

Wise Men Change Their Mind

Matthew 2:10-12, Luke 18:20–23; Luke 19:5–9; Matthew 6:24; John 16:33; Romans 12:2

Matthew 2:10-12 - Have you ever noticed that the Magi had to change their minds? They had a plan: find the Messiah, give him gifts, turn around, and go home. The quickest and easiest way to do that is just to reverse the route they took getting there.

We do not always like to change our mind, but there are times when change is necessary. That change can be difficult. Some change is life-altering.

When a change has the potential of being life-altering, remember these three things:

Divine-Decide-Dedicate

The Magi had a divine dream to change their mind. They had to decide if they would follow the divine intervention. Once they decide to obey, they dedicate themselves to their decision.

Two Who Were Confronted with Changing Their Minds

The Old Testament is replete with people changing their minds, which carries into the New Testament. Today, we will consider two individuals from the New Testament who were confronted with changing their minds: The Rich, Young Ruler in Luke 18:20-23 and Zacchaeus in Luke 19:5-9.

The rich young ruler was a wonderfully religious guy. By all accounts, he followed the rules, and honored God with his life. He wanted to ensure he was doing everything right to gain eternal life.

In contrast, Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He was a traitor to his people—an outcast, and, by all accounts, not religious. He cheated people out of their money and partnered with Rome to extort God's people.

So, we might say the Rich Young Ruler was the church-going guy, and Zacchaeus was not.

Divine Calling

Just as the Wisemen had a divine dream, the Rich Young Ruler and Zacchaeus both have a divine calling to change their minds.

--Jesus calls the rich, young ruler to sell everything he has and give the money to the poor. Why does Jesus say this? Because He knows money has this young man's heart. The young man will never follow Jesus, for he cannot serve two masters – Matthew 6:24. Jesus is calling this young man to change his mind about money. Instead of serving money, Jesus wants him to use money to serve others. Money as a tool to fix and repair other people's lives and to give glory to God.

--Jesus tells Zacchaeus, "I must stay at your house." Jesus understands Zacchaeus also serves money.

Zacchaeus, however, in contrast to the rich young ruler, does not feel like he is a part of the family. He has been rejected by everyone and feels like he is an outcast. Jesus is calling Zacchaeus to change his mind about who he is and who Jesus really is. "Come down" is as much about where he is in the tree as it is about where he thinks he is in life. Zacchaeus feels like he is above everyone and at the same time below them because he does not belong.

Decision Time

Just as the Wisemen had to decide to change their path, the Rich Young Ruler and Zacchaeus must decide if they will change.

--Jesus gives the Rich Young Ruler a divine calling. Luke says this call made him sad. Change is difficult. Our desire to change must eclipse our desire to stay the same because change is incredibly challenging. *Jesus is calling this young man to give up his identity.* He had found his identity in his stuff and his status. *Jesus tells him, "If you want to find eternal life, then you need to find your identity in Me."* This is a calling to actual change. It will change how he lives, who he associates with, and how others see him. If he says "okay," it will change everything. His decision is instantaneous. That is the root of his immediate sorrow. He is not sad that Jesus said something; he is sad because he has already decided he cannot change.

--In contrast, Jesus gives Zacchaeus a divine calling, and the Bible says, "he came down at once and gladly welcomed him." Sometimes, change is so exciting we do not think about its implications. In fact, as Zacchaeus was shimmying down that tree, he honestly had no idea that what seemed like a simple decision would become

a life-altering decision. One “yes” to Jesus would change the entire journey of the rest of Zacchaeus’ life. This decision will change the way he lives, how people see him, and with whom he spends time. It will change his politics and his theology.

John 16:33 – Following Jesus is difficult, but He has overcome the world!

Zacchaeus’ decision to invite Jesus to his home was also an invitation to the challenges and troubles of being a follower of Jesus. He will have to learn to live with less income, less political power, and less influence in certain areas of life. His decision for more Jesus may just cause him less of other things.

Dedicated to the Decision

Just as the Wisemen dedicated themselves to their decision, so would the Rich Young Ruler and Zacchaeus dedicate themselves to their decisions.

--In Mark 10, we see the Rich Young Ruler “went away grieving.” He was dedicated to his identity: to his wealth and to his status; to his decision not to change his mind. He was dedicated to living for himself, rather than choosing to follow Jesus. We have all been there. We have all had those moments when our journey finds us on a road of regret about a decision we made. Many of those decisions were tied to our unwillingness to change our minds about something. Even now, just hearing those words, most of us are reminded of times when we wish we could go back and change rather than stay the same. We have tasted the Rich Young Ruler’s grief. Yet like him, we stayed dedicated to our decision not to change.

--On the other hand, Zacchaeus is the poster child of dedication to changing your mind. Look at his dedication: “Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

This is true dedication! This is a life transformed by the Gospel!

We forget sometimes that dedication is costly. He is giving away half of everything he has. *This is not an obligation; it is an offering.* He is not giving it to people he owes but to people in need. *He is starting to understand that money is a tool, not a treasure.* If giving away half of what he has to the poor is not dedication enough, he is going to give back four times what he cheated people. *Zacchaeus is setting an example of just how costly dedication to change can be.*

What About You?

Romans 12:2 - What are the patterns of your world? What if you looked at the world you live in? What if you reconsidered the way you make decisions based on the world of your family, your church, your work, and your friends?

The Greek word Paul uses that translates to “renewing” can also be translated as “change of heart and life.” In other words, Paul is calling the Christians in Rome to be open to changing their minds about things.

Jesus would use this phrase several times, “You have heard it said.... but I say.” In other words, “You were taught to think, act, and do something this way, but I am calling you to change your mind about it.” When you start thinking and acting like God, like Jesus, you are doing God’s good, perfect, and pleasing will.

In church, we can tend to get stagnant and avoid change. There is great comfort in staying the same. However, there are times when change is needed. It could be as simple as changing the direction of your journey home or as complicated as changing your mind about where you find your identity. If your identity is in money, family, sports, work, or a host of other things, then you need a change of your thinking and believing.

Wisemen seek Jesus above everything else, and from time to time, they also need to change their mind and alter their journey in this life. May the God of peace teach us when to change and when to stay the same.