



Sermon, Sunday September 4, 2022 “Choose Life for You and Your Descendants”

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 30:15-20 ¹⁵“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶If 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. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I 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. ¹⁹I 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, ²⁰loving 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.”

Introduction: Dalgona game

Brothers and sisters in the Christ!

Have you ever watched a Korean drama called 'Squid Game'? It aired on Netflix recently and was very popular. The main character of this series is Ki-hoon Sung, a driver who is divorced and in debt. He is invited to a series of children's games for a chance to win a big prize. He is taken to an unknown place, where he meets 455 other players who owe a lot to the game. Participants will participate in the game with their lives as collateral. Players participating in the game will die if they lose the game.

In the drama 'Squid Game', a children's game called 'Dalgona Game' appears. Dalgona game is a game where you cut the symbols engraved on the candy into various shapes (circle, triangle, star or umbrella) without breaking the delicate dessert. Participants feel relieved when they choose a circle or triangle shaped candy, and despair when they choose a star or umbrella shape. Because it is difficult to properly cut the symbol engraved on the candy when a difficult shape is selected. What shape you choose is important because the result of that choice leads to life or death.

As I was preparing today's message, the 'Dalgona Game' from the drama 'Squid Game' came to mind. Our lives are determined by the consequences of our choices. So, we must be careful when choosing something and choose one that can bring us good results. The Lord is telling us what we must choose through Moses in the text.

As the leader of Israel, Moses worked hard with hope for the land of Canaan for 40 years in the wilderness, but he could not enter the land of Canaan by God's command. So, with the land of Canaan in front of him, he gives a farewell sermon to the Israelites in the plains of Moab, this is the book of Deuteronomy. Today's article is part of them.

So, in today's text, what is Moses saying about the people of Israel and what we should choose for our lives?



Body: Three things we must choose for the blessing of life

Deuteronomy 30:15 and 30:19 says, “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity.” (v.15), “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.” (v.19)

Christians should be able to choose ‘life and prosperity’ for us and our descendants, not ‘death and adversity’. In the Bible, there are stories of people who have failed because of their wrong choices.

In the Old Testament, Esau and Lot are representative. Esau sells the birthright given by God to his brother Jacob to eat a bowl of red bean porridge to satisfy his hunger. So, Esau was excluded from God's line of faith, and Jacob took Esau’s place in the line of faith. (Hebrews 12:16)

Also, Lot, the nephew of Abraham, the father of faith, chooses Sodom and Gomorrah, which seem fertile, as places for his dwelling, considering only the realities that he can see right away. But instead of bringing abundance to Lot's family, Sodom and Gomorrah bring destruction. The stories of Esau and Lot above shows us that we must hold onto the word of the Lord and choose the right thing, not the reality we see right now.

Then, what did the Lord tell the people of Israel and us to choose for a blessed life? **Deuteronomy 30:20** says, “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.”

This verse tells us to choose three things for a blessed life. The first is to love the Lord. The second is to hear the word of the Lord and do it. The third is to rely only on the Lord who is life and not on idols.

In fact, we have read and heard many similar passages in the Bible. However, sometimes we do not give the above verse the importance it must have in our lives. I said last week in my message that it is the word of the Lord, not money, clothes, food, or a house, that guarantees our safety. But did you agree with me? Or did you disagree? If we do not agree that it is the Word of the Lord that assures our safety, why do we disagree?

Let's go back to our reality and think about it. Anyone in the family who is sick and can't go to the hospital because they don't have money will think that money can help keep their family safe. Amid the ravages of the ongoing war, the people of Ukraine will strongly believe that a strong national defense will be able to protect them from Russian aggression. Furthermore, people in poor countries who are dying from lack of food right now will think that food will guarantee their lives. There are too many examples of similar realities.

The reason we do not agree well with the words of the Bible is that the problems we face are too concrete, whereas the words of the Bible sound abstract and therefore do not reach our hearts directly.

If so, is the promise of Deuteronomy in today's text a lie? The Bible is adamantly against this. This is because life belongs to God, and humans cannot know the origin and essence of life. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and created life. Therefore, the source of life is God. We cannot achieve perfection in our lives without God, the source of life.

So, the Lord tells us to choose three things for a blessed life as in verse 20.

The first is to love the Lord. But what does it mean to love the Lord? **In the Gospels, an expert in the law comes to Jesus and asked; “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (Matthew 22:36) Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."**



The disciples of Jesus experienced the Lord's sacrificial love through Jesus' death on the cross and the fulfillment of the promise through the Lord's resurrection. Through the word of the Lord, we too have experienced His love and the hope of resurrection. If we have experienced the Lord's love and there is hope in the resurrection, we will be born again as beings who love the Lord and our neighbors by doing the Lord's words.

So, Christians inevitably choose to hear the Word and do it. And when we love the Lord and serve our neighbors, our love bears more fruit. The abundance that love for the Lord and neighbor has brought us is a precious thing that no other can fill. Thus, Christians experience deep gratitude, joy, and praise in their hearts.

However, we must be on the lookout here. That is, we must preserve our inner holiness so that our relationship with the Lord will always remain intimate. So, the Lord asks the people of Israel and us to make choices that depend only on the Lord and not on idols.

We know that there are many idols in the world that can tempt us. The temptation is so strong and sweet. It is impossible for us to overcome this through our ability and our will. We will always fall for this temptation. However, if we live each day with the help of the Holy Spirit in a deep relationship with the Lord, we can withstand the temptations of this world. And the result is freedom and rest in life. May we experience freedom and rest more abundantly in our lives.

Conclusion: The most blessed way for us and our descendants

Now let's summarize today's sermon. My dear brothers and sisters! We live in a world like the people of Israel who experienced life in the wilderness and the suffering and shame of the Babylonian captivity. Our daily lives are full of immediate challenges, concerns, and questions about the world.

Of course, we must specifically address the problems we face. But no matter what problem we solve, we will continue to have another problem. Also, no matter what we achieve in life, we are not satisfied and will have to work hard to achieve something else.

But please don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that life is futile. Nor is it to say that all the efforts we make in life are in vain. I'm talking about a way to solve the essential problems of our lives.

What is important for us is to gain true life by loving God, the Lord of life, as we said today. Christians are those who have experienced the ultimate resurrection life that will happen in the end through the cross and resurrection of Jesus. So, Christians have received resurrection as a promise, and they hope for it.

Today's text, Deuteronomy 30:20, clearly states the attitude of life that the Christian should take. To love Jesus Christ, to obey His words, and to depend on Him. This is the most blessed way for us and for our children. I hope you enjoy such a blessing.

