

# REBELLION!

## TWO WAYS TO LIVE: STEP 2

### INTRO – THE PERCH

*Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate.*

- Summer job, aged 20-something. Ended up working a couple of graveyard shifts alongside someone who was intrigued by Buddhism & New Age movement.
- Don't even remember the question – somehow we ended up talking about our worldview.
- I started with “God made the world” and then went into how we’d screwed it up, and now lived in a fallen world.
- We had to serve a couple of people, then “well I think that’s a pretty depressing situation” and he went off shift.
- **Conclusion:** I need to learn from Dickens! His story starts with a negative, downbeat truth – both Marley’s death and Scrooge’s character – but does it in a way that’s intriguing and winsome!

### RECAP: REMINDER OF THE SIX PANELS

- Reminder: foundations (for us), fluency (for non-believers), freedom (no guilt!)
  - Example: me and cooking (teach me to cook – no guilt – freedom to seize opportunity)

## TWO WAYS TO LIVE: THE CHOICE WE ALL FACE

<p>- God is the loving ruler of the world. - He made the world. - He made us rulers of the world under Him.</p>  <p>"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." (Rev 4:11)</p> <p><b>1.</b></p>	<p>We all reject the ruler-God-by trying to run life our own way without Him, but we fail to rule ourselves or society or the world.</p>  <p>"There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless," (Rom 3:10-12)</p> <p><b>2.</b></p>	<p>- God won't let us rebel forever. - God's punishment for rebellion is death and judgment.</p>  <p>"It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." (Heb 9:27)</p> <p><b>3.</b></p>
<p>- Because of His love, God sent his Son into the world: the man Jesus Christ. - Jesus always lived under Gods rule. - Yet by dying in our place he took our punishment and brought forgiveness.</p>  <p>"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;" (1Pe 3:18)</p> <p><b>4.</b></p>	<p>- God raised Jesus to life again as the ruler of the world. - Jesus has conquered death, now gives new life and will return to judge.</p>  <p>"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," (1Pe 1:3)</p> <p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>The Two Ways To live; Our Way or Gods new way</b></p> <p><b>OUR WAY:</b> -REJECT OUR RULER(GOD) -TRY TO RUN LIFE OUR OWN WAY RESULT - CONDEMNED BY GOD, FACING DEATH AND JUDGMENT</p> <p><b>GODS NEW WAY:</b> -SUBMIT TO JESUS AS OUR RULER -RELY ON JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION RESULT - FORGIVEN BY GOD &amp; GIVEN ETERNAL LIFE</p> <p>"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (Joh 3:36)</p> <p><b>6.</b></p>

- We're on panel 2
- There will be Q&A at the end – jot down any questions you have as we go.

## THE RECURRING THEME

- Panel 1 has a good God creating the world and creating us to live under his good, loving rule.
- Panel 2 is where it starts to go wrong – the Fall. Humanity – you, me, Adam and Eve – choose not to live under that loving rule, but to seize that rulership for ourselves. Put simply, we rebel.
- This is laid out in Genesis 3, but if I was talking to someone who wasn't a believer, I wouldn't start there – people get hung up on Adam & Eve's literal existence, why eating from a tree is wrong, and so forth. First we'll look at the foundations that we need to be sure of as believers, and then we'll come in a bit to where I'd start with a non-believer.

## GENESIS

- Important that *we* understand what goes on here.
- What is the tree of knowledge of good and evil?
  - By the way, I have no problems believing it's a literal tree, although I don't think that's necessary to the genre.
  - What it signifies is clear more than simply breaking a rule.
  - Moral maturity & independence.

*And the little ones that you said would be taken captive, your children who do not yet **know good from bad** – they will enter the land. I will give it to them and they will take possession of it. (Deut 1:39)*

*... before the boy **knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right**, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. (Isa 7:16)*

- Has God set us up for failure? Why have the tree there?
  - He's entrusted us with something amazing
    - Blessing (blessed to be fruitful and increase)
    - Responsibility (fill and tame nature, rule over the animal kingdom)
    - *also* Constraint (leave it to me to define good & evil)
    - Like complaining at being given a power tool and then hurting yourself
  - Free will
    - If I say that I love it when my kids are obedient, I sound controlling!
    - Actually, I hate it when I see kids who are slavishly obedient, living in fear under compulsion.
    - I hate it when I see glimpses of that in my parenting. But I love it when I see our kids obey out of love for us and trust that we've made a good judgment call.

## REST OF THE OT

- This theme of rebellion and moral independence runs through the rest of the Old Testament
- Cain – “am I my brother's keeper?”
- Babel – let's ignore God's mandate and make a name for ourselves
- Isaac/Rebekah/Jacob/Esau
- Pharaoh
- Israel in the wilderness
- Canaanites
- Judges (everyone did what was right in their own eyes)
- Post-exile no better

This theme of “everyone doing what is right in their own eyes” is also very strong in the New Testament, in particular in Romans.

## HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT TALKS ABOUT IT

### ROMANS

*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*

*For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.*

*Romans 1:18-23*

- Important for us to understand
- Great leveller: ***fallen down the mineshaft analogy***

*As it is written:*

*'There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.'*

*Romans 3:10-12*

- But notice: written to the church – to the converted. Not necessarily the best way to lead with unbelievers.
- Let's look at how Jesus did it.

### JESUS

- Parable of the Lost Son
- Spoken to tax collectors & "sinners" as well as to Pharisees.
- Rebellion features, but presented in a story (narrative distance is less intense, story engages interest)
- Not presented on its own, but with the good news following and illustrated (the open-armed Father)

## HOW TO RELATE THIS TO TODAY

- This "doing what is right in our own eyes" can be seen on multiple levels.
- Internationally, as I mentioned on Palm Sunday, one nation's freedom fighter is another nation's terrorist. Britain and the US launches what many see as an illegal invasion of Iraq. Russia has launches what many see as an illegal invasion of Ukraine. I see a difference, but others don't. Mention security council seats also.
- At home, what's the definition of speeding? Answer: *exceeding the speed limit by more than I do.*
- In our attitude to God:
  - God and religion are exploited to legitimise the military or political aims of individuals;
  - or used for profit, as with Scientology;
  - or sidelined by laws, as in France and to some extent the UK;
  - and right across the Western world, most people's approach to faith is not what they believe to be true, but what they consider to be comfortable and convenient.
  - In other words, the crown is very firmly on our own heads.

## Q&A

- Any questions?

## CONCLUSION

- If you're doing the two-minute version of 2WTL, you won't go into much of that detail. Just "we chose to reject God's good, loving rule and make ourselves our own rulers", then give whichever contemporary example you feel most comfortable with. And if you're mentioning Bible verses as you go, perhaps a good one is Isaiah 53: "We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way."
- For now, as we're stopping here, let's remember the second half of that verse: "and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all".