

Choose Life  
Deuteronomy 30:15-20  
February 12, 2017

*See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

Forty-three years ago the Supreme Court of the United States handed down the Roe vs. Wade decision that opened the way for legalized abortion on demand. Since then, the number of American babies murdered by legalized abortion is rapidly approaching 60 million. Almost 10 times the number of Jews murdered by Hitler before and during WWII.

Today, there are many groups fighting for the lives of unborn babies. Quite often these groups use the term “choose life.” In our Old Testament reading, we hear Moses encouraging the Israelites to choose life. With these words of Moses, we will look at choosing life in two ways: 1) Choosing life regarding the unborn; 2) Choosing life as our response to God’s love.

The choice we make is a personal choice. It’s personal because no one can make you fight for the lives of the unborn. It’s personal because no one can make you support lawmakers who will work to end abortion. It’s personal because no one can make you choose to follow God instead of following the world. While choosing life is a person choice, our choice is influenced by three agents.

### **Our choice is influenced by the world.**

The choice we make today is the same choice that has faced every human being since Adam and Eve. In reality, there are only two choices; good or evil, life or death. There is no middle ground. Jesus said: *He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters* (Mt 12:30 NIV).

Where does the world stand in regard to this choice? The world is anti-Christ. Our beloved nation is following close behind the world. The world hates Christ and all those who faithfully follow Christ. The world classifies all who would choose life, either by safeguarding the unborn or by living a Godly life, as being ignorant, uninformed, bigoted, and some form of phobic.

Many nations of the world are working hard to remove the influence of Christianity. In America there is a strong effort to discount, and even demonize, Christians and their witness. However, no matter how numerous or powerful the world's influence might be, we have the ability to resist. Jesus gave us the perfect example of holy living in an evil world, and the Holy Spirit will give us the power to do the same – the power to choose life.

### **Our choice is influenced by Satan.**

Although the world laughs at the concept of Satan, he is very real and he is very powerful. His influence guides many of the things the world believes and confesses. One of Satan's most useful weapons is the ability to make people believe he doesn't exist. After all, no one is afraid of a fairy tale.

However, Satan is real. The Old Testament tells us: *One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them* (Job 1:6 NIV).

Jesus said: *Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only* (Mt 4:10 NIV). Jesus told Peter: *Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat* (Lk 22:31 NIV).

In his first letter, that same Peter warns us to: *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour* (1 Pe 5:8 NIV).

Even though the devil is real and he has tremendous powers of influence, we can't excuse our choices with the old Flip Wilson line "The devil made me do it." We are talking about a choice. If the devil can make you do something then you have no choice.

The whole idea of the devil forcing you to do something you don't want to do is a lie. We choose. We don't choose sometimes, we choose every time. The choice is always ours, and we can always make the choice for what is God-pleasing.

James tells us: *Submit yourselves ... to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you* (Jas 4:7 NIV). We possess the power to tell the devil to take a hike. We possess the power to make the right choice for the unborn and to make the right choice for every facet of our daily lives. St John writes: *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome [false spirits], because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world* (1 Jn 4:4 NIV). **We can choose life.**

### **Our choice is influenced by God.**

We worship and follow a God who is unlike any god of the world. We have a God who dearly loves us. We have a God who came to be one of us so he might rescue us from our wrong choices. We have a God who was willing to die for us. He is also a God who will never force his will upon us.

While we have a Savior-God who respects our right to choose, we don't have the right to not choose. We cannot take an undecided position when it comes to matters of right and wrong; matters of good and evil. We cannot wait for someone else to act to save the unborn. We cannot expect someone else to make our decisions regarding loyalty, honesty, justice, forgiveness, and compassion. There are many influences bearing down on the choices we make, but those choices are always personal.

### **Our choice is pressing.**

Just as the Israelites stood on the banks of the Jordan River, looking into the Promised Land, and had to make a choice, so it is with us. Today and every day we are faced with that same choice: Follow the God of our faith or follow the gods of this world. This isn't a choice that can be put off until tomorrow because no one is promised tomorrow.

Every day we hesitate to make a choice to protect the unborn, 3,000 babies die. Every day we make a choice not to follow God, we miss the chance to witness to our faith and maybe help someone else to find his or her way back to the Father. Our choice is personal; our choice is pressing; and our choice must be right.

### **The wrong choice.**

In today's text, Moses told the Israelites: *If your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess* (Dt 30:17-18 NIV).

Scripture is filled with bad choices:  
Lot chose to live in the plain of Sodom.  
King David chose adultery.  
Judas chose the love of money.  
The Jews cried, "Give us Barabbas."

Wrong choices lead to broken hearts, broken dreams, broken lives. Today, a wrong choice might be to turn a deaf ear to the cries of murdered unborn babies. A wrong choice might be to ignore the chance to invite an unbelieving friend or relative to come and meet the God of salvation. A wrong choice might be to set a bad example for your children or for those who are watching you live out your Christian life.

### **The right choice.**

The right choice is always to choose life. After that very stern warning, Moses tells the Israelites: *This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* (Dt 30:19-20 NIV).

The right choice isn't hard to recognize. It has been said that it's not hard to know the right thing to do – the hard part is doing it. God put a small voice inside of each of us to help us choose life. That voice is called a conscience.

In today's reading, God is asking us to choose life. He wants us to choose life for the unborn who are at risk. He wants us to choose life for ourselves by following his direction for our lives. He wants us to choose life for those who don't know his saving love by using any and every opportunity to be the love of Jesus to the world.

The choice is yours. I pray that you choose life.