



## Choose Life or Death

God gave man the ability to choose the quality, even substance, of his life. For most, this is a little known fact, but nonetheless true. You have the God given ability to determine how your life will be, how it will develop, how it will mature, how it will look, feel, and appear to others. This is your choice and yours alone! *This is one of the greatest wonders of the ages.*

Christians are not an exception to this.

Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or



things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)

Moses taught this unto the Israelites.

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 thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest

cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

Jesus taught it unto the Jews.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

And Paul taught it unto the Christians.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father,

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even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

What is your choice?

A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it [understand and use the power of the tongue for benefit] shall eat the fruit thereof. (Proverbs 18:20-21)

You might think that this applies to your physical life, and it can, but what about your spiritual life? It applies to that also.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:24)

Jesus brought unto us everlasting life. This is far better than whatever quality of life we live on earth, but we should be concerned about both.

*What makes all the difference in the world to how your life develops spiritually?*

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Romans 8:6)

The answer is, "your thoughts." How you manage your thoughts. Sure, you can go through each day not controlling how you feel and think, but is that the best? According to Romans, if you want life and peace in your life, you need to become spiritually minded. You have the right to choose which way your life shall go. Paul did and the book of Philippians records his experience when choosing between life and death. We can all

use this as a touch stone for how we choose our direction in life.

According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. (Philippians 1:20-22)

His dilemma was to choose either to live or to die. He was squeezed between these two alternatives.

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. (Philippians 1:23-24)

So far, his best alternative was

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to be with Christ (which could only happen when the return of Christ took place). His rational alternative was to be with the people so that he could take care of them spiritually.

And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. (Philippians 1:25-26)

He took the pressure of the people's lives when he expressed his choice – to abide and continue with them. Then he went on to teach them of their proper choices in life.

Only let your conversation [way of life] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs,

that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. (Philippians 1:27-28)

A Christian's manner of life should be what becomes the gospel of Christ. In other words, agrees with the teachings of Christ as they apply to Christianity. The things of the world will battle you down to decision-making time. Eventually, you will need to choose an outcome. ***In the midst of this battle, don't become terrified.*** Their fear and terror is their problem, not yours. Don't let it become yours.

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer [experience] for his sake; Having the same conflict which

ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me. (Philippians 1:29-30)

Today, you have the ability to choose your quality of life, both physically and spiritually. Sure, you will experience conflicts such as Paul did, but eventually, you will need to make your choice. Many people choose death, or something very close to it. You live among them daily. Some people choose life and its associated wonders. These people are harder to find.

***Then there are those who refuse to be put down no matter the odds.***

Perhaps you've had the privilege to meet one or two of these in your lifetime. What choice will you make today, tomorrow, or anytime? Will you make use of one of the greatest wonders of the ages – your free will to choose life in the face of adversity, or will you be a complacent one – giving up your freedom only to replace it with slavery of the worst sort.

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There is nearly nothing worse than the pains of defeat in the face of adversity, *but the worst sort of pain manifests itself at the end of the matter if you refuse to choose life no matter the odds.* Put down or be put down, it's your choice. God wants you to live and to live handsomely. The real question is, "what do you want?" Choose LIFE!

Much Love in Christ!

Jerry D. Brown