

Choices

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Every day of our lives we are confronted with choices. Every choice we make, big or small, has consequences. For better or for worse, we have to live with those consequences. Some choices we make determine the quality of our lives and the quality of our relationships. Some of the choices we make determine our destiny and have eternal consequences.

Edwin Thomas was a master on stage. In 1863, he was with his actor brother John in the play Julius Caesar. It was a foreshadowing of things to come that Edwin's brother who played the assassin in Julius Caesar is the same John who took the role of assassin in Ford's Theatre on an April night in 1865, when he stole into the rear of the box in the Washington Theater and shot Abraham Lincoln.

As you may have guessed, the last name of the brothers was Booth: Edwin Thomas Booth and John Wilkes Booth. Edwin was never the same after that night. Shame from his brothers' crime drove him into retirement. He might never have returned to stage had it not been for what happened at a New Jersey train station. Edwin was awaiting his coach when a well dressed young man, pressed by the crowd, lost his footing and fell in front of an oncoming train. Without hesitation, Edwin locked a leg around a railing, grabbed the man and pulled him to safety.

Edwin did not recognize the young man he'd rescued. The knowledge came weeks later in a letter he carried in his pocket to the grave, thanking Edwin for saving the life of Robert Todd Lincoln, the son of Abraham Lincoln.

Edwin and James Booth. Same father, mother, profession, and passion. Yet one chose life, the other death. How could it happen? I don't know, but the story is not unique.

Look at the two criminals on the crosses on either side of Jesus. The two criminals have much in common. Convicted by the same system, condemned to the same death, surrounded by the same crowd. Equally close to the same Jesus.

How can two men see the same Jesus and one choose to mock Him and the other choose to pray to Him? I don't know, but they did. And when one prayed, Jesus loved him enough to save him. When the other mocked, Jesus loved him enough to let him go – even though it probably tore at His heart.

God allowed them the choice. He does the same for us.

God's heart for each of us is to make choices that lead to abundant life. He says to His people through Moses, "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him." (Gen.30:19-20)

To choose Jesus is to choose life.
