

There Are No Moral Accidents

by Russell DeLong

The sermon emphasizes that moral outcomes are the result of deliberate choices, underscoring the importance of aligning one's will with God's standards.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26, Deuteronomy 30:19, Joshua 24:15, Proverbs 16:9, John 8:32, Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Galatians 6:7, James 1:14, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Free Will", "Repentance"

Description

Russell DeLong delivers a powerful sermon on the consequences of our choices, emphasizing that there are no moral accidents and that our will determines our destiny. He highlights the freedom of will given by God, the importance of making righteous choices, and the inevitable principle of reaping what we sow. DeLong stresses the need to align our will with God's standards to overcome any challenges or unfavorable circumstances. He concludes with a call to repentance, urging listeners to choose Christ and change their ways to experience forgiveness, regeneration, and a new beginning.

Transcript

Scripture Reading -- Galatians 7

Text -- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Galatians 6:7).

Some wrecks are accidental -- some are due to carelessness -- others are premeditated.

Who has not driven by vacant lots covered with what is left of hundreds of automobiles -- mechanical wrecks.

Hundreds of wrecks were before my vision in another setting -- human wrecks. I was in the old Doyer Street Mission, New York City. Over 300 men were present -- at least present physically -- some were not there mentally. Many were asleep, others were under alcoholic numbness, a few were victims of dope. Human wrecks -- some young, some old; some white, some black; some Americans, others foreigners. Here they were all assembled in one room, not primarily to attend a religious service, but to receive the post -- service soup and a bed for the night. Old men, emaciated, shaking limbs, quivering lips, thin bodies, bald, and what hair remained touched by the white snows of many winters. Middle-aged men

bound by the unshakable habit of alcohol. Dope fiends who were so dominated that they would pay any price to satisfy that insatiable craving for morphine, heroin, or marijuana.

As I looked at this motley group of tattered men with hair disheveled, unshaven faces, with sensuous lines of sin creasing their skin I wondered how many were married, how many had children and how many had fathers and mothers still living. If so, how hurt the wives must be because of their husbands' broken-down condition; how the children must be ashamed of their daddies, and how mothers must be crushed over their sons' debauched condition.

It occurred to me that years ago every one of these human wrecks had been a plump,

handsome baby in the arms of a loving mother who had high hopes for that boy. As he played about the home the father had allowed his ambitious imagination to envision his son as a successful doctor, lawyer, educator -- maybe a minister. As the lad had gone through school the mother's fond hopes for that favored boy increased.

Yes -- but something happened. Here he is -- a human derelict, a complete wreck. No fond ambitions of a father will ever be realized; no proud achievement to present to a loving mother.

Here he is broken down physically, weakened mentally, well-nigh damned morally, and corrupt spiritually. A human wreck.

But why?

Did it just happen?

Was it an accident?

No! There are no moral accidents.

There may be moral wrecks -- but none are accidental.

The word "moral" implies choice. There can be no moral act without the possibility of

alternatives. The thing you are forced to do has no moral value. If there is only one road to take it is of no ethical significance that you take it.

The basic principle of this existence is freedom of the will.

The greatest day in the history of the universe was when God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit sat down together in the council chambers of eternity and said, "Let us make man in our own image." What a momentous decision. What did it mean? Three things:

1. "In our own image" intellectually. Man thinks. No animal has the power of reflection, of reasoning, and of reaching a logical conclusion.
2. "In our own image" morally. Man was given the power to know right from wrong.
3. "In our own image" spiritually. Man was endowed with a spiritual nature which gives him a capacity for God and which will assure his existence when material things are no more.

To guarantee and make possible these Godlike characteristics God gave man the sovereign power of will. Sovereignty does not mean power. It is not synonymous with might. It means self-directing, self-governing. Man is completely autonomous. This is an awesome truth. What a decision for God to make! How freighted with danger. But how loaded with possibility! Man can say, "Yes," or "No," to any creature or thing.

I say this reverently, but as I do, I am uttering a solemn, sobering thought -- man can defy

God and even God cannot make man obey Him. Oh, He could by His power force man's body to behave in the way He desires but not his spirit. If God should make man do what He wanted done He would violate the governing principle of a moral creature -- freedom.

For man to be a moral creature he must face alternatives. There may be the possibility of great good but also of terrible evil.

So God made the decision -- He created man a moral creature endowed with the matchless gift of freedom. Man can look the field over and make his own choices.

The choices of one man make him a Hitler, a Dillinger, a Capone, or a Judas. The choices of another man make him a Lincoln, a Wesley, a St. Augustine, or a St. Paul.

It is the will of man that decides his destiny. The old stoics said, "A man's character is his destiny." There is some truth in that statement. A man's character is the sum total of his decisions. What any person enjoys depends on what he is. What a man suffers depends on what opportunities he has missed and what privileges he has prostituted. The enjoyment of heaven in no small measure will depend on our holy character while the torments of hell will in no small degree be due to an enlivened memory of squandered opportunities, as Abraham said to Dives, "Son, remember." For a moral creature, lost opportunities, betrayed trusts, disloyal acts, and imposed aloneness will cause the most acute suffering. The boring worms of memory, the hissing serpents of lost opportunity, and the howling devils of debauched privileges will make hell a place of extreme torment.

