

## **“CHOOSE LIFE”**

### **ISSUE**

God commands us to choose life, and we can do that by always obeying His commandments and remaining loyal to Him whatever situation we face in life.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Make the brethren understand that as God's chosen ones we should not imitate the way the people of this world deal with the severe problems that they face.
2. Teach that God Himself wants us to choose life because our salvation depends on it.
3. Encourage the members of the Church to imitate Christ who chose life by obeying and remaining loyal to God.
4. Inspire the brethren that no matter how severe their problems are, they must never stop obeying because God will not abandon them.

### **EXORDIUM**

There is no doubt that Judgment Day is very near. On that great day, we, members of the Church Of Christ, are the ones who are certain to be saved. However, as we journey in this world, we encounter many obstacles or hindrances that can prevent us from receiving that great blessing. There are also many problems that trouble us in our daily lives. It is vital that in such situations, we must learn to decide wisely and correctly. Why?

### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS TO MAN WHEN HE IS TROUBLED BY MANY PROBLEMS?**

1. *Panic-stricken* ..... *Ps. 55:3 REB*

<sup>3</sup> I am panic-stricken at the hostile shouts, at the shrill clamour of the wicked; for they heap trouble on me and revile me in their fury.

*(The Revised English Bible. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1989)*

- When there are many threats from the enemies, man is usually panic-stricken, uneasy, and troubled. Who is the foremost enemy of our faith? The devil, and it has many schemes and instruments that it uses to destroy our hope for salvation.
- What usually happens to man when he is panic-stricken and troubled? He makes wrong decisions. Hence, when beset by serious problems, there are people who choose and turn to vices, such as getting drunk and using prohibited drugs. Others go with bad companions who do influence them to commit evil deeds that further aggravate their problems.
- As people who belong to the nation of God, should we be overcome by troubles?

Q. What do the apostles teach us if we are experiencing all kinds of troubles?

2. *We should not lose hope because God will not abandon us* ..... *II Cor. 4:8 CEB & 9 EXB*

<sup>8</sup> **CEB** We are experiencing all kinds of trouble, but we aren't crushed. We are confused, but we aren't depressed.

*(Common English Bible. Nashville, Tennessee: www.CommonEnglishBible.com, 2011)*

<sup>9</sup> **EXB** We are persecuted [pursued], but God does not leave us [not abandoned/left behind]. We are hurt [struck down; knocked over] sometimes, but we are not destroyed.

*(The [Expanded] Bible. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2011)*

- According to Apostle Paul, as people who are journeying in this world, we often experience all kinds of troubles; we get confused, we face persecutions, and there are also times when we are knocked over. However, as members of the Church Of Christ who are on the way to salvation, what should we not allow to happen to us? We must not allow such troubles to destroy us and cause us to fall into hopelessness. Instead, what should we bear in mind in the face of many and intense persecutions? God will not abandon us.
- Thus, whatever we encounter in this world, as servants of God, we should not give up; even though sometimes we get knocked down, we should get back on our feet again and continue moving forward.

Q. What should we firmly believe that God will do whenever we are facing all kinds of problems?

A. *Teach and counsel us* ..... Ps. 32:8 NIV

<sup>8</sup> I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

*(The Holy Bible: New International Version. Colorado Springs, Colorado: International Bible Society, 1984)*

- Although we cannot avoid experiencing problems, still, what give us courage are God's promises to us, His servants. What are those promises? When we are troubled and in difficult situations, He will instruct us. If we get confused, He will teach us in the way we should go. If we are being persecuted and in the grip of disappointment, He will counsel us with His loving eye on us.
- What is being referred to as the counsel of God that He will use to teach us how to face problems? Those are His words (Ps. 107:11). On what occasion are we taught the words of God? During our worship services. Thus, the worship service is vital because on occasions such as this one we receive the counsel and guidance of God so that in the face of many problems we will not get confused, and we will not make wrong decisions like what others do.

## **I. WHAT DOES GOD TEACH TO GUIDE US NOT MAKE THE WRONG CHOICE WHATEVER WE ENCOUNTER IN THIS LIFE?**

1. *"Choose life"* ..... Deut. 30:15 & 19 GW

<sup>15</sup> Today I offer you life and prosperity or death and destruction.

