are in this position, even within the church. They are not really fully convinced that what the Bible says is absolutely true.
- B. There Are Some Who Never Decide, If the Bible Is True, Whether or Not They Should Really Live As It Calls Them To.
1. Remember the Christian faith is not merely learning a new kind of knowledge, it is a life to be lived.
 2. The great purpose for which God created us and recreated us was not merely to have right thinking, although that is necessary for right living, but that we might do good works (Eph. 2:10).
 3. But for one reason or another, there are many who will not do what the Lord has commanded them.
 - a. Maybe they think that God is simply something that is added to their lives, and His purpose is mainly to enhance their life style.
 - b. Perhaps they think that salvation is something which is easy and does not require any change in their life style when they come to Him.
 - c. Maybe they are not convinced of the words of Christ where He says that they must seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, before anything else.
 - d. They hope to some day, perhaps before they die. Certainly none of them are intending to go to hell. But for one reason or another they keep putting it off.
 - e. They never come to any decision. They think that they will get serious about the things of God before they have to stand before Him on that day, but the time is never right.
 - f. And so they never get serious about seeking God and the things of God.
 4. But the decision is not that difficult. There are only two roads to choose.
 - a. They may choose the world, with its worldly pleasures and sin, and its destination, hell.
 - b. Or they may choose to follow Christ, to be in heavenly glory with Him, but they must also choose the road of self-denial and obedience to all of God's commandments.
 - c. They may only have one or the other. But some will never decide which to choose.

- d. There are many who want what they think is the best of both. They want heaven, and the pleasures of sin. But realizing that they cannot have their own way and still go to heaven, they are at a standstill.
- e. The road which leads to heaven is not a road of self-indulgence. They do not want heaven on God's terms, but on their own.
- f. What they want leads down to hell, but they do not want to end up there, so they again put off their decision.
- g. Others try and divide the two. They take the world and heaven, but leave self-denial and hell behind. But they are only fooling themselves, for this road still leads to destruction. For outside of faith in Christ and repentance from all sin, they are still on the broad road to hell.
- h. There are those who seem to choose the way of the cross when it doesn't cost them that much of the world. But when times of temptation come, and the lusts of the world are set before them, they abandon holiness and heaven, to again walk on the broad road.
- i. There are really few people who have ever truly counted the cost of being a Christian and have determined to follow Christ at all times no matter what the cost to them personally. Jesus said, "FOR THE GATE IS SMALL, AND THE WAY IS NARROW THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND FEW ARE THOSE WHO FIND IT" (Matt. 7:14).
- j. Most are caught between two opinions. They aren't sure whether or not they want to follow God. They may not really want to follow the devil. But by not making a decision, they are really choosing to serve Satan. They are, as James says, "A DOUBLE-MINDED MAN, UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS" (1:8).

II. But to Remain in This Undecided Position Is Very Foolish for the Following Reasons:

- A. The Truths of Christianity Are the Most Important Things in the World.
 1. The fact that God exists, that the Bible is His Word, that Christ is His Son, and that there is such a thing as conversion is infinitely important.
 2. Those who embrace this God, through faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, are eternally saved from everlasting destruction. While those who reject Him are cast away forever into everlasting torment in hell.
 3. Is it wise to refuse to look into these things, or to remain undecided about them, since they are true regardless of what anyone thinks? Truth is not determined by what someone believes. Truth is still true whether you believe it or not. All will be judged according to truth and not according to belief. And since it is true that there are only two eternal destinations for all men, it would be foolish to remain undecided about them.
 4. You must decide which master you will serve. Will it be God or mammon? Will you pursue the interests of the world, or the interests of ^{heaven}eternity? Will you submit to God, or to your own pleasures? It is foolish to remain undecided.
- B. God Has Given Us the Ability to Examine These Issues and to Know that These Things Are Important to Us.
 1. It is so simple that a child could see it.
 2. The problem is not with our understanding, but with our hearts. The only reason we would not choose that road of self-denial and duty is because we don't want to.

3. Because of the evil of our hearts we would choose against what is best for us. But it is very foolish and unreasonable to choose a life of temporary pleasure in this world, and to miss a world of infinite pleasure in the next, ~~no matter what the cost.~~
- C. But God Sets Them Both Before Us to Decide.
1. He says in Deuteronomy 30:19-20, "I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH TO WITNESS AGAINST YOU TODAY, THAT I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE. SO CHOOSE LIFE IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY LIVE, YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS, BY LOVING THE LORD YOUR GOD, BY OBEYING HIS VOICE, AND BY HOLDING FAST TO HIM; FOR THIS IS YOUR LIFE AND THE LENGTH OF YOUR DAYS."
 2. What more could you ask for than that God gives you a choice? God sets life and death before and asks you to choose. Will you choose life? Then embrace the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and turn from your sins. Will you put off that decision? Then you are rejecting the life which He has offered you.
- D. Don't Forget that There Are Only Two Choices that Any Can Possibly Make.
1. There is only life or death, blessing or curse.
 2. There is either a life of complete and persevering obedience to God, with eternal glory; or a life of pleasing yourself, with eternal misery.
 3. This would be a hard decision if there were several things to choose from which were nearly equal. But how foolish it is to be undecided between two things which are so vastly different.
 4. You must choose either to abandon all and follow Christ, or to keep all in this world and follow the devil.
 5. But even knowing this there will still be those who will hesitate to make that choice.
- E. But God Has Given You Everything that You Need to Make that Decision.
1. God has not left you in the dark. He has not left you merely with His revelation in nature, as Luke says that He gives to all men, "THAT THEY SHOULD SEEK GOD, IF PERHAPS THEY MIGHT GROPE FOR HIM AND FIND HIM" (Acts 17:27).
 2. He has given to you the Scriptures. He has given to you a clear light.
 - a. You may test their truth anytime you want and find that they are true and perfect.
 - b. Christ has plainly told us what we will gain if we follow Him. He has also told us what we will receive if we continue in sin. His Word is true. Those who follow Him will live with Him forever. Those who reject Him will be thrown into the lake of fire.
 - c. He has told you plainly that you must pick up your cross daily and follow Him. He has told you that you must hate your father and mother, your wife and children, your brothers and sisters, yes, and even your own life, in order to be His disciple (Luke 14:26-27). You must be willing to pluck out your eye, and to cut off your hand that offends, if you are to enter into heaven.
 - d. He even tells you to count the cost beforehand, to see if you are really willing to pay the price (v. 28).
 - e. You cannot claim ignorance. No one can. Those of you who are undecided must choose now.