Your will can send your soul to the richness and happiness of heaven or to the remorse and torture of hell.

In navigation, it is not the winds, waves or storms that guide or send a vessel to a chosen port. It is the set of the sail or the slant of the rudder. In aviation it is the bend of the stick.

One ship drives east and one drives west,

By the selfsame wind that blows;

'Tis the set of the sail and not the gale,

Which tells the way it goes.

So in life it is not environment, heredity, friends, enemies, conditions, storms, sorrow,

betrayals, financial reverses, or things, that determine a man's moral character -- it is the will. Which way is your will set?

Set your will to the right and all the wicked men of earth, plus the cohorts of hell, plus the unfavorable conditions of environment cannot defeat you. God gives power to the will which is set in line with His immutable standards.

On the other hand, set your will to wrong purposes and all the power of God, plus praying mothers, interested friends, and conducive circumstances cannot make you do right.

No -- there are no moral accidents. What happens to you morally is the result of your premeditated choices.

You may ultimately become a human wreck, take your place with the group in the mission and finally wake up in hell, but if so, there is no one to blame but yourself.

Life is such that some people get results, others get consequences. Results come from a planned program of righteously chosen deeds. Consequences come from wrong acts. You cannot do right and get bad results morally. Neither can you do wrong and get good consequences.

Another startling fact is that we have the power to make our own choices but we do not have the power to change the consequences of our choices.

The universe is moral. God is just. His standards are immutable. His laws are irrevocable.

I may talk about "breaking God's laws," but I don't break them. The fact is that they will ultimately break me. I will be left helpless, hopeless, and finally homeless.

God's three major moral attributes are justice, holiness, and love. These are complementary to each other. Calvary is an expression of all three. The holiness of God could not tolerate sin. The justice of God demanded that the penalty for broken law be paid. The love of God sent His Son to save poor, lost man. Jesus came as an expression of divine love. Jesus paid the penalty of sin to satisfy the divine justice and preserve the integrity of the moral government of the universe. Man's depraved nature can be cleansed by the Holy Spirit -- a requirement of the holiness of God.

So -- God is just but He also is loving and merciful. Choose Him today. Repent of your past willful choices and God will forgive you. He will also give you a power to activate your will in choosing right.

Remember -- there are no moral accidents. If you finally make your bed in hell it will be the result of your own free choice.

The Buddhists have what they call the "Law of Karma." It is this: "All deeds, good or bad, work out their moral recompense, either in this or in a future state of existence." The Christians, too, have a Law of Karma. It is stated in the text, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You can't live a bad life

and reap a good reward. You can't live a good life and be consigned to a bad eternity. But Christianity goes one step beyond Buddhism -- for Buddhism offers no remedy for one who has lived wickedly. Christianity says to the man who has lived sinfully, "Stop. Repent. Confess. Change your manner of living. Choose Christ." The man that does so will find a power to regenerate his soul and God will wipe out the past. A new day can dawn.

Your will decides your happiness and your destiny. Somebody has pertinently put it:

Sow an act -- reap a habit.

Sow a habit -- reap a character.

Sow a character -- reap a destiny.

You face the necessity of a choice. There is no neutral ground in the moral universe. You are on one side or the other.

To every man there openeth a high way and a low,

And every man decideth the way his soul shall go.

Down in your heart you know you are on the wrong side. Your choices have been against

your better self, Christ, and the Church. You have sown to the flesh and have reaped nothing but sorrow, disappointment, and sin. It is time to change. The remaining moments of this broadcast are dedicated to you in the hope that you will call a halt. For this purpose such services are conducted.

It is for you. Christ is pleading for your right choice. Answer His call now.

Jesus is tenderly calling thee home,

Calling today, calling today!

Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam,

Farther and farther away.

Don't you sense His presence; is it not a fact that your better self is saying, "Surrender to

Him." Too long you have ignored His pleadings. Too long you have chosen evil and sin. Stop! Why don't you change now before it is too late either for this life or eternity? Don't become a moral wreck. Your will given to Christ can bring happiness in this life and heaven in the future. Yield yourself now. Your will determines your character and your ultimate destiny. Throw your will on the side of Christ and right.

I am asking one of my colleagues, Dr. Mendell Taylor, who is a guest in the studio, to offer a closing prayer. Let us pray.

Prayer

O God, we sense Thy Holy Spirit's presence. Thou art speaking to multitudes of hearts just now. Thou hast endowed them with the sovereign power of will. Help them to choose the right and accept Christ. May

they turn from their evil ways and sow to the flesh no longer. The crop they have already sown is enough unhappiness and eternal death. But Thou wilt forgive and blot out the past. Let a new day dawn. Help them to place their wills in harmony with Thy plan for their lives this moment. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/russell-delong/there-are-no-moral-accidents/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net