<sup>19</sup> I call on heaven and earth as witnesses today that I have offered you life or death, blessings or curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants will live.

*(GOD'S WORD Translation. Holiday, Florida: Green Key Books, 2006)*

- God Himself is the One who told us that we ought to choose life. Even to His ancient people, that was what He taught them to choose, and even now that is what we should also choose: life, not death. If we choose life, what benefits will it bring us? Prosperity and blessings. Who should lead the families of God's people in choosing life and blessings? The parents. Thus it was stated, "Choose life so that you and your descendants will live."
- This should call the attention of all parents. All the members of your household should be united in making the right decision so that none of you will suffer death and curse. You should choose life.

Q. How do we choose life?

2. *Choosing life* ..... *Deut. 30:20 GW*

<sup>20</sup> Love the Lord your God, obey him, and be loyal to him. This will be your way of life, and it will mean a long life for you in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

- To choose life is to obey and remain loyal to God. What good will obedience and loyalty to God bring? The confident hope for life in the land promised by God. What land is promised to us, members of the Church Of Christ? The Holy City wherein the life we will have there is very different from the life we have now in this world. Why? Because in the Holy City there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, no more pain, for those things have passed away. (Rev. 21:1-4).
- Now that we are very near to the fulfillment of these promises of God, we should make a firm decision: that we will obey His commands and be loyal only to Him, and we will not allow anything to take them away from us.

**II. WHO CAN WE CITE AS EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO CHOSE DEATH AND WHO IS AN EXAMPLE OF ONE WHO CHOSE BLESSINGS?**

1. *Those who chose death* ..... *Gen. 3:1-6 GNB*

<sup>1</sup> Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?" <sup>2</sup> "We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden," the woman answered, <sup>3</sup> "except the tree in the middle of it. God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die." <sup>4</sup> The snake replied, "That's not true; you will not die. <sup>5</sup> God said that because he knows that when you eat it, you will be like God and know what is good and what is bad." <sup>6</sup> The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, and he also ate it.  
(The Good News Bible in Today's English Version, Second Edition © 1992. Manila, Philippines: Philippines Bible Society, 1995)

- To choose death was the decision made by Adam and Eve, the first man and woman created by God, who were placed in the garden of Eden where they enjoyed a good life. What was the strict instruction of God to them so that they would remain in the garden of Eden and continue enjoying their life there? They should not eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. But, when the tempter or the devil came, did the couple make the right decision? No. They chose to disobey the command of God, and they ate the fruit of the tree that God forbade them to eat. What did their disobedience amount to? It amounts to being disloyal to God. Thus, what happened to them as a result of their disobedience? They were cast out of the garden of Eden, and their life was cursed. And from then on, man has been experiencing death and has been separated from the life that God wanted him to have.
- What does this prove to us? Disobeying God's commands is equivalent to choosing death, and this has a corresponding punishment or curse.
- Why did the first man and woman still choose death and curse when their life in the garden was already good? Because the temptation of the devil prevailed over them. Did you notice the tactic used by the devil against them? The devil overturned the teaching of God, muddled it, and made it appear that the teaching of God is not true.

- **Thus, when someone is trying to confuse us or make us doubt the teachings of God that we received, such as the importance of attending the congregational worship services, helping in the work of sharing our faith, offering with all our might, and submitting ourselves completely to the Church Administration, we should be wary and vigilant because the devil is using someone to deceive us.**
- What was another tactic that the devil used that deceived the first man and woman? **He tempted them with something that was beautiful and good in their eyes, but was against the command of God.** Thus we should learn from what happened to them. **We should not pick or grab the things being offered to us just because we want them and we perceive them to be opportunities for us because the devil might be using those to tempt us.** For example, a job that pays well but can prevent you from carrying out your duties in the Church or prevent you from attending the worship services; someone courting you who have the qualities that you are looking for but is not a member of the Church, knowledge or an ideology that promotes something that go against the teachings of the Bible, and the like. Those things should not deceive us because, if that happens, it only shows that we are disloyal to God, and we have chosen death.

