

A Deadly Choice

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of making a choice about Jesus, either to accept him as Lord and Savior or to reject him and go our own way, with the consequences of that choice having eternal implications.

Duration: 31:20

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:19, Joshua 24:15, Matthew 27:22, Hebrews 10:26-31

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Personal Responsibility"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of making the right choice regarding Jesus Christ, highlighting the biblical theme of choosing between life and death. It explores the consequences of our choices, drawing parallels from historical events like Adam and Eve's decision in the Garden of Eden and the people's choice to crucify Jesus over Barabbas. The message stresses the personal responsibility each individual has in deciding their stance towards Jesus and the eternal impact of that choice.

Transcript

Don't forget next Sunday, change your clocks. We do this, we do change in the fall because it gives you an extra hour of sleep. In the spring, we ignore it.

We're not going to take away, the government want to take away an hour from your sleep, but not us. We'll let you sleep on in the spring, but some people get mixed up because we do switch it in the fall and we do get the extra hour sleep. So also we do have our latest Calvary Chapel magazine.

It just came off the press and it's free to use. So we encourage you take one with you and just enjoy finding out what's going on through the Calvary Chapel ministries around the world. It's a great, great magazine, full color and just fascinating articles of the work of God's spirit through Calvary Chapel around the world.

Then also we have voter guides for you and this is just to help you to understand the position of the various people who are running for office. It also deals with the, what do you call it, the propositions. Yes, thank you.

So it sort of goes into explaining what they are and so that you can have an intelligent vote. You know what you're voting for and so you can't always just tell by the ads that come over the radio or in the newspapers, but this will just really lays it on the line what you're actually voting for so that you can give an

intelligent vote on these things. So we just encourage you to take one of those and look it over and if you want to use it as a guide for your voting, that's what the purpose is to guide you and to understand just what it is that you're voting for.

So we encourage you to do that. Let's turn now in our bibles to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 30 and our scripture reading today will begin with verse 11 and go to the end of the chapter. So I'll read the 11th and the odd numbered verses and we ask you to join together as you read the even numbered verses.

Shall we stand as we read the word of God. For this which I commend thee this day, and it not be hidden from thee, neither is it far off, neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it. See I have set before thee this day life and good and death and evil, but if but if thine heart turn away so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and shall worship other gods and serve them, I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.

Therefore choose life that both you and your descendants may live. Let's pray. Father we thank you that you have given to us the capacity of choice so that today we can choose life or we can choose death and that you do allow us Lord to make that choice of our own destiny.

We pray father that as we consider the responsibility of choice that we will seek to make the right choices that we might live Lord the life that you would have us to live life eternal life life in fellowship with you. Bless we pray Lord open our hearts to hear your truth in Jesus name amen. You may be seated.

Well as we continue our journey through the bible this week we've come to Matthew 26 through 28. We finished the book of Matthew this week and so tonight we invite you to join with us as we continue this exciting journey beginning now through the new testament the book of Matthew complete tonight. This morning we'd like to draw your attention to the 27th chapter of Matthew verse 22 where Pilate said unto them what shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ and they all said unto him let him be crucified.

God when he created man created him a self-determinant being that is God has given to us the gift of choice. I can choose my own destiny but for choice to be valid there's got to be something to choose and for choice to be valid there has to be the respect or the honoring of my choice. So God has given the choice life or death.

He is honoring the choice that I make I can choose life and live in fellowship with him or I can choose to rebel against him and I can choose death. Oftentimes people make wrong choices but because God has given to us the capacity of choice he honors the choices even when they are wrong. Our choices often have awesome consequences.

Many people make foolish choices that can be very costly sometimes deadly. Thus the wise counsel is be careful of the choices that you make. Make certain that it is the right choice because wrong choices can be and often are fatal.

So the Bible gives us illustrations of people making their choices. It begins very early with Adam and Eve there in the Garden of Eden. We read that the Garden of Eden was filled with edible fruit trees and God said to Adam and Eve of the fruit of all of the trees you may freely eat with one exception the tree that is there in the middle of the garden.

