Welcome back to our series of Gospel messages that actually grow out of the writings of Dr. Seuss! In this series I hope to accomplish three goals. **First**, I want to take some of those poems that are known to many of you and point out how you can use those for teaching times with your children. **Second**, there are Bible based lessons you and I can learn from Dr. Seuss as well. **Finally**, I want you to see that you can start a conversation with folks almost anywhere about almost anything (including children’s books) and take a beeline to the Gospel. Yes, even Dr. Seuss.

From our first venture into the world of Dr. Seuss we learned a lot from Sam-I-am and his determination to have his friend try Green Eggs and Ham. We applied several key lessons from that little poem. (1) We need to love our friends and family enough to share our faith with them. Even when we suffer rejection, we must not give up. (2) We must keep our message simple. It’s all about Jesus. It’s about His love, His life, His death and resurrection. (3) Finally we must stay on that message. We must not get distracted by talking about church, or denominations, or preachers. We must focus our message on Jesus.

The next week we considered a lesser-known but insightful poem called “The Places You Will Go.” From that we learned the singularly imperative truth that we need to consult the Lord in all the decisions we make. Today I want to follow that line of thinking one step further with another of Dr. Seuss’s wonderful poems.

Dr. Theodor Seuss Geisel dedicated himself to writing simple, entertaining and thoughtful poems that used basic words children would understand. But every once in a while, Dr. Seuss would introduce what some people would consider nonsense words – like in his poem about the Zoad in the Road.

Did I ever tell you about the young Zode?  
Who came to a sign at the fork of the road?  
He looked one way and the other way too -  
the Zode had to make up his mind what to do.  
Well, the Zode scratched his head, and his chin, and his pants.  
And he said to himself, "I'll be taking a chance.  
If I go to Place One, that place may be hot  
So how will I know if I like it or not.  
On the other hand, though, I'll feel such a fool  
If I go to Place Two and find it's too cool  
In that case I may catch a chill and turn blue.  
So Place One may be best and not Place Two.  
Play safe," cried the Zode, "I'll play safe, I'm no dunce.  
I'll simply start off to both places at once."  
And that's how the Zode who would not take a chance  
Went no place at all with a split in his pants.

The poor Zode couldn’t make up his mind which way to go. So, he decided not to make a decision at all. Instead, he tried to take both roads at the same time.  
He didn’t want to make a decision, so - in his indecision - he actually made a decision. Because he wouldn’t take a chance … he “went no place at all with a split in his pants.”

Have you ever had trouble making a decision? I have! But if the decision is important enough I will eventually be forced make a choice.

In the Bible, God is constantly telling His people to make decisions. On Mount Carmel Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him...." (1Kings 18:21) That was Elijah’s brave choice to go against the prophets of Baal.
In Joshua 24:15 Joshua challenged the Israelites: *And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*” (Josh. 24:15)

Make up your mind!
Make a choice!
Make a wise decision … but decide!
And act on your decision!
Why? Because to decide not to decide … is to decide. To choose not to make a choice … is a choice. And these decisions and choices, even when not made, have long-term consequences!

In today’s text, we find Jeremiah telling the people of Israel to make a decision: “*Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’*” (NIV)

Just like the Zode, God tells His people – you’re at a crossroads. Make a decision. Decide which road you’re going to choose because eternity hangs on the choice you make.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus echoes Jeremiah’s words. "*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*” (Matthew 7:13-14)

There are two roads (Jesus implies) and you have a choice. One road is wide and easy to travel and lots of people choose this road. The other is narrow. It leads to life, but few seem to choose that path.

Jesus says: Make a choice. Make a decision. Choose your road.

Now some people - like the Zode in the Road – are not willing to make a decision. They feel that not making a decision is a viable option. What they really want is to find a way to compromise.

Sadly enough, there are believers who want to have it both ways. They want to be faithful to Christ and faithful to the world at the same time. They want to have their cake and eat it too. There is a problem with that. It is impossible to begin with, and secondly even when you refuse to make a choice … you make a choice!

The Apostle James put it this way. "*Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*” (James 4:4)

For many the narrow road Jesus described is too … (pause) narrow.

In fact the world has a phrase for that. They call people who take this path “narrow-minded” because they are intolerant. They are too strict. A little of Jesus is a good thing, but be careful not to be too moral. Too straight-laced! Too pure! So, we are told to, “Loosen up. Don’t be so serious. Mix a little worldliness in with your faith.”

Take the broad way … in fact the world has a word for this too! It’s called being “broadminded.” It’s all about tolerance. It’s being accepting of all opinions as equal and true.

Their view of morality was: “take the broad way … go for the big gate. Don’t be so narrow-minded. Don’t make such hard choices … just go with the flow and God (if He exists at all) will surely understand.”

Even some Christians can get caught up in this thinking.
They’ll go to parties and drink with “the boys” (or “the girls”).
They’ll cuss, and laugh at the dirty jokes just to fit in.
They’ll sleep with their girlfriends/boyfriends and say, “It’s ok… we love each other. God will understand.”

Will He? Are you sure about that?
Consider what God tells us in II Corinthians 6:14-18, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’”

Make a choice – God says. Decide what you’re going to do. You can choose life by walking on the narrow way … and bring glory to God. OR you can be “broad minded” and end up going someplace you don’t want to go.

