

"They made me do it!"

TH talk for Aug. 9th, 2007

Big idea:

"They made me do it!" does not excuse us from the consequences of our actions.

Verses:

Numbers 20:1-12, John 18:19-24

Have you ever wanted to punch someone in the face because they were being mean to you or a friend?

Have you ever felt like people are annoying you so much that your only way to have them to stop is to get them back so bad they wouldn't want to pick on you again?

When I was in 7th or 8th grade I decided to take an annoying situation into my own hands. Here's what happened.

My younger brother David, my older brother Tim, and I were at our church one afternoon. Tim had been picking on David all day and I was getting pretty sick of hearing it. I knew what it was like to be picked on by Tim because sometimes he would try and take me down with his comments too.

This particular time we were in the downstairs of our church. There was one main door that led outside. The door had one of those 4 glass-paned windows on it so you could see in and out. It was not a very heavy door and I could push it open with one hand.

My Dad was not in the room at this exact time so Tim kept picking on David until I had had enough. I walked up to Tim and I punched him right in the face!!! Imagine walking in the woods and coming across a bee's nest. The nest was blocking your way so you decide to take a rock and try to knock it down. All you really end up doing is busting a big hole in the side of the hive!!! The bees start coming after you and you begin to run and scream like a little girl!!! Picture how scared and frantically you would run. That is how I felt as soon as I hit my brother. I took off running as fast as I could! Tim yelled and then came after me! My only escape out of the room was the door with the window. As I sprinted toward the door I took a quick peak back over my shoulder to see how much space I had between me and a certain beating! Whew! I was safe for now.

I reached the doorway and thrust my hand at the door to push it open and escape Tim's reach. All of the sudden I heard the sound of shattering glass!!! There was glass on the ground in front of me as I ran out of the church! How did that get there? Had someone put some glass on the ground outside and now I had just stepped in it!? That's when I noticed something shiny on my glove. It was glass! I looked back at the door to see the shattered remains of the window on the door I had just pushed open. Instead of pushing on the wooden part of the door I had put my hand right through the window pane! Thankfully it was cold outside and I had my winter gloves on or my hand would have been bleeding and cut to threads!

When my Dad came and asked what had happened I told him that Tim had been picking on David and I had hit him to make him stop. If Tim had not been making fun of David then I would not have broken the glass. It was obviously NOT my fault. It was Tim's fault all of this had happened.

While it is partially Tim's fault for his role in the incident, I still had to pay for a new window out of my own money and I was grounded for hitting Tim. Doesn't seem fair does it? It wasn't my fault!

Have you ever felt like, "It's not my fault!?" "They made me do it!" That's what I want to talk about today. I want you to remember this statement:

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The people of Israel were in slavery in Egypt for generations! That is all they knew for a long time. Through the leadership of Moses, God led the people of Israel out of the Egypt and toward the Promised Land. They had so much to be thankful for, so much to look forward to. Let me start reading to you from Numbers 20 and I want you to pay attention to the words of the people as they talk with Moses.

1 In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried.

2 Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. 3 They quarreled with Moses and said, "If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the LORD! 4 Why did you bring the LORD's community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? 5 Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!"

What were the people complaining about? What did they want? How do you think Moses felt? His wife had just died and the people are yelling at him because they don't have water and they don't have all the things they want. How do you think you would react if you were in Moses' shoes? As I read the rest of the story I want you to notice how Moses reacts to the people and how he follows God's instructions.

6 Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. 7 The LORD said to Moses, 8 "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink."

9 So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. 10 He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.

12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

What did God tell Moses to do so the people could have water? What did Moses do instead? Do you think Moses had a right to be mad and upset? I would have been pretty angry with their complaining! But that does not mean he could hit the rock TWICE instead of just placing his hand on it. Moses lost the privilege of leading the people into the Promised Land because he responded in anger. Do you think Moses talked with God about what happened later on that day? I'll bet he said "They made me do it! They got me so mad I couldn't help it!"

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I have a friend who is in prison for life because he killed someone. He did not plan it out before he did it. It was a spur of the moment thing. The other guy got him very upset and my friend grabbed whatever was closest to him and hit the other guy on the head. Unfortunately, he grabbed a hammer, and the other guy died on the spot. He has to suffer the consequences of his action. He has lost his family, he has lost his freedom. He just sits in his cell thinking about what could have been had he not responded in anger. He has every right to say "He made me mad!" but what he did when he got angry is what has him in prison.

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What do you do when people annoy you? Pick on you? Make fun of you? Try to get you mad? How do you respond? You can not control the actions of others, BUT you can control how you are going to react and respond.

There are a number of good ways we can respond or react. Tell me some of those good ways to respond.

I want to challenge and encourage you all to THINK before you ACT because even when we think it's "not our fault" we still have to experience the consequences of our actions. Most of the time our initial reaction is going to bring about negative consequences; like buying a new window for the church and getting grounded, and in the most extreme situations, life in prison.

SONG:

PRAYER