

**21 OTB.18;** Joshua 24:1-18; Ephs 5:21-32; John 6:60-69

A man and wife, both 60 years old, were celebrating their 35th anniversary. During the party, a fairy appeared & offered each of them a wish. Now all her life, the wife had longed for a trip around the world. So the fairy waved her wand, and poof, the wife had a ticket in her hand or a world cruise! Next it was the husband's turn. He'd been faithful for 35 years, but now he revealed his inmost desire, "I want a wife 30 years younger than me!" he said. "Granted," said the fairy who waved her wand. **And suddenly, the husband was 90! Yikes!**

(Source: *Sunday Mornings 2*, D. Clark)

**His deepest desire defined what he became!**

**Actually, it always does in the end.**

Long ago, Joshua challenged the Israelites to make *the defining choice* about whom they would follow into the Promised Land, "***If it does not please you to serve the Lord, decide today whom you will follow.... As for me and my family we will serve the Lord.***" Israel chose *the Lord*,

**.. and so they shaped the rest of their lives.**

Many centuries later when Jesus asked Peter to choose, he chose Jesus: "***To whom shall I go, Lord? You have the words of everlasting life...you are the Holy One of God.***" In doing that Peter *set his course* of his life from that point all the way to his grave many years later.

**His "yes" defined & shaped the rest of his life.**

My friends, the same is true of us. Somewhere, some time, every one of us makes a choice that *permanently shapes* our hearts & defines our lives. The problem is that lots of us make the big choice without ... even noticing it.

**We just slide into it, and can rarely even name it clearly.**

Some of us have slid into *choosing our careers* as the great love that defines our lives. Some of us have let *our house & all the lovely things in it* define who we are. Some of us have given our hearts *to the chase* - not to having things, which can get boring, but to *the competition* for getting things or just plain winning, ... whatever that is!

Some of us have slid into letting our lives be shaped & defined *by* our angers, or our fears, or our jealousies, or even our commitment to controlled substances.

**Whatever we choose, with our eyes open or with eyes closed,**

**... it will *define & shape* who we become at our very center!**

**So the radically urgent question is: What have you/I chosen?**

Is it big enough and worthy enough for the task we have given it, that is,

... to be the *shaper of our being's* very core?

How many of us have really chosen *the Lord* as the definer & shaper of our lives?

There's one way to find out. *Track the pattern of your choices.* Daily, what do you usually choose, and how do you choose it? As you make your decisions, what do

2 your inner conversations sound like? Some Native American wisdom says,  
“Listen to the wind, it talks. Listen to the silence, it speaks.

*Listen to your heart, it knows. Unk*

**Your heart does know that Jesus is slowly re-shaping you & me** into his own likeness. Yet, this is never an easy task or a gentle road to follow. Peter believed but *still struggled* at times to follow. *In every age*, many of the disciples of Jesus reached at point at which they too have said,

... **“This saying is hard, who can accept it?”**

A little closer to home, poet +Maya Angelou recalls the struggles of her grandmother living through the great depression. She remembers a lot of things about her grandmother: her wisdom, her stature. But it was her grandmother's faith that Maya remembers most. Claspng her hands behind her back her grandmother would look up into the distant sky & say,

**"I will step out on the word of God."**

The great depression was a difficult time for everyone, but "especially so for a single black woman in the South tending her crippled son and two grandchildren." But when faced with mountainous burdens, Maya's grandmother would face the sky & say, **"I will step out on the word of God."** Maya writes that,

**"She would look up as if she could will herself into the heavens,"**

And because of her grandmother, Maya Angelou grew up knowing that the word of God had power. And now, today, whenever she experiences the injustices of this world, Maya remembers the great faith of her grandmother. (Story Source: [esermons.com/Duncan](http://esermons.com/Duncan))

A grandmother believed. Her faith in Jesus was her total outlook on life, her attitude on living fully engaged in this world. This perspective guided & enhanced the life of Maya's grandmother and many generations after her.

**Some chose to believe.**

**Some choose to be shaped by *the Holy One of God*.**

We hear Peter respond to that question posed by Jesus about *doubting his words*, “Do you also want to leave? Peter answered, *Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.* Have you come to believe? Are you convinced?

*At this Liturgy of Trust in the Word*, we are being challenged like those first disciples to believe in Jesus, completely. Define your life. Remember that,

*“what you do makes a difference and you have to decide*

*what kind of difference you want to make.”* – Jane Goodall

**Step out on, *the Word of God*, because to whom else shall the world go?**