**Choice - Stories & Illustrations**

There is a story told about the beginning of the Reformation. There was a man by the name of Martin of Basle. He came to a knowledge of the Truth, but he was very afraid to make a public confession. So he wrote on a leaf of parchment: “Oh merciful Christ, I know that I know the Truth, Oh Holy Jesus. I acknowledge Thy sufferings for me. I love Thee! I love Thee! I love Thee! Then, with this covenant he wrote in hand, he removed a stone from the wall of his chamber and hid it. It was not to be discovered for more than 200 years. About the same time, Martin Luther found the Truth as it is in Christ. He said out loud in a public area, “My Lord had shown mercy to me before men, and I will show mercy to men before kings.” The world knows what followed. We’ve all heard of Martin Luther but we have never heard of Martin of Basle. Why? They both wrote a covenant, but one put the covenant in a wall and the other lived it. *(Christopher Ian Chenoweth)*

**An angel appears at a faculty meeting and tells the dean that in return for his unselfish and exemplary behavior, the Lord will reward him with his choice of infinite wealth, wisdom, or beauty. Without hesitating, the dean selects infinite wisdom. “Done!” says the angel, and disappears in a cloud of smoke and a bolt of lightning. Now, all heads turn toward the dean, who sits surrounded by a faint halo of light. At length, one of his colleagues whispers, “Say something.” The dean sighs and says, “I should have taken the money.” *(Tidbits)***

**Both the hummingbird and the vulture fly over our nation’s deserts. All vultures see is rotting meat, because that is what they look for. They thrive on that diet. But hummingbirds ignore the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, they look for the colorful blossoms of desert plants. The vultures live on what was. They live on the past. They fill themselves with what is dead and gone. But hummingbirds live on what is. They seek new life. They fill themselves with freshness and life. Each bird finds what it is looking for. We all do. *(Steve Goodier, in Quote)***

**And then one day, the queen fell ill. The king frantically summoned his finest medical advisors. The king wept. The king prayed. The queen died. And the king changed. The fairy tale was finished. A nightmare was only beginning. For once upon a time, there was a king who threw himself into a life of dissipation and drunken revelry, who seized those who had been his friends and tortured them and impaled them on stakes and burned them alive, a sadistic beast of a man who murdered children, even his own. History almost forgot the saint he was, remembering instead the demon he became. For after thirteen years of glory and goodness, that nation's most benevolent ruler became its most evil. His mind, twisted by grief and determined to destroy the haunting memories, became in its torment the supreme instrument of destruction. But don't let it be forgotten -- that the kingdom bathed in blood was once wrapped in dreams. And that the king, more than a king, the czar of all Russia, with his bride by his side was Ivan the Wonderful. Only when she, Anastasia, was gone -- when the light in the czar's heart was extinguished forever -- the fiend that remained was Ivan the Terrible. (*Paul Aurandt, Destiny and 102 Other Real Life Mysteries, p. 240)***

**Tough Choice: Ed Koch, mayor of New York City, trying to decide which Democratic candidate he will support in 1982 for the Presidency: "If I support Ted Kennedy, there would be cruises, jet-set parties and long, lazy summers at Hyannis Port. If I were t o support Fritz Mondale, there would be winter in Minnesota. It's a tough choice. *(Time magazine)***

**Lord George Gordon Byron and Sir Walter Scott were gifted writers and poets who lived in the late 18thand early 19th centuries. They were both lame. Byron bitterly resented his infirmity and constantly grumbled about his lot in life. Scott was never heard to complain about his handicap. One day Scott received a letter from Byron which said, “I would give my fame to have your happiness.” What made the difference in their reactions to suffering and their attitudes toward their disabilities? Byron was known as a man of doubtful moral standards. Scott, on the other hand, led a courageous life that exemplified his high standards and values. *(Rev. Billy Graham, in ‘Til Armageddon)***

