

**THE BIG IDEA:** When one choice can impact every choice, we'd better make the right choice.

### The Take-Off

Anybody feeling a bit overwhelmed?

Yesterday as I watched some TV - I admit it, I was a little hooked on House Crasher episodes on HGTV - I couldn't believe how many infomercials there were.

Seems like there are a lot of products out there that you and I have been living without for a long time and shouldn't have been. Plus, if we act now and correct that oversight, they'll double the offer as long as we're willing to pay way too much for them to update the cart total from 1 to 2!

There are a lot of people jockeying to get your money and your attention, and they're doing it because they want you to make a choice.

The problem is, that when there are so many options, the pressure to choose can be a little too much

But what if I told you that everything we need is found in ONE? That everything comes from ONE?

I know we're just starting our series in Ephesians and you may not have read the letter yet, but you'll see that word ONE 20 times over these 6 chapters. That's a lot, right? Kind of like it might be important, right?

Everything comes from ONE. It's the phrase that I want you to think of all the way through this series, because as we'll see in Ephesians, this church in a city filled with distractions was in danger of losing focus on the ONE thing that influenced everything.

Focus is powerful and it's a good thing - and we'll see in the coming weeks that the believers in Ephesus were focused - but it's only redemptive when we're focused on the right thing.

And so this morning - on week one of ONE - we want to talk about the ONE choice that all of us have to make that impacts every choice that we'll make beyond it.

Let me sum that up in our Big Idea right up front so it can be marinating in our hearts all morning: When one choice can impact every choice, we'd better make the right choice.

We all know that's true, don't we? It isn't even necessarily spiritual, is it?

Why does the menu at The Cheesecake Factory stress Wendy out so much? Because there are so many choices, and that increases the odds that she could pick something that she'll regret.

If everything comes from one choice, then that one thing, one choice, one moment becomes foundational, critical.

There's suddenly a lot of weight behind that one choice, because there's a lot riding on it.

One play, one shot, one choice. And all of that leads us to one point:

### **1. ONE POINT: Choose Jesus**

- a. That's it. We could literally stop right here, because until we've made this choice, we've got no shot.
- b. Paul doesn't even get out of the first verse without making this clear.
- c. No, he didn't write the words "choose Jesus" but he did write the letter to saints "in Christ"
- d. This is HUGE because everything that we'll read and learn beyond this point will be built on this foundation:  
have you chosen to live in Christ?
- e. Jesus is the only right choice, and when we choose Jesus, that choice impacts everything else
- f. Some of you haven't chosen Jesus
- g. You'll listen to the messages and you'll jot down some truth here and there and even try to make better choices
- h. But that's like using a nicer cup to drink poison with. You may look better, but you're still going to die.
- i. What does it mean to be "in Christ?"
- j. We'll start answering it in greater detail next week, but for now, it means that we choose to go all in on trusting Jesus to save us, to make the way for us to live at peace with God.
- k. Here are a few scriptures to help us understand that:
  - i. Romans 5:17 - Death in Adam, life in Christ
  - ii. Ephesians 2:17-18 - Jesus made access for us with God and that gives peace
  - iii. John 15:5 - being "in Christ" allows us to have everything he gives us and nothing he doesn't
- l. That last one makes it pretty clear that we have everything in Christ and nothing apart from Christ.
- m. That ONE choice - Jesus - impacts every choice, which is why Jesus is the only right choice.

## 2. Why it matters so much

- a. It's fair to ask how choosing Jesus can make that big of a difference, although most of us feel bad asking it
- b. Choosing to be in Christ changes 3 things:
  - i. How we see ourselves
  - ii. How we see others
  - iii. How we see God
- c. Here's an example of how that plays out
- d. Notice in verse 1 that Paul called the Ephesians "saints"
- e. That was a pretty common way for Paul to address his readers, and it implied that they were valuable
- f. I mean, what does "saint" mean to you? It surely isn't something we'd call a bad person, like Hitler, right?
- g. How would you respond to being called a saint? You'd try to answer humbly & show you aren't "that good."
- h. But why is that? It's because we see our value based on what we do and how well we do it
- i. But that's the lie of Adam - that we can be good enough to cover up our sin; if we try harder, we'll be better
- j. But if you and I are in Christ, we're saints, and it has nothing to do with you or me
- k. It has everything to do with that one choice of being in Christ
- l. Being in Christ changes how we see ourselves, not as worthy or unworthy based on performance, but as valuable based on Jesus
- m. And that applies to others. If I'm in Christ and you're in Christ, then I see you as a valuable saint, too
- n. But most of us still apply the Adam test to others, don't we?
- o. In fact, if you go all the way to the end of the Bible, you'll find that Jesus had some strong words for this church in Revelation 2.
- p. He basically told them good job judging truth and error, but bad job loving each other.
- q. If you are critical of others who are in Christ, then you may not be in Christ as much as you think you are.
- r. Does it mean we like everyone? No. Does it mean we see everyone in Christ as valuable to us because they're valuable to Him? Yes. Should that change how we treat them, speak to them, interact with them? Yes.
- s. And it changes how we see God, as well.
- t. He isn't a jerk looking to kill us and punish us. He's a Father who wants a relationship with us.
- u. As we'll find out next week, he wants us to make the ONE right choice because he has a limitless supply of blessings that he wants to give us.
- v. There is something about the way he sees me that should change the way I see myself.
- w. All that us just one example of how being in Christ changes everything, and that should dramatically change the way I see my relationship with Jesus.
- x. Suddenly, nothing else matters as much as that.

## The Landing

So, here's the one application that I want to leave you with this morning  
I want you to think about, pray about and then write out ONE step that you can take that will allow you to sit here one year from now with a closer relationship with Jesus  
Think about it - if relationship with Jesus is the one right choice, then what is ONE way you can strengthen it?  
Usually we think of too many things to do in a new year, and we end up doing none of them well, or even at all  
But what if you had only one?  
It doesn't have to be perfect, or even worded for me. I simply want to be able to start each elder meeting in 2014 taking the time to pray for you by name about that ONE step  
It could be many things: read the Bible more consistently, change the media you take in, spend time with your family talking about Jesus, praying more  
But the difference is that when we are in Christ, we aren't doing those things to be better branches, we're doing them because we ARE branches.  
Paul's ONE thing is found in Philippians 3:10 - he wanted to know Christ (v. 10)  
His ONE step toward that is found in verse 12 - live forward, not backward  
What's your ONE step? If one choice can impact every choice, and Jesus is the right choice, what is one thing you can do intentionally and consistently over the next 12 months to nurture that relationship?  
Write that down, and we're going to wrap up this morning by bringing them and laying them on the platform.  
Let's pray.