

You Have A Choice

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Key Scripture

Deuteronomy 30:19 (ESV) I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live.

Sermon in One Sentence

God, in His boundless wisdom and love, has presented humanity with a fundamental choice between paths of life and death, urging us to choose life through obedience and faith.

Introduction

Have you ever faced a decision that felt weighty, a crossroads where the path you chose would undeniably shape your future? Perhaps it was a career decision, a relational commitment, or a moral stand. We live in a world saturated with choices, from the mundane to the monumental. Yet, amidst this deluge of daily decisions, there is one choice that transcends all others in its eternal significance. It is a choice God Himself places before us, a choice that determines not just our immediate circumstances, but our ultimate destiny.

The problem, however, is that many of us approach this ultimate choice with indifference, ignorance, or outright defiance. We either assume the choice is inconsequential, or we neglect to even acknowledge that a choice has been presented to us by the Creator of the universe. But God, in His profound love, does not leave us without clear direction. He doesn't merely present options; He reveals the consequences and explicitly instructs us in the path that leads to flourishing.

Today, we turn our attention to one of the most poignant declarations in all of Scripture, found in Deuteronomy 30:19. Moses, standing on the precipice of the promised land, delivers a final, impassioned exhortation to a generation poised to enter God's covenant inheritance. His words echo across millennia, reminding us that the God who spoke to Israel then speaks to us now, holding out before each of us the deepest and most profound choice of all.

Historical & Biblical Context

The book of Deuteronomy, meaning "second law," serves as Moses' farewell address to the Israelite nation before his death and their entry into the Promised Land. After forty years of wilderness wandering, this new generation stands on the plains of Moab, preparing for a monumental transition. Moses, by divine inspiration, reiterates the Law given at Sinai, not as a mere repetition, but as an impassioned plea and a covenant renewal. He reminds them of God's faithfulness, their history of rebellion, and the blessings of obedience versus the curses of disobedience.

Deuteronomy 30, in particular, comes after lengthy sections detailing the intricate blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 28). This chapter offers a glimmer of hope and a pathway to restoration even after disobedience, emphasizing God's mercy and willingness to forgive a repentant people. Our key verse, 30:19, acts as a powerful culmination and summary of much of what precedes it. Moses, acting as God's prophet, calls heaven and earth (the created order) as witnesses, underscoring the gravity and permanence of the choice presented. It's not a mere suggestion; it's a divine imperative, laying bare the two fundamental paths available to humanity, urging them toward the path that leads to life. For us today, it underscores the universal and timeless nature of God's call to choose wisely in all matters pertaining to salvation and discipleship.

Main Point I — The Divine Presentation of Choices

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:19a – "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse."

God does not hide the options from us; He transparently presents them. Moses, speaking for God, isn't offering a riddle or a subtle hint; he is making an explicit declaration. The phrases "life and death," and "blessing and curse," are not abstract philosophical concepts but concrete realities with tangible outcomes. Life refers to flourishing, wholeness, peace, and covenant relationship with God; death signifies separation from God, alienation, and destruction. Blessing implies divine favor, provision, and protection; curse denotes divine judgment and suffering. This isn't a human invention of ethical dilemmas; it is a divine framing of reality, underscoring God's absolute sovereignty and moral authority.

This presentation of choices is a profound act of divine love and justice. God, in His infinite wisdom, knows the paths and their endpoints. He doesn't coerce, but He does delineate. He respects our agency while simultaneously revealing the inescapable consequences of our decisions. Just as He gave Adam and Eve a choice in the Garden, so He gives humanity now. To ignore these presented choices is to ignore the very nature of reality as designed by God. To understand salvation and sanctification, we must first recognize that the choice is ours to make, and God has clearly laid out the options before us, backed by the cosmic witnesses of heaven and earth.

Main Point II — The Ultimate Choice: Life or Death

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:19b – "Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live."

Having laid out the two diametrically opposed paths, God, through Moses, immediately issues an imperative: "Therefore choose life." This isn't a passive observation; it's an active command, an earnest plea from the heart of God. What does it mean to "choose life"? For Israel, it meant choosing to love the Lord their God, to obey His voice, and to hold fast to Him (Deuteronomy 30:20). It was a choice for covenant fidelity, for living in accordance with God's revealed will, which was designed for their good. This choice wasn't just individual; it had generational implications: "that you and your offspring may live." A whole nation's future, its very existence and flourishing, hinged on this collective and individual commitment.

