Choose Life

By Doy Moyer

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” (Deut 30:19-20)

God gives life. He breathed into man the “breath of life” to make him a living entity (Gen 2:7), then put Adam and Eve in a garden containing the “tree of life.” As we know, the consequence of sin is death. The horror of sin is seen in the fact that it results in everything opposite of what God wanted for us. Yet, in order to preserve our free will, he allows us to have that choice. He doesn't want anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). Why? Because through repentance we can once again find life.

Life has always been precious in the sight of God. He underscored this by His prohibition of eating “flesh with its life, its blood” (Gen 9:4; cf. Lev 17:11, 14). He further highlighted the importance of life after the flood by showing that when one man unjustly takes the life of another, “by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man” (vs. 6). It may seem odd on the one hand that life’s value is demonstrated by what we call capital punishment, but when a man commits murder, the only viable price he can pay is his own life. Yet even here is where the mercy of God is sometimes found. God Himself may allow a murderer to live, yet with severe consequences (e.g., Cain, David).

With a sin-worn world, death has become the norm. It is that contrast, however, between life and death that underlines how significant the life is that God offers us all. Physical life will only be temporary, but eternal life -- how can we begin to put a price on that?

We can’t put a price on the eternal, but God did. In order to pay this price, the blood of bulls and goats, or even of normal human beings for that matter, could not come close to what was needed. It was only through the precious blood of Jesus that eternal life can be offered to us. “...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14)

Jesus Christ is life. This truth is one of the great themes of the Gospel of John. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). So, Life and Light are connected here, just as darkness and death are connected (the second death is outer darkness). Since Jesus is life, then eternal life is given to those who believe (3:14ff). For the thirsty believer who drinks of the water of life offered by Jesus, that water “will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (4:14). They will be raised to a “resurrection of life” (5:29) because they have partaken of the “bread of life” come down from heaven (ch. 6). Because of who He is, Jesus, as the Light of world, can offer us life (8:12); He can offer us abundant life (10:10) because He is the “resurrection and the life” (11:25). Jesus said, “I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me” (12:50); only by going to Jesus will we find “the words of eternal life” (6:68).

This is why Jesus came. “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (17:3). “Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (20:30-31).

God still sets before us life and death. He loves us, and because He loves us and made us in His image, He has given us the ability to choose to love Him in return. By choosing to love Him, we are thereby choosing life. The price paid for eternal life is more than we can understand. Yet the benefits and blessings that flow from the grace and mercy of God is that which we must not ignore or deny.

Life. Choose it. Then, “when Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory” (Col. 3:4).