

**Choose Life**  
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*“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. <sup>16</sup> If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I declare to you today that you shall certainly perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. <sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, <sup>20</sup> loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)*

## **1. We Choose Every Day**

Every day we make choices of what to eat, where to go and what to do. Many of these choices may seem insignificant, while others have lasting consequences.

This past week, over 25,000 people were killed in an earthquake in Syria and Turkey. Among the people was Emmanuel Johnson, a Nigerian who survived the earthquake in Turkey. Johnson said that he had been watching a documentary at 4 am when he saw the cracks in his home. He grabbed his wife and children and ran out of the house. Watching that movie saved Johnson and his family's life.

## **2. Moses' Last Words**

In today's scripture, Deuteronomy 30:19, Moses says, ***“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.*** Moses tells the people that they have to make the right choice between life and death.

Deuteronomy chapter 30 is a part of Moses' last sermon to the Israelites. The Israelites are in Moab, east of the Dead Sea. They are getting ready to cross the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land. The

Israelites would have been excited, and yet, they faced a serious crisis. For 40 years, Moses was the leader of the people. But God did not allow Moses to enter the Promised Land. Joshua would be the new leader of the people of Israel.

The Israelites could have never thought of entering the Promised Land without Moses. They would have been upset and disappointed. But Moses did not complain. His concern was what would happen to the Israelites. Would they obey God's laws?

Moses worried the people would break their covenant with God and worship other gods. That is why he assures the people in Deuteronomy chapter 28 that if they would obey God's commandments, they would be blessed. If not, Moses warns Israel they will be cursed.

In Chapter 29, Moses calls the Israelites to a renewal of the covenant with the Lord. He reminds Israel of how God has taken care of them in the wilderness. Their journey was a miracle. Moses reminds the people of the idolatry of the nations and that God would punish them if they worship other gods.

### 3. How to Choose Life

Moses tells the people to choose between two options: life or death, and prosperity or adversity. Moses teaches the people to choose life. In verse 16, Moses says, "***If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess.***"

Moses tells Israel that if they love the Lord, they will obey God's commandments. The secret to choosing life is to love the Lord. How can we love the Lord? If we love the Lord, we first need to know who God is and how much he loves us.

This is why Moses says in Deuteronomy 6:7, "***recite them (God's commandments) to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you lie down and when you rise.***" God wants his people to teach their descendants about God and how much God loves them. When the children know who God is and how much God loves them, they will love the Lord.

### 4. Abraham's Love

Who genuinely loved the Lord in the Bible? Abraham would be a good role model in the Old Testament. When Abraham was 75 years old, God called him saying, ***“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.”*** Abraham chose to be the father of a great nation. He left his birthplace to an unknown place that the Lord told him to go.

After a decade, Sarah was still childless and Abraham had a son through her servant Hagar. From Hagar, Ishmael was born. God did not forget his promise and when Sarah was 89, she became pregnant, and Isaac was born. God’s promise was fulfilled 25 years later.

When Abraham was so happy as the father of Isaac, God told Abraham, ***“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you”*** (Genesis 22:2). God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son. Abraham did not ask why.

Abraham left early the next morning to obey God’s command. His obedience tells us how much Abraham trusted God (Genesis 22:23). He did not worry about what would happen and loved the Lord by doing whatever God told him to do. What happened to Isaac? When Abraham is about to kill his son Isaac, an angel of the Lord says to Abraham, ***“Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me”*** (Genesis 22:12).

We learn from this story that God did not want Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Instead, God just wanted to see how much Abraham loved the Lord. Abraham trusted in the Lord that God would continue to lead him and guide him, even during this testing of his faith. Since he trusted in the Lord, he had no fear.

## **5. No Fear**

We can find that one of the characteristics of those who loved the Lord is that they had no fear. King David is one of the examples. He says in Psalm 27, ***“The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? ..... I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord”*** (verses 1 & 13-14).

When David was in times of difficulty, he had no fear but wait on the Lord. He trusted in the Lord that God would take care of him in any situations. The disciples of Jesus had no fear even when they faced martyrdom. They loved the Lord more than their own lives.

## **6. Conclusion**

Life is a gift from God. It is given to us by the Lord through our parents. Why are we given our lives even though we have never requested? God has a reason and a purpose for giving each of us a life. The question that we need to ask ourselves is are we living our lives according to God's purpose?

## **7. Application**

I have been very blessed since Christine and I came to Swift Memorial Church to meet many amazing people. Among the people we've met, I wanted to thank Julia Chick for her service on Sundays teaching the children of our church.

Julia could be sitting in service and enjoying worship like the rest of us. But she chooses to spend her time teaching our children about God's love every Sunday. When Julia wasn't feeling well, her grandson, Jonathan said, "Grandma, when you are retired and can't teach the children, I will do it." Jonathan learned something from his grandma how to love the Lord and his people.

Julia's life is a reflection of part of God's purpose for each of us. Julia has been choosing life, not only for herself but also for the lives of her grandson and other children. We are all called to choose life. Choosing life means for me to love the Lord by fulfilling God's purpose. When we live our lives according to God's purposes, we will be blessed by the Lord and be a blessing to others.

Choose life. Then we will love the Lord and be blessed, and we will be a blessing to our children, grandchildren, and others. Amen.