

The Choices We Make

Deut 11:26-28

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 - "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known.

Introduction:

- A. The Bible is a book primarily about people. In it, the lives of various individuals are used to teach and illustrate either truth and righteousness or rebellion and impiety.
- B. People are the only part of God's creation on earth blessed with the ability to make free-will choices about which path to travel in life.
- C. God sets before man a blessing if we seek after the good and a curse if we seek after our own desires in preference to what God has commanded, then we make the choice of our own free will.
- D. Let's look at some Biblical examples that relate to the choices we make.

I. Noah Chose Obedience To God

- A. The world of Noah's day was very wicked, but instead of listening to the world, Noah chose to listen to God - Gen. 6:5-9, 13-14, 22

Genesis 6:5-9 - Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

Genesis 6:13-14 - Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.

Genesis 6:22 - Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

- B. Because of this choice, Noah was able to save himself and his family - Heb. 11:7

Hebrews 11:7 - By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

- C. In so doing, he serves as an example for us to choose obedience to God's will that we might be saved - 1 Pet. 3:20-21

1 Peter 3:20-21 - who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

II. *Abraham Chose Faithfulness*

A. When God called Abraham to leave Ur, he had a choice - either to go or to stay, and we know what he chose - Gen. 12:1-4

Genesis 12:1-4 - Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

B. It was Abraham's determination to be faithful to God which led him to make this choice - Heb. 11:8-10

Hebrews 11:8-10 - By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

C. Indeed, Abraham's entire life serves as an example to us of a faith which is manifested by an intense loyalty to God's will - Jas. 2:21-24

James 2:21-24 - Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

III. *Joseph Chose Virtue*

A. Joseph had all kinds of difficulties and temptations thrown at him, but he made the choice to maintain his purity - Gen. 39:1-12

Genesis 39:1-12 - Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD'S blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field. So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?" As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her. Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside.

B. While Joseph isn't mentioned in the New Testament like Noah, Abraham, and others, his account is preserved in the Old Testament for us - Rom. 15:4

Romans 15:4 - For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

C. And his choice reminds us what we need to do amid an evil world - 1 Cor. 6:18-20

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 - Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

IV. *Moses Chose Meekness*

A. While some may be more naturally humble than others, meekness is a learned trait, and in the face of Israel's rebellions, Moses chose to be meek – Num 12:1-3

Numbers 12:1-3 - Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman); and they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)

B. Thus, the example of Moses helps us to understand what Jesus wants of us - Matt. 5:5

Matthew 5:5 - "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

C. How did Moses develop meekness? Result of the choices he made to submit to God - Heb. 11:24-27

Hebrews 11:24-27 - By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

V. *Solomon Chose Wisdom*

A. When Solomon was given his choice of any blessing from God, he chose wisdom - 1 Ki. 3:4-14

1 Kings 3:4-14 - The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask what you wish me to give you." Then Solomon said, "You have shown great lovingkindness to Your servant David my father, according as he walked before You in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. "Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted. So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing. God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any

among the kings like you all your days. If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days."

B. This wisdom didn't keep Solomon from making mistakes, but in his search for meaning in life he still reached the proper conclusion about life - Eccl. 2:2-9, 12:13-14

Ecclesiastes 2:2-9 - I said of laughter, "It is madness," and of pleasure, "What does it accomplish?" I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding me wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives. I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees. I bought male and female slaves and I had homeborn slaves. Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men--many concubines. Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me.

Ecclesiastes 2:13-14 - And I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I know that one fate befalls them both.

C. His example reminds us of the need to choose wisdom from above - Jas. 3:13-18

James 3:13-18 - Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

VI. Paul Chose Devotion To God

A. Paul was another person with an important choice to make - Acts 8:3, 9:1-5

Acts 8:3 - But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Acts 9:1-5 - Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,

B. He chose to renounce his sinful past and devote his life to the service of Christ - Phil. 3:4-11

Philippians 3:4-11 - although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of

all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

1. And continued - vs. 12-14

C. Why?

1. He understood, and we need to understand, that God will always reward such a choice

2. If not in this life then in eternity - 2 Tim. 4:6-8

2 Timothy 4:6-8 - For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Conclusion:

A. Or what about the others - The heart of David; The humility of John the Baptist; The courage of Peter; The love of the apostle John; The encouraging words of Barnabas.

B. They were all people, just like you and me, who chose to commit their lives to God.

C. God has given us information about them in the Bible so that we can learn from their examples how to please Him in our lives.

D. Now the question is, what choice will you make?