**How they chose their last names:**

**Nicholas Cage – from comic book character Luke Cage**

**Rock Hudson – from Hudson River**

# Michael York – from York brand cigarettes

**Lionel Barrymore – from an actor’s name on billboard**

**Edward G. Robinson – from name he heard in a play**

**Kirk Douglas – from Douglas Fairbanks Sr. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**During the Civil War, Robert E. Lee was offered command of the Union Army before he accepted his post with the Confederacy. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 179)***

**Every time you smile, you use thirteen muscles. When you frown you use fifty muscles. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 11)***

**When I was a boy, my father, a baker, introduced me to the wonders of song. He urged me to work very hard to develop my voice. Arrigo Pola, a professional tenor in my hometown of Modena, Italy, took me as a pupil. I also enrolled in a teachers college. On graduating, I asked my father, “Shall I be a teacher or a singer?” “Luciano,” my father replied, “if you try to sit on two chairs, you will fall between them. For life, you must choose one chair.” I chose one. It took seven years of study and frustration before I made my first professional appearance. It took another seven to reach the Metropolitan Opera. And now I think whether it’s laying bricks, writing a book – whatever we choose – we should give ourselves to it. Commitment, that’s the key. Choose one chair.” *(Luciano Pavarotti, tenor superstar, in Guideposts)***

**Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion. I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less cleaning up to do afterward. *(Kurt Vonnegut, in Palm Sunday)***

**Owen Wister, an old college friend of Theodore Roosevelt, was visiting him at the White House. Roosevelt's daughter Alice kept running in and out of the room until Wister finally asked if there wasn't something Roosevelt could do to control her. “Well,” said the President, “I can do one of two things. I can be President of the United States or I can control Alice. I cannot possibly do both.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Our friend H. Stephen Glenn is one of the most affirming, empowering individuals we have ever met. He instantly inspires us to always look for the positive. Stephen was at his grandson's tee-ball game a while back. A little boy came up to bat. He swatted the ball off the tee and ran as fast as he could to third base. The coach went up to the little boy and said “Boy, you sure hit that ball a long way.” The little boy said, “I did?” “Yeah, and you ran really fast to third base and surprised the heck out of everybody!” “I did?” he asked.  “Yes, you did. I have one question to ask you before you come to the dugout to watch the rest of the inning,” the coach said to the boy. “When you made the decision to run to third base instead of first, what were you thinking of?” The boy replied, “Well, everybody that was running to first was getting put out.” The coach took the boy to the dugout to talk to him. “Last time you made the choice of running to third base instead of first, you surprised everybody, and made it, but you *didn’t* get a chance to score. Now you've got the same choice again. You can choose to run to third and probably make it okay but you won't get to score, or you can take the risk of running to first base. You may get put out, but if you make it you get a chance to score. But, whatever you decide, I want you to know we're right there behind you.” *(Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen)***

**Bruce Barton some years ago wrote an effective parable concerning the idea of giving: "There are two seas in Palestine. One is fresh and fish are in it. Splashes of green adorn its banks. Trees spread their branches over it, and stretch out their thirsty roots to sip of its healing waters. Along its shores the children play, as children played when He was there. He loved it. He could look across its silver surface when He spoke His parables. And on a rolling plain not far away He fed five thousand people. The river Jordan makes this sea with sparkling water from the hills. Men build their houses near to it, and birds their nests; and every kind of life is happier because it is there. The river Jordan flows on south into another sea. Here is no splash of fish, no fluttering leaf, no song of birds, no children's laughter. Travelers choose another route, unless on urgent business. The air hangs heavy above its water, and neither man nor beast nor fowl will drink. What makes this mighty difference in these neighbor seas? Not the river Jordan. It empties the same good water into both. No the soil is which they lie, nor the country round about. This is the difference. The Sea of Galilee receives but does not keep the Jordan. For every drop that flows into it another drop flows out. The other sea is shrewder, hoarding its income jealously. It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps. "The Sea of Galilee gives and lives." The other sea giving nothing. It is named "Dead." *(A Synoptic Study of the Teachings of Unity)***

**Water in an ocean wave moves in only two directions: up and down. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure in the landscape -- the loneliness of it -- the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it -- the whole story doesn't show. *(Andrew Wyeth, in Catholic Digest)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***