

Life or Death

(Deuteronomy 30:11-20)

Yearly Theme: *“Patience is...”*

Series Title: *“Preserving Patience”*

March 20th, 2022

Something to think about:

How many of you like to make choices? Let’s say for instance, after church service this morning you and your family go out for lunch. And, let’s say, you are the one who gets to decide where you go. Will you have a hard time deciding? In our family, the choice is often difficult. No one really wants to choose, and when someone finally does, someone else usually complains about going there. Sometimes we drive around for hours waiting on someone to choose a restaurant (no, not really).

The American philosopher, William James, who lived during the later part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, said: *“When you have to make a choice and don’t make it, that is in itself a choice.”*

And American pastor from the same time period by the name of Harry Fosdick, wrote, *“He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place it leads to. It is the means that determine the end.”*

Just before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, Moses had a few last words to say to them. He would not be going with them because GOD would not allow him to go. At Meribah (which means “arguing”) Moses disobeyed GOD by striking a rock to bring forth water when GOD had told him to merely speak to the rock instead.¹ Moses is resigned to his plight and does not complain to GOD. However, what he does do is leave the Israelites with passionate words of instruction. He exhorts them to choose GOD above all else, and in essence choose *“life.”*

Let’s take a closer look...

Turn in your Bible to: Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Here’s the takeaway this morning:

Key Point: *“GOD has given us a choice between life or death. He wants us to choose life!”*

What is a choice between life or death really? Let’s break this down further...

- **Life**

Deuteronomy 30:11-16 (NLT), ¹¹ “This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, and it is not beyond your reach. ¹² It is not kept in heaven, so distant that you must ask, ‘Who will go up to heaven and bring it down so we can hear it and obey?’ ¹³ It is not kept beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, ‘Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear it and obey?’ ¹⁴ No, the message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it.

¹⁵ “Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. ¹⁶ For I command you this day to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy.

- **Death**

Deuteronomy 30:17-18 (NLT), ¹⁷ “But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, ¹⁸ then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.

Something to take home:

C.S. Lewis, in *Mere Christianity*, wrote,

“When the author walks onto the stage, the play is over. God is going to invade, all right; but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else comes crashing in? This time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. That will not be the time for choosing; it will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen, whether we realized it before or not. Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side.”²

Remember, to not make a choice is to make a choice. Choose this day whom you will serve! Don’t leave anything to chance. Choose GOD, and thus, choose life! Choose your way, and thus, choose defeat and destruction! GOD’s desire is that you choose Him so that you really know freedom.

Key Point: *“GOD has given us a choice between life or death. He wants us to choose life!”*

¹ Numbers 20.

² C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (Simon and Schuster Touchstone: New York, New York, 1996), 65–66