- F. *One Thing Is Certain, You Will Never Have A Clearer Revelation Than What He Has Already Given You.*
1. *God has given us His Word once for all. He did not promise that He would ever lay it out more clearly than He already has.*
 2. *He has told us plainly what it is that we have to gain and what we have to lose.*
 3. *Those of you who continue to delay will gain nothing by it, except that the devil will have more time to deceive you and to lead you astray.*
 4. *You must not remain undecided.*
- G. *If You Don't Make That Decision in This Life, then God Will Make It for You, by Appointing You a Portion with the Wicked.*
1. *If by putting off that decision, you could avoid the consequences, that would be one thing.*
 2. *But by not choosing in this life, God considers that you have already chosen. You have chosen not to follow Him.*
 3. *God will bring the matter to a speedy conclusion and appoint you your portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.*
- H. *Lastly, To Delay Is Foolish, Because You Do Not Know When Your Opportunity Will Be Over.*
1. *Your opportunity will last no longer than your life. Once your life is over there will be no more offer, the sentence will be past, the matter will be closed.*
 2. *The irony is that those who were undecided who are now in hell, could easily make that choice ~~now~~.*
 - a. *They now see that Christianity is true, and that heaven is by far the best portion, (as they taste the fires of hell.)*
 - b. *But now it is too late. All their opportunities are past.*
 - c. *They would gladly give all the world if they could for another opportunity to choose, but God will never grant it to them.*

III. Application.

- A. *In Light of This, I Would Ask You to Examine Yourself this Morning to See Whether or Not You Have Fully Embraced the Lord and Have Committed Yourself to Serve Him.*
1. *Do you believe that what the Bible says is true?*
 - a. *If you believe it only because others do, or because that was the way in which you were raised, then you are still undecided. You must believe it for yourself. You must be converted.*
 - b. *If you really believe what it says is true, then this will be more important to you than anything else in the world.*
 - (i) *If you believe that there is a heaven and hell, that there is a judgment immediately after death which will assign you forever either to heaven or hell, if you really believe these things, they will influence you more than anything else on earth.*
 - (ii) *You will be more concerned about how to escape hell and to gain heaven than anything which the world would have to offer you.*
 - c. *Examine yourself, then, and see whether your mind is set on the things on earth or the things in heaven. If they are set on earth, isn't this the reason why you are hesitating between two opinions?*

2. Secondly, examine yourself to see if you have ever embraced the godly practice of religion which is necessary if you are ever to see heaven. Have you chosen the ways of self-denial and obedience over the world and sin?
 - a. If you are putting off what you know is the commandment of your Lord to a later time, then you have still not embraced Christ. Good intentions are not enough. Present obedience is,
 - b. If you are not living strictly according to everything which the Lord commands you, then you have still not embraced Him. Even to do some things conscientiously, but to neglect others, is still indecision. To attend public and private worship, but not to be upright in your business dealings, or to love your neighbors and enemies, is to hesitate between Christ and the devil.
 - c. If you try to step around certain duties which are particularly difficult for you, because you are not willing to give up your comfort and ease, you have not embraced Him fully. You must be willing to pick up your cross, and crucify yourself to your own interests to follow Christ.
 - d. If you are only living as a Christian most of the time or only some of the time, and at other times you are not, then you have yet to be converted.
 - e. This is not to say that the Christian does not have any struggles. He does. But he has resolved in his heart to forsake the world and to follow Christ no matter what the cost, himself.

B. If These Things Describe Any of You Here This Morning, You Must No Longer Hesitate Between Two Opinions.

1. Either embrace Christ through faith and repentance and a life of self-denial and whole-hearted obedience, and receive its outcome, eternal life; or embrace the world through a life spent in pursuing the things of the world, and receive its end, everlasting destruction. Do not remain undecided.
2. Since you have the Gospel and the knowledge of God, to remain undecided is a worse offense in God's eyes than to be ignorant.
 - a. Jesus says, "I KNOW YOUR DEEDS, THAT YOU ARE NEITHER COLD NOR HOT; I WOULD THAT YOU WERE COLD OR HOT. SO BECAUSE YOU ARE LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER HOT NOR COLD, I WILL VOMIT YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH" (Rev. 3:15, 16).
 - b. "HOW LONG WILL YOU HESITATE BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS? IF THE LORD IS GOD, FOLLOW HIM, BUT IF BAAL, FOLLOW HIM" (1 Kings 18:21).
3. If you refuse to choose, the Lord will one day choose for you. If after He has clearly shown you the truth, and has warned you to flee to Christ, and you still remain between the world and heaven, He shall one day settle the matter for you and put you with the unbelievers to teach you the truth at a time when it will be too late.
4. Won't you come to Christ ~~then~~ ^{with}. Won't you choose to suffer shame in this life ^{with} the Lord of Glory, that you may share in His glory hereafter. I pray that you will. ✓ Amen.

Come to Christ now, and no longer hesitate!