

Week 3 (Aug. 22-28)

We Have A Choice, So Choose Life

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

¹⁵ “See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

Commentary:

God's purpose in creating the human race is to have sons and daughters who can freely love, obey and praise him. This is the reason for our freedom: we are to *choose* the way of faith, of obedience, of love. But (you might ask), in giving us freedom, isn't God taking a rather big risk? In fact, has not the story of our first parents shown that freedom could be used (and is still being used) in defiance of God? Yes, but God wouldn't have it otherwise, for the alternatives are either a race of robots ... or no human race at all.

The story of Israel – and of God giving the Ten Commandments to Israel, which is the context of this passage from Deuteronomy – is the story of Adam and Eve all over again. Indeed, it is *our* story. God creates a people out of his goodness and love; he rescues them from slavery; he gathers them and calls them *his* special people; and now he gives them a way of life which guarantees them fullness of life if they live it faithfully.

And here is the amazing thing: the covenant-making God can only invite, not compel. He points us in the right direction, but does not force us to take it. The **People of the Covenant** cannot be forced to obey; one cannot force another person to love. God presents to us two ways of living (cf. Psalm 1), and spells out the

consequences of our choice. But it is clear which is the better choice: *Choose life, that you may live.*

For Reflection:

1. First, thank God for enabling you, at the time of your conversion and new-found relationship with him, to choose to follow him. That choice (whether it was made years ago, or more recently) has made the biggest difference: it has *saved* you. It was *your* choice, and it was also *his grace* which enabled you to make that choice. Reflect on that, and thank God for it.
2. Do a *lectio divina* on this passage.
3. Our daily life as Christians always presents us with two ways of living: to live for God, or to live otherwise. “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners ... but [whose] delight is in the law of the Lord” (Psalm 1:1-2). Jesus says: “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (Matthew 7:13-14)
 - Do I consistently “delight in the law of the Lord” and choose to walk the “hard and narrow way” that leads to life?
 - What are my particular pitfalls? What are the “easy ways” of the world and of the fleshly life that I am especially vulnerable to?
 - End by asking the Lord for his grace to keep on keeping you on the right path that leads to life.

Scripture-Prayer:

“I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure.

For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your godly one see the Pit.

You show me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy, in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.” (*Psalm 16:8-11*)

Intercession:

Let's pray for the children of *Ligaya* members, especially those in the YA and CYA age-range: That, at this important stage of their young life, they might choose to follow the Source of life, our Lord Jesus Christ.