



Sermon
Rev. Lang Yang

“Choose Life or Death”

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany
St. Michaels Lutheran Church
2-12-17

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Deuteronomy 30:19 “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,” (ESV) This is the word of God. (Cross reference – Genesis 2:17, Deuteronomy 4:1, 6, 26; 11:26; 30:1, 16; 31:28, Jeremiah 21:8)

Illustration “Choose” (Show bag of money, toy, car, and airplane)

We all make choices every single day. We all have already made several choices this morning. We chose to get up, we chose to get dressed, get in our car and come to church. Perhaps you’ve already made the choice of whether or not you are going to listen to the message or not.



What if I ask you, “Do you want a \$100.00 bill or a teddy bear? For an adult, he will choose the \$100.00 but for a child, they will choose the teddy bear. What if I were to ask you again, “Would you like to have a car or an airplane? You probably will choose a car because you don’t know how to fly an airplane. Whether you choose the more expensive items or the less value, all your choosing will have a lasting. The questions for you today is, “Will you choose life or death?”

I. In our Old Testament Lesson, after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel have come to the edge of the Promised Land. They are camped on the east side of the Jordan River. Soon they will cross over under Joshua’s leadership and begin to take possession of the land the Lord promised to their ancestors many generations ago. (Show Moses)



Moses will not be going with them. *He is an old man now and near death.* He brought them out of Egypt and shepherded them through all the long years in the Sinai desert. God has already told him that he cannot go with them into the Promised Land. He has gone as far as he can go. With that in mind, Moses delivers a farewell address to his own people in which he reviews their history to this point, and exhorts them to obey the Lord when they finally cross the Jordan and enter their new homeland. At length he comes to an end. There is yet one further challenge to be made. In just a few simple words he crystallizes the choice

that is before them. He said, “*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,*” (Deuteronomy 30:19) When Moses addressed the Israelites for the last time, he pleaded with them to make the right choice by observing “all the words of this law... Because it is your life” (32:46-47).

Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, in the same way, God's will for us is life. His Word is life. To choose life is to choose God Himself and obey His Word. (Show Major Txajkim Yaaj)



My father "Major Chiakee Yang" had always say when he taught us children about life. He said that in this world people will always said, "*Xaav muaj tsi xaav pluag – Xaav caj tsi xaav tuag* - I want richness and not poor, I want life instead of death." When you look around, the just about all people always want richness and want life instead of death. People want health and wealth and whenever or wherever they want to go, all they have to do is drive, take a plane or cruise and not have to worry about money. How about life? Do you know the difference between eternal life or eternal death?

Those of us that are Christian understood that death is a way to heaven and have eternal life with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But, the unchristian has a different view on death. People are longing to live forever. They want their love one to be with them for a long long time without ever have to say good bye. Most people that I have encounter especially the elderly always say to me, "Pastor, I want to live, I don't want to die." We all know that everyone must die one day and while you are living, you have to make a choice of choosing life – by believing and trusting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior or choose death by trying to hold on to the physical of the world.

- II. If you do not choose life by believing in Jesus, then when you leave this world, a place call hell will be waiting for your soul. (Show Hell)



What is hell like? Scripture describe hell is a place of souls for the wicked, it's a fiery furnace, a place of unquenchable fire, a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth, a place of no rest, a place of condemnation, a place of destruction, a place of separation form God's presence, a place of outer darkness, a place of lake of burning sulfur, and a place for eternal suffering. (Show Heaven)



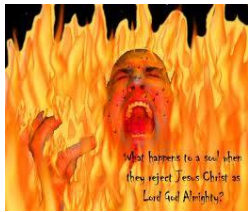
Or you rather choose life and be in heaven. So, what is heaven like? Scripture describe heaven is a place of paradise, a place where the road are pave with gold, a place where there is no sickness, no death, no tears, no mourning, free from sin and a place of everlasting joy with Christ forever and ever. Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, do you choose life or death? Moses said, "Today you have a choice – choose life for blessing or choose death for curse."

Many people thought that they choose the life of the world that bring them worldly joy and as long as no one know what they have done. There was a men who claim to be a Christian. He had a wife with three children. He hop from one bar to another bar every night. And on the weekend, he stay late with his friend without coming home. Every now and then he would date others women just to satisfied his need. If you look at this situation, would you say that he had choose death instead of life? (Show bad inside)



If the men continue to treat his family this way and not willing to repent, where do you think he will end up? He may appear to be a find husband on the outside, but on the inside, he carry the sin that he continue to break God's commandment. This is like a fruit that from the outside, it looks delicious and tasty but the inside are rotten that it has to be thrown out. (Show burning in hell)

- III. If you don't choose life and choose death then you will definitely end up in hell where constant burning



for eternity. If you don't repent of your sin, worshipping idols or others god then this will not lead you to life. You need to put your faith to the true God, the Father whom created the world, the Son whom came to save you from the sin of the world, and the Holy Spirit whom continue to help you to maintain your faith. You cannot have life unless you believe in Jesus. You cannot go to heaven except through Jesus. This is why Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No*

one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6) Jesus said again, *"...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* (John 10:10) **(Show Decision?)**



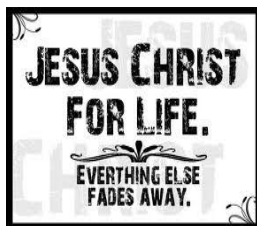
Making decision can be difficult at time. But for the decision of life and death, it should not be hard at all. Moses asked the Israelites to choose wisely. He concluded and said, *"and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."* (Deuteronomy 3:20) There was a story about a pastor remembering one of his classmate. **(Show men sitting in jail)**



While preaching one day to the convicts in the penitentiary of a certain state, a minister saw in the audience a man whose face seemed familiar. At the close of the sermon he went to the convict's cell and the following conversation is reported to have ensued: "I remember you very well, sir," said the prisoner. "We were boys in the same neighborhood; we went to the same school; sat beside each other on the same bench, and then my prospects were as bright as yours. But, at

the age of fourteen, you made choice of the service of God and became a Christian. I refused to come to Christ, but made choice of the world and sin. And now you are a happy and honored minister of the gospel, while I am a wretched outcast. I have served ten years in this penitentiary, and am to be a prisoner here for *life.*"(*Florida Baptist Witness*)

(Show Jesus Christ for life)



Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, you know what it mean "No mean No and Yes mean Yes" for choosing life or death. "Choosing life" involves loving God. "Choosing life" means to walk in God's ways. "Choosing life" means to keep God's commandments. *"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."* (Deuteronomy 6:5) So Choose life in Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is life. Amen.

No may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep our heart and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.