

## The Turning Point

There comes a point in everyone's life when they realize that they are standing at a crossroads of destiny. Everything that has happened in their lives has led them to this point. And the next decision that they make will change their lives forever. Abraham Lincoln recognized this point in his life when he made the decision to sign the Emancipation Proclamation at the height of the Civil War. Nothing that he did after that decision could change the course of his destiny. He would die from an assassin's bullet, but the nation that he had dedicated his life to would be saved.

Other decisions in history stand out as turning points: Napoleon's decision to attack Waterloo sealed his fate and signaled the end of his conquest of Europe; President Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb on Japan and Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor were each monumental, turning points that changed the course of history and set off a sequence of events that led to an inevitable conclusion.

The scripture today speaks of such a turning point for Jesus. It is subtle. You just read past it because the scripture in

Matthew seems to gloss over it focusing more on what the disciples did and said. But it is a turning point just the same. Nothing that happens after it can change the fate that is in store for Jesus, for Satan, and for all humanity. It is the moment when Jesus ends his ministry and begins his journey to the cross.

We all have to face turning points in our lives. Some are more dramatic than others such as the decision to marry or not, the decision to have children or not, the decision to move to another city or not...these are all tough choices...but none compare to the decision we must all make to decide to follow Jesus or not. In doing so, we turn control of our lives over to him. We change the direction of our lives and become dead to the world, just as Jesus did.

This time of Lent is an opportunity to look deep within ourselves and see if we are still standing at the crossroads. You see some of us get to the turning point and never move forward. We just stand there. Life goes on around and us and we seem content and even happy to let the world go by. Some of us turn back and leave the decision making to others. Both of those options lead away from eternity. Standing still means

stagnation, no growth, no Holy Spirit. Backing away from a decision to follow Jesus means that you are putting your future into the hands of the rulers of this world, and they will ultimately choose that you should be destroyed.

Jesus chose to follow God, knowing that it meant his death. But also knowing that it meant that he would save the lives of all humans who would follow him.

Choose to follow Jesus and die, to live for all eternity. Choose to follow the rulers of this world and you may live—but only in this life. As the great commentator Matthew Henry says not exactly in these words, if you love this life more than you love Christ, you will give into the lusts of this life and indulge yourself. You will probably cut short the life you love so much and lose an infinitely better one in the process.

We will all face turning points in our lives, but none will be more important than the one to become a Christian or not. I know that many of you have already made that decision. I pray for God to give you the courage, strength and willingness to help others make the decision for Christ as well. If you have not made the decision or if you have decided that Christ is not for you, I pray that God will turn you back to Him.

The path you've chosen is destructive and leads to death. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face. And the things of this earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.