



CHOOSING LIFE TODAY

Deuteronomy 29–30

The choices before us, like those before Israel in Deuteronomy 29–30, are pretty simple. Obey the Lord, and enjoy His blessing; or disobey Him, and experience His discipline. Thankfully, God is always faithful, accessible, and ready to forgive and restore us when we seek Him.

Moses is now standing on the plains of Moab. He will not enter the promised land himself, but the people he speaks to will, very soon. His message is recorded for us in Deuteronomy chapters 29 and 30. Here Moses reminds Israel of their failures, warns them of the consequences of sin, and encourages them to follow the Lord.

Consider how much wisdom Moses has accumulated over the past forty years. Think of the passion that wisdom—and all that experience—has created in Moses' heart.

Now I want you to imagine Moses here as he delivers that passion in a final message to a new generation of Israelites who are stubborn to the bone. He makes

three appeals—the same three appeals we need to hear today.

First, Moses makes this appeal: *Don't close your eyes to the dangers of sin.* Israel's track record is testimony enough that they haven't learned the lesson of sin's danger.

Beginning in verse 2 of chapter 29, Moses reminds the people of God's gracious miracles over these past forty years:

“You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes . . . the signs, and those great wonders . . . Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet.”

(verses 2-3, 5)

Imagine wearing a shirt and a pair of shoes that last forty years!

The problem is that Israel doesn't connect the dots. Their sinful hearts close their eyes to the greatness of God. Moses says in verse 4 that they don't have “a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.”



Remains of a Vassal treaty of Esarhaddon



Only God can make them “see” and “hear” what He has been doing. By the way, remember those expressions “eyes to see” and “ears to hear.” You will hear similar words used in warnings from Isaiah the prophet and Jesus Christ, among others. The world lives in sunshine and beauty all around but refuses to hear the voice of God and see His handiwork in creation.

In verses 18 and 19, Moses warns Israel about false worship:

“Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you . . . one who . . . blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.’”

Oh, Moses understands the deceptive nature of sin—that one can defiantly disobey God while walking around saying to himself, “I’m safe.” My friend, there is no such thing as safe sin. Don’t be blind to the dangers of sin. Sin will overthrow your life and bring you to ruin, as Moses affirms here in verse 21.

Moses then moves on to make a passionate appeal: *Don’t ever forget that God’s grace is greater than sin.* Beloved, you can ruin your life with sin, but you can just as easily ruin your life by believing God will not forgive your sin because you have sinned too much or for too long.

Chapter 30 opens with Moses delivering some wonderful news. It’s true that the nation will sin against God, but note what Moses says here:

“Return to the LORD your God . . . and obey his voice . . . with

all your heart and with all your soul, then the LORD your God will . . . have compassion on you.” (verses 2-3)

Yes, sin is destructive, but God’s grace is constructive. Sin tears away, but God gives back; sin is strong, but God’s grace is stronger. That’s not only true for Israel—that’s also true for you and me today.

When you choose to love the Lord and obey His voice, you are actually choosing a life worth living.

I remember reading the true story that began in a poor village in Brazil. In a little hut with a dirt floor and a red tile roof lived Maria and her daughter, Christina. Maria’s husband had died when Christina was just an infant, and Maria had done her best to raise her daughter. Christina was now an older, attractive teenage girl with a streak of independence that worried her mother. Christina would often talk about fleeing this dusty little village and going to Rio de Janeiro, the city that seemed so full of life. Her mother would often remind her of the dangers in that city; she knew that if her daughter went there and could not support herself, there would be danger and even tragedy ahead.

One morning, Maria discovered her daughter was missing. She knew where Christina had gone, and it broke her heart. As soon as she could save up enough money for a bus ticket, Maria packed a small suitcase and headed for the bus depot. Before arriving, she stopped at a little drug store and stepped into one of those photograph booths and took all the pictures of herself that she could afford. And with that, Maria headed for Rio de Janeiro.



She began visiting places that had a reputation for prostitutes; she knew that when sinful rebellion meets hunger, a person might do anything to survive. So, Maria went to the bars and the hotels and the nightclubs; and wherever she went, she taped her picture to the wall—in hotel lobbies or near bathroom mirrors. And on the back of each photograph, she had written the same message. Finally, after several days, she ran out of money, and she ran out of photographs. She was weary and heartbroken as she boarded the bus alone for the long journey home.

Weeks turned into months. Then one day Christina was descending the steps from a hotel room when she looked across the lobby and saw the photograph of a familiar face taped to the wall. She ran over and took it down. Sure enough, it was a photograph of her mother. Her eyes filled with tears as she looked at the picture of her mother—the one who truly loved her. Then she turned the photograph over, and there on the back, she read this message: “Wherever you are, whatever you have become, it doesn’t matter. Come home.” (And Maria did just that)¹—she went back home.

Beloved, God already knows that Israel will stray from home. Even as Moses delivers these appeals, God knows Israel will pursue a life of sin. That is why, even here, centuries earlier, Moses reminds them that they are never beyond the reach of God’s grace.

With that, Moses delivers one final appeal: *Don’t ever stop choosing each day to walk with God.*

Moses wraps up his powerful message in chapter 30 by delivering these unforgettable words:

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life

. . . loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days.” (verses 19-20)

Wow! Here’s the choice: life or death; sin or the Savior. What would it be for Israel back then? More importantly, what will it be for you today? And just as it was for Israel, when you choose to love the Lord and obey His voice, you are actually choosing a life worth living.

So, *today*, choose to love Him and follow Him and obey His Word. And when you make that choice today, it will make all the difference in your life—today and tomorrow.

What resources has God already provided His followers to help them develop “eyes to see” and “ears to hear”? What resources does Satan have to cause you spiritual blindness and deafness? How does 1 John 4:4 encourage you in this “eyes and ears” battle?

What aspects of God’s character do you see displayed in Moses’ appeals to Israel? How do they impact your life personally? Who in your life might be encouraged to know your God is gracious and willing to forgive sin through faith in Jesus’s sacrifice?

¹ This phrase deleted from video after recording - wrong name in original script. 10/21/21 SM
Audio version corrected to “Christina.”

