

Why Gamble?

Acts 24:24-25, Matthew 16:26

➤ Introduction

Illus: Several years ago, my family and I moved to Bay St. Louis, MS. We arrived with a full moving van and went straight to the mini-storage buildings where I had arranged for our furniture and personal items to be stored while we built a new home. Late Saturday afternoon we finished unloading our household goods. On Monday, Pam went to the storage building to get something she needed but was unable to find it. When she came by my office, she asked, "Why did you put those empty boxes in the storage building?"

We had not put any empty boxes in the storage building. Between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning, thieves had made their way through our stuff and managed to take everything of value including cameras, televisions, beds, etc. When we were completing the police report, we were informed that this had become a common problem all along the coast since the casinos had come to the area.

All along the Mississippi coast, there are casinos and pawn shops. Some pawn shops even boast being open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In Mississippi, gambling is promoted as a means of increasing tax dollars thereby producing better roads and schools. Ironically, Mississippi still has some of the nation's worst schools. And if there is a state with worst roads than Mississippi, I have not seen it. The only roads that have been improved in Mississippi are the roads that lead to the casinos.

Yes, the casino industry does generate more tax dollars for Mississippi. However, those tax dollars are consumed by the cost of dealing with the increased crime and the required infrastructure. The people of Mississippi were sold a lie and out of greed and the desire for quick and easy fixes, they bought that lie.

Statistics

- The gambling industry has grown tenfold in the US since 1975.
- Over 15 million people now have a gambling addiction.
- There are now over 260 casinos on Indian reservations alone.

- Gambling profits now exceed 100 billion dollars a year.
- After gambling opened in Atlantic City, the crime rate increased 100 percent.
- The average rate of divorce among gamblers is double that of non-gamblers.
- The suicide rate among pathological gamblers is twenty times that of non-gamblers.
- At least 65% of addicted gamblers commit crimes to support their gambling habit.
- Along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, bankruptcy, crime and domestic violence have all increased as much as 300%.

Gambling has become a high profile and socially acceptable activity in the US despite the evidence of destroyed families and financial ruin.

I realize the Bible does not have a commandment that says, thou shall not gamble. However, gambling violates numerous principles taught in God's Word. God's Word is a Word of principles.

Gambling violates God's principles concerning honesty, brotherly love, work, stewardship, trust and danger.

Casinos exist because people do not win at gambling. Any winnings a person does get come from the losses of many. Nothing is produced. No goods or services are exchanged and society does not benefit, it loses.

I believe a Christian has no business gambling for entertainment, financial gain or any other purpose. Simply put, gambling is just down right "dumb." The next time you have the urge to throw some of your money away, call me and I will bring some offering envelopes over and we can use that money to mend lives and reach people for Christ.

One day I will preach a sermon on gambling and address these principles and the tragedy of gambling. However, that is not my purpose today.

Scripture Acts 24:24-25

"²⁴But some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in

a Acts 20:21

Christ Jesus. ²⁵But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened (afraid) and said, "Go away for the present, and when I find time (convenient) I will summon you." Acts 24:24-25 NAS

The big tragedy is that many people foolishly gamble much more than their money. Many people in our society gamble with eternity every single day.

1. Felix Was Frightened

Paul gives Felix a three point sermon about

- a) righteousness (yesterday's sin & being right with God)
- b) self-control (today's temptations & walking with God)
- c) judgment (tomorrow's judgment)

Felix trembled and became afraid. Felix felt something in his heart and knew there was a decision to be made.

Like an expert physician, Paul went right to the heart of Felix's relationship with God. God moved in Felix became convicted.

When our relationship with God is not where it should be, God uses words of men and the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts. He moves us to turn our souls to Christ.

Jesus Christ is either your Saviour or your Judge. Every one of us must come to this realization.

2. Felix Procrastinated

God's Word says,

"for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" Rom 3:23

"For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal

life in Christ Jesus our Lord" Rom 6:23

"There is none righteous, no, not one" Rom 3:10

a Titus 2:12

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"But God demonstrated his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" Rom 5:8

Felix's mind was enlightened to these facts and his heart was stirred but **his will would not yield.**

There is no indication Felix ever became a believer and most likely that day he destined himself to hell.

There is an old English proverb that says, "One of these days is none of these days."

Edward Young wrote, "**Procrastination is the thief of time.**" Procrastination is also gambling with one's soul and eternity.

The most "convenient season" for a lost sinner to be saved is **right now.**

Felix took a foolish attitude towards God's Word. He thought he could "take it or leave it."

Felix took a foolish attitude towards God's Grace. He had the ultimate riches right before him and he missed it.

People think they have to clean up their lives to receive the Grace of God. Satan would love for you to buy that lie.

People think they can pick up God's Grace whenever they choose.

The Bible says it is God's Holy Spirit that calls us to salvation.

"²⁶For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26 NAS

Felix gambled and Felix lost his soul.

Conclusion

Illus: I heard a story about Satan calling four of his leading demons together and commanding them to think of a new lie that would trap more souls. "I have it!" one demon said. "I'll go to earth and tell people there is no God."

"It will never work," said Satan. "People can look around them and see that there is a God."

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“I’ll go and tell them there is no heaven!” suggested a second demon, but Satan rejected that idea. “Everybody knows there is life after death and they want to go to heaven.”

“Let’s tell them there is no hell!” said a third demon.

“No, conscience tells them their sins will be judged,” said the devil. “We need a better lie than that.”

Quietly, the fourth demon spoke. “I think I’ve solved your problem,” he said. “I’ll go to earth and tell everybody *there is no hurry.*”

The best time to trust Jesus Christ is—*now!*

Illus: Trevor and his Dad love to ride motorcycles together. They have attended all sorts of motorcycle events and get-togethers. This past week when they were returning from a motorcycle ride, Trevor’s father watched as a Mack truck pulled out in front of his 20 year old son. Trevor took his last breath in the arms of his father as they lay on the pavement. Thank God, Trevor a few years earlier did not procrastinate. When his mind was enlightened and his heart was stirred, his will said yes to Jesus Christ.

Are you seeking the whole world but forfeiting your soul?

Are you gambling with your soul?

Are you gambling with eternal life?

If God is calling you to salvation, will you respond or will you procrastinate?