But what you cannot do is BOTH! Jesus made it abundantly clear: “You can’t serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other…” (Matt. 6:24)

YOU CAN’T SERVE THEM BOTH! YOU’VE GOT MAKE A CHOICE!

You can’t simply put it off and NOT make a decision. If you do that … you’ll end up like the Zode – not going anywhere, being embarrassed, and very possibly going to hell.

By choosing NOT to decide you will have already decided. God says – make a choice: “… choose for yourselves THIS DAY whom you will serve.” Don’t put it off. Because in your decision … or lack thereof … eternity awaits.

As I said earlier, there are times when I have a hard time making a decision. The harder the choice, the harder it is for me – sometimes - to choose. And I can literally freeze up trying to make some decisions.

God knows that, so here in Jeremiah gives us a gem of advice on how to make the wise choices.

1. **Realize how important the decision is.** “Stand at the crossroads and look,” God says. You’re at a crossroads. Realize you’ve got to make a decision - you can’t take both roads.

   Now, sometimes it won’t be that hard to know which path is the right one. The more you know God’s Word, the more time you spend in church and around other Christians, the more obvious THE RIGHT choice will be.

   The problem often doesn’t lie in knowing which road is the right one. The problem is facing the possibility that it isn’t going to be a fun trip. You’ll risk being made fun of, be persecuted and rejected.

   Jesus knew this, and so He told us, “Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven. For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.” (Luke 6:22-23)

   The road can be hard.

   In our nation, many people have found making godly decisions are hard:
   … students have been denied their graduation diplomas
   … scientists have lost their jobs,
   … beauty queens have lost their crowns
   … politicians have been ridiculed and run out of office
   … and businessmen/women have been taken to court…

   All because they’ve taken a stand for God.

   And we’ve got it easy.
I recently read about a preacher in Vietnam, who was sentenced to two years in prison. When he was offered an early release, he declined saying he had a group of new Believers in the prison he wanted to disciple.

In Columbia, a missionary was kidnapped and told she only had two hours to live. She told her captors that if she only has two hours to live, she wanted to spend it telling them about Jesus.

And in the Sudan, a Christian boy had his knees and feet nailed to a board and he is left to die. When rescued he said he forgave the man who did it because Jesus was also nailed and forgave those who did that to Him.

Don’t let anybody fool you into thinking this choice to serve Jesus is easy. You stand at the crossroads … look around. Count the cost. That is what Jesus said in Luke 14:28. Know that it might get difficult.

It is a narrow road and there IS a reason why few choose it. But also know that God is watching to see what you’ll do. And He’s watching with the desire to empower you to bring glory to Him and reward you if you make the right decision.

2. “Ask for the good road,” says Jeremiah.

Don’t just look at the roads … ask advice, because, sometimes the choice will be hard to figure out on your own.

I’ve encountered many “cross-roads” in my life. Major decisions that will affect my family and future require careful attention, prayer, and wise counsel. I have not grown out of the need to seek that insight.

Proverbs tells us: “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” (11:14)

And again “Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established.” (15:22)

There’s no shame in asking for help with major decisions. Sometimes that’s the only way to know where you need to go. Be sure to seek godly counsel …

But seeking advice is not enough. I’ve GOT to make a decision!

Jeremiah says, “ask where the good way is, and WALK in it.”

It’s not enough to simply SAY I want to walk with Jesus … I have to decide. I can talk the talk all day - but until I walk the walk I’m not going anywhere.

And that’s the message from this Dr. Seuss poem “The Zode on the Road.” The Zode talked a good talk … but he didn’t walk the walk. He’d come to a “crossroad” and couldn’t decide.

In the days when Christ walked the earth throngs flocked to Jesus because He fed them, and they wanted to see signs and wonders. But when, He would not give them what they wanted to see and hear they walked away.

He could have kept the crowds coming if he’d only given them excitement, entertainment, and intrigue but instead, He said, "take up the cross and follow me.”

“It’s a ‘Cross’ road we are asked to trod.”

In Matthew 16:24, 25 “Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.’” Being a disciple of Christ is walking down the Cross road.

Many people come to a “cross” in the road. The cross stands there in their path … and they know they’ve got to make a choice. They’ve got to make a decision because Jesus is right there in their path, and He’s asking them to pick up the cross and follow them.

But many people just stop right there. They don’t pick up the cross. They don’t walk down His path. They just stand there like the Zode in the Road and think God will be satisfied if they compromise or make no decision at all.
No He won’t!
There’s only one path that will lead to God, and Jesus said, “I’m it!” “I am the WAY the truth and the life.”
And just as Jeremiah said - if Israel would only choose the right path and walk in it – they’d find rest. So also, Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”
Matthew 11:28
But you have to choose the right path.

So, which path will you choose?
There is the “Broadminded path” which allows you to choose which part of Jesus you want. Not too much of Jesus. We want just enough of Him to make us comfortable. But Proverbs says “there is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death.”
And then there is the narrow path - the one few choose, because it seems “too narrow.” If you choose that path, it leads past the cross to that sign which leads to life.

What will you decide today? Don’t be like the Zode! Pray, seek wise counsel, and choose Christ.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

(Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken,"