

# JOHNS CREEK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Confirmation Sunday Message

Sunday, May 2

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When I was a teenager, my mom would say two things to me before I left the house to go out with friends. One of them was, "Make good choices." The second thing I'll get to in a minute.

But right now I want to focus on this issue of choices. The choices you make today will determine your tomorrow.

Life is a matter of choices – choices about how you spend your time – choices about how you spend your money, about what you think is important – choices about what and who you choose to follow.

Some of our choices are not that important. But there are other decisions that are vitally important. There are choices in life that determine the quality of our lives and the quality of our relationships. There are destructive choices and there are constructive choices. There are choices that will make you and those who love you stronger and there are choices that will wreck your life and those that you love.

Confirmation Sunday is a high holy day because today is all about making the most important choice of your life – to follow Jesus Christ.

This leads to the point of my message today. ***The choices you make today will determine your tomorrow.*** Your future depends on what you do today.

The Bible has many lessons on the importance of making the right choices. Today I want to lift up something Moses said to the children of Israel that has always spoken to my heart. They come from Deuteronomy.

Moses was delivering to the children of Israel the covenant he had received from God. It was a hard message but he had no choice to deliver it. The stakes were high. The very survival of his people was at stake.

In the midst of Moses' sermons we find these critical words:

**"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death . . . therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live." -Deuteronomy 30:19**

Moses was saying that a time of decision was at hand. The people of Israel could no longer walk on both sides of the fence. They had to make a choice. Choose death or choose life. Choose to follow idols or choose to follow the living God. The choice was theirs.

Confirmands, I am so proud of you because today you have chosen life. You have chosen the highest road of following Jesus. This is the most important decision of your life. It will determine the direction you go and the values that guide you. And this is your decision. Not your parents. Not your grandparents. Not your friends. Because you are at the age where you are learning one of the most important lessons in life: *Each of us must live with the choices we make.*

Youth, I want you to remember that the next time you are tempted. Confirmands and graduates who will soon be headed off to college, when someone tries to tempt you to do something they will often say, “Everyone is doing it. It’s no big deal.” And I want you to remember that this may be true but you are the only who will live with the consequences of your decision. They do not have to live with your decisions. No one is responsible for your actions but you. No one else will take on the consequences of your actions but you. Remember that.

*The choices you make today will determine your tomorrow.*

Imagine for a moment that your life is over, and you are led into a small room. In this room are two chairs; one for you and one for God. In front of these two chairs are a television and a DVD player. Imagine God coming into the room with a DVD labeled with your name and the title, “What might have been” (John Ortberg, “If You Want to Walk on Water, You Have to Get Out of the Boat”).

Now, imagine sitting in that room with God and watching all of the things that God might have done with your life if you had let him. Imagine seeing what God might have done with your financial resources if you had trusted him. Imagine seeing what God might have done with your skills and talents if you had stepped out in faith and used them. Imagine seeing what God might have done with your relationships if you had given him room to work. Imagine what God might have done with you if you had confronted sin and yielded to his grace.

Now, I don’t know if God will make us watch a video like that. I hope not. It would be rather cruel. And I haven’t asked you to do this exercise so you can wallow in self-defeat. But I have asked you to do this for one reason – to remember that the choices you make today will determine your tomorrow.

Where do you want to be in life? Who do you want to be? What choices are you making to get you there? There are choices we must make. If you’re going to have a healthy body, there are choices you must make about what you eat and what you drink. If you’re going to have a healthy spiritual life there are choices you must make about the input you give your mind. If you’re going to have a healthy marriage and a healthy family, there are choices you’re going to

have to make every day. Most important of all, if you are going to live a life of wholeness and joy, you must choose to follow Jesus.

*The choices you make today will determine your tomorrow.*

The most crucial choice we can make in life is to trust God and follow Jesus.

Have you ever made that decision?

The second thing my mom would say to me before I went out with my friends was a reminder of the decision that you confirmands have made today: “Remember who you are.” Remember, you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

Cornelius Vanderbilt in his day was one of the richest people on earth. He was walking through the woods one day and got lost. He was worried over a lot of problems in his life...in his heart, business and life.

He just wasn't paying attention to what he was doing and got lost. He was disoriented and didn't know what to do. So, in desperation he sat down against a tree and fell asleep.

A little later he woke up with someone's foot kicking his. When he opened and his eyes and looked up he saw a big bear of a man with a big black beard looking down at him. He was a forest ranger. The man said, “Who are you and where are you going?”

Vanderbilt said those two questions are like ice water to his mind, clearing it of all the things confusing him. He said, “Right then and there I offered that forest ranger a job. He wouldn't take it, but I offered him a job doing nothing but moving back to the city and waking me up every morning with those same two questions: Who are you and where are you going?”

There is a lesson in that story for us. As we make decisions in life those are two key questions we must ask ourselves. In fact, I would rephrase the questions: Who do you want to be and where do you want to go? If Jesus is Lord, you want to follow him and go where he leads you. But, like the confirmands, only you can make that choice.