Q. On the other hand, who is a perfect example of one who chose life?

2. *One who chose blessing* .....Matt. 4:2-4 & 8-11 GNB

<sup>2</sup> After spending forty days and nights without food, Jesus was hungry. <sup>3</sup> Then the Devil came to him and said, "If you are God's Son, order these stones to turn into bread." <sup>4</sup> But Jesus answered, "The scripture says, 'Human beings cannot live on bread alone, but need every word that God speaks.'"

<sup>8</sup> Then the Devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in all their greatness. <sup>9</sup> "All this I will give you," the Devil said, "if you kneel down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus answered, "Go away, Satan! The scripture says, 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him!'" <sup>11</sup> Then the Devil left Jesus; and angels came and helped him.

- We should imitate the Lord Jesus Christ because He chose life despite the different attempts of the devil to deceive Him. How did Christ do that? He did not hold onto His ability but to the teachings of God. What did obedience to the teachings and loyalty to God bring to Christ? He was not deceived, He did not sin, and He was able to choose life.
- Hence, we should not listen to and obey just anyone. We should listen to and obey only the teachings of God. Who was entrusted by God to teach us His words? The Church Administration; thus, we should listen to and obey the Church Administration (Col. 1:25 HCSB). **Our submission and obedience to the Church Administration is our submission and loyalty to God** (Heb. 13:17; I John 1:3).
- What is one of the teachings of God that Christ firmly held on to? The teaching written in the Scriptures, "Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him." Hence, that is also what the Church Administration always teaches and reminds us. The teaching written in the Bible that we should not forsake is attending "our" meeting for worship or our congregational worship service (Heb. 10:25 CEV). Take note that we should attend "our" worship services in the Church Of Christ and not the gathering or meeting being held by those expelled from the Church or those outside the Church. Thus, if we are invited to attend "their" meetings or gatherings we must not join them. What they are doing is not the true worship because those who are outside the true Church cannot render to God the true worship. Let us learn from the examples set by Christ before us. We must hold on tightly to the teachings of God for us not to be deceived. By doing so, we can make the right choice, just like what the Lord Jesus Christ did.

### III. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH FOR US NOT BE OVERCOME BY TROUBLES?

1. *Look forward to the joys in heaven ..... II Cor. 4:18 TLB*

<sup>18</sup> So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.

*(The Living Bible: Paraphrased. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971)*

- Let us follow the instruction of the apostles that we should not look at the things that we see right now. What do we see in this world? The troubles all around us. Instead, to what should we look forward? The things that we have not yet seen or the joys in heaven. How about the troubles in life? They will soon be over; meanwhile, the joys to come will last forever. How should we look at the things that we are going through? **Those are just trials. God wants us to prove to Him that despite all of those things we will still choose and obey Him.**

Q. What should we ask from God so we can overcome the troubles and problems and remain in our hope of receiving the everlasting life?

2. *What we should ask for ..... Ps. 57:1-3 GNB*

<sup>1</sup> Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful, because I come to you for safety. In the shadow of your wings I find protection until the raging storms are over. <sup>2</sup> I call to God, the Most High, to God, who supplies my every need. <sup>3</sup> He will answer from heaven and save me; he will defeat my oppressors. God will show me his constant love and faithfulness.

- Let us implore God to be merciful to us, that He may draw near to us and protect us until the dangers are over. But, whom will God protect? Those who call to Him with steadfast hope that He will be the One to supply their every need. Thus, we have nothing to worry about no matter how severe our problems may be because God has the solution to all of them. What should we always keep in mind for us to always receive the love and help of God? His constant love and faithfulness are for the people who are faithful or loyal to Him.

### CONCLUSION

In this time when there are so many problems and hardships, turmoil is everywhere, and the schemes of the devil to snatch us from salvation are all around us, this is the best opportunity for us to prove our loyalty to God. Although the situations we are going through in life may change, our resolve must remain unmoved. We will still obey and zealously serve God. If we do so, we make the right choice: we choose the everlasting life.

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