You're not to eat of the fruit of that tree for in the day that you do you will surely die. Now we do read that there was a another tree there in the garden and it was called the tree of life and to eat of this tree would guarantee living forever. So when Adam and Eve were there in the garden they had the choice what tree will they partake of and foolishly they chose to eat of the tree that would bring death and so Adam and Eve ate of that tree and brought death for by one man death entered in the world and death passed into all men for all sin.

God said to the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 30 15.

See I have set before you this day life and death in that I command you to love the Lord your God to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments and statutes and his judgments that you may live and multiply and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you go in to possess but if your heart turns away so that you will not hear and you are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them I declare unto you this day that you shall surely perish and that you shall not prolong your days in the land that you pass over Jordan to possess and I call heaven and earth to bear record this day against you that I have set before you life and death blessing and cursing therefore choose life that you and your children may live but we read that they chose death instead it is a mystery to me why

when men are given the choice of life or death that so many of them choose the path of death rather than the path of life later in the history of the children of Israel as they were now dwelling in the land that God had promised to them Joshua the leader of the people stood before them and said there in Joshua 24 God has given you a land for which you did not labor cities which you did not build you enjoy the fruit of the vineyards and the olive orchards which you did not plant now therefore fear the Lord serve him in sincerity and in truth and put away the gods which your father served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt and serve Jehovah and if it seems evil unto you to serve Jehovah then choose you this day whom you will serve but as for me and my house we will serve Jehovah

now note you are serving someone either God or Satan and you have that choice of which you will serve in our text we find the people making the choice of actually taking death when they had the choice of life or death they chose death now Jesus has been brought before the Roman governor Pilate to be sentenced to death and Pilate is put in a very difficult position for on one side he knows that the charges against Jesus are trumped up charges there in verse 18 for he knew that for envy they had delivered him he knew that Jesus was not guilty of these charges his wife was urging him to not to surrender to the will of the mob she said that she had had and suffered things in a dream because of this whole situation he knows that Jesus is innocent he calls him a just person he said I'm

innocent of the blood of this just person on the other hand he realizes that he cannot prevail against the unruly mob that was calling for the crucifixion of Jesus and that a tumult was being created among the people and so he had attempted a compromise he had said to them you know we have this one evil prisoner Barabbas guilty of murder he's a wicked man and at this time of the year I'm to release a man free to you which one do you want me to release Jesus or Barabbas giving them the choice between a man who is the ultimate picture of good and a man who is the ultimate picture of evil choose which of the two do you want me to release free in our society and to his amazement and dismay the people cried out release unto us Barabbas and he said to them then what shall I do with Jesus who is

called the Messiah and they cried out let him be crucified so his attempts at compromise failed completely and the mob called for the release of Barabbas and the blood of an innocent man they said let it be upon

us and on our children this all-important question asked by Pilate as they called for the release of Barabbas what shall I then do with Jesus who is called the Messiah and I would like to suggest to you that this question is one that every person of normal intelligence who has ever been born must answer this question for themselves though it was asked by Pilate and it was one that Pilate had to make the choice so it is something that the same question is asked to you and you have to make your choice what will you do with Jesus who is called the Messiah so uh answer it a good

reminder if you have a cell phone turn it off okay it was not something that Pilate as a Roman judge had to decide it is also a decision that you as an individual must decide no one can wash their hands of this issue you cannot escape from making your choice concerning Jesus everyone makes their choice either one way or the other not to accept him is to reject him as your savior not to believe that he is the son of God is to believe that he was a liar a deceiver and if you're more kindly disposed he was just a poor deluded soul but you cannot be neutral concerning Jesus not to make the choice is to make a choice a negative choice against him Jesus said he that is not for me is against me so not to be for him is to be against him again it comes down to the choice between life and death the

bible tells us he that believes on the son has life he that believes not the son shall not see life but the wrath of God abides on him so believing is a matter of choice whatsoever excuses you might seek to formulate some of you have chosen not to believe in Jesus or because of the powerful evidence through the fulfilled prophecies there are many of you and most of you who have chosen this day to believe that he is indeed the son of God but in the final analysis it is a choice that each of you have made for yourself but there's an interesting twist to this whole story though Pilate was a Roman judge and was called upon for the decision the decision that he made did not really determine the destiny of Jesus Jesus had to die he came to the world for the purpose of dying for our sins he had