For us today, choosing life primarily means choosing Jesus Christ, who declared Himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). He is the embodiment of spiritual life and the only means to eternal life.

Choosing Christ necessitates repentance from sin, faith in His atoning sacrifice, and a commitment to follow Him as Lord. It is a choice to walk in obedience to His commands, to embrace His teachings, and to yield our will to His. Just as for ancient Israel, this choice has profound implications not only for our own spiritual destiny but also for those around us and the generations that follow us, as our lives bear witness to the path we have chosen.

Main Point III — The Foundation of Life: Obedience and Love

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:20 – "loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

The admonition to "choose life" is immediately contextualized and clarified by what follows. Choosing life is not a vague sentiment; it is a concrete expression of our relationship with God. It involves three interconnected actions: "loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him." These are not separate endeavors but different facets of a unified heart attitude and lifestyle. Love for God is the primary motivation, leading to willing obedience to His commands. Obedience, in turn, strengthens our bond and enables us to "hold fast to Him," to remain steadfast in covenant relationship despite challenges. This holistic devotion is the very essence of choosing life.

The reason for this choice is profoundly stated: "for he is your life and length of days." God Himself is the source and sustainer of true life, both in its temporal and eternal dimensions. He is not merely the dispenser of life but life embodied. To love Him, obey Him, and hold fast to Him is to connect to the very wellspring of existence and flourishing. For Israel, this meant dwelling securely in the promised land. For us, it means experiencing the abundant life Christ offers here and now, and the promise of eternal life in the New Heavens and New Earth. The choice for life, then, is ultimately a choice for God Himself.

Illustration

In the late 19th century, a young man named Dwight L. Moody was working as a shoe salesman in Chicago. He was full of ambition, but his spiritual life was lukewarm at best. One day, a humble Sunday school teacher named Edward Kimball visited him and spoke earnestly about Christ's love and the importance of making a choice for Him. Moody was deeply moved but initially hesitant. He wrestled with the choice for several days, pondering its implications for his life and future. Finally, he yielded his life to Christ. This seemingly personal choice not only transformed Moody but sparked a spiritual awakening that reached millions worldwide. He became one of the greatest evangelists in history, founding schools and ministries that continue to impact lives today. His single choice for life, made in submission to God's call, demonstrated how one person's decision can echo through eternity and impact countless "offspring." He chose life, and through him, untold numbers found life.

Practical Application

1. Prayerfully Examine Your Core Choice: Take time this week to reflect deeply on whether you have truly chosen life, which means choosing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. If you have not, make that choice

today. If you have, reaffirm it with a fresh commitment to follow Him.

2. Identify Areas of Disobedience: Consider where your actions, thoughts, or attitudes might contradict God's voice. Confess these areas to God and deliberately choose obedience, recognizing that obedience flows from love for Him and leads to flourishing.

3. Cultivate a "Holding Fast" Discipline: Develop a consistent practice of daily spiritual disciplines—Bible reading, prayer, worship—that enable you to "hold fast" to God amidst the distractions and temptations of life. Make time to connect with Him.

4. Share Your Choice with Others: Just as God called heaven and earth to witness, let your life be a witness to the choice you have made. Share the hope and life you've found in Christ with others who may still be living in spiritual death.

Discussion Questions

1. In what specific ways does our modern culture try to obscure the binary choice between "life and death, blessing and curse" that God presents?
2. What are some practical implications of "choosing life" in your daily decisions this week, beyond explicit religious activities?
3. How does the concept of "loving the Lord your God" relate to "obeying His voice" and "holding fast to Him"? Can you have one without the others?
4. What generational impact do you believe your choice for Christ (or lack thereof) could have on "your offspring" (family, community, future generations)?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the profound grace of choice You extend to us. Forgive us for our indifference and for straying from the path of life. We pray for courage to choose You wholeheartedly, for Spirit-led obedience, and for steadfast love that continually holds fast to Your truth. May our lives reflect this choice, bringing glory to Your name and life to those around us. Amen.

Benediction

Go forth, beloved of God, knowing that the Lord has set before you life; therefore, choose life, that you and your offspring may live, walking in His love and obedience, for He is your life and your length of days.