declared over and over again for this cause I came into this world and he came to die for our sins and that was a foregone kind of an issue and and thus Pilate really didn't determine the destiny of Jesus in the choice that he made to turn him over for crucifixion but what he did determine was his own destiny the destiny of Jesus was foretold it was a foregone kind of a conclusion but his destiny was determined by his choice and this is the interesting thing your choice today doesn't really affect Jesus he is who he is that will not change and and your choice has nothing to do with who he is or what he is but your choice has everything to do with your own destiny the bible assures that Jesus is the king of kings he is the lord of lords the bible tells us that one day every knee will bow

and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is lord to the glory of God the father the interesting twist is that even though you are the one judging him your judgment does not determine his future but it determines your future I've always had trouble with the story of Adam and Eve I cannot understand when they had the choice to eat of the tree of life or the choice to eat of the tree that promised death why they would choose to eat of that tree that promised death rather than of the tree that would promise eternal life it would seem to me that the decision would be a no-brainer that they would just automatically make the right choice maybe that's troubled you too how could they be so foolish as to choose death over life and yet we see the same thing repeated over and over today you

see God has given to you the choice of life eternal life in his kingdom or eternal separation from him which the scriptures call the second death and for the life of me I can't understand why people would opt for the second the question what shall I do with Jesus who is called the messiah they cried out crucify him Pilate tried to reason with him he said why what evil has he done but note they just cried louder crucify him they

could give no rational reason why so they just blindly cried louder I'm certain that you can give no rational reason to reject the gift of eternal life that God is offering you today through Jesus Christ if you will just but accept him as the lord of your life Pilate did not want to take the responsibility of the death of Jesus and so we see him washing his hands

but the mob cried his blood be upon us and on our children I'm certain that because of in less than 40 years Jerusalem was ravaged by the Roman army the populace was slain or taken captive back to Rome and I'm certain that they would rue the foolish choice that they made of rejecting Jesus as messiah today unfortunately most people make the decision without really examining fully the evidence if a person says I do not believe in the Bible or Jesus and you ask them why they'll usually give you an irrational answer or no answer at all those who choose to reject Jesus Christ as their savior today face a future that is worse than death in Hebrews 10 26 it is described if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth there remains no more sacrifice for sins but a

certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries of God he that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses how much worse do you suppose the punishment will be for those that have trodden underfoot the son of God who have counted the blood of the covenant whereby he was sanctified an unholy thing and have done despite to the spirit of grace for we know him who said vengeance is mine I will repay saith the Lord and again the Lord will judge his people and then the author of Hebrews said it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God but you see that's your choice and with choice comes responsibility you are responsible for the choices that you make and again today for you that are sort of in the valley of

decision I'm challenging you to make your choice today is Jesus truly the son of God is he what he said he was did he come to die for the sins of mankind have you received him as your savior and as your Lord the choice that you make yes he is I believe or I doubt it I don't really believe it I doubt that he is all that he said he was I think that he was maybe deluded maybe just a liar maybe just a little insane visions of grandeur what will you do with Jesus who is called the Messiah will you allow him to become the Lord of your life or will you resist him and go your own way your choice you're responsible for the choice that you make and it is my prayer that God will help you to make the right choice today father we thank you that you have given to us this capacity of choice and as many

today are making their choices all today are making their choices one way or the other for to choose not to accept you is to choose to reject you to choose not to believe is to choose or we choose to believe but Lord it is a choice that we make and we're responsible for those decisions that we make help I pray father those that are in the valley of decision today may this be the day long remembered because they made the right choice to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to live Lord as you would have us to live a life that is pleasing to you and so Lord we ask even now work by your spirit in each of our hearts and we thank you for it in Jesus name amen shall we stand the pastors are down here at the front and they're here for the purpose of

praying with you praying for you today if you would like to make that choice of receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior then I would encourage you come on down and just talk with them and let them pray with you and just open up your heart to what God wants to do in your life today and so may this be that day that you make that choice that will determine your eternal destiny with him in his kingdom the Lord bless thee and keep thee the Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee and be gracious unto thee the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace a blessing

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