

“A Blessing or A Curse – Choosing the Right Path” *Deuteronomy 11:26-28*

Open: Story

- The Children of Israel are getting ready to enter the promised land of Canaan.
 - Ask your class if they remember the first time the Israelites came to Canaan’s doorstep they refused to enter.
 - As punishment, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Everyone 20 years of age and older died, except Joshua and Caleb.
- God wanted the children of Israel to see the great potential for blessings, but He also warned them about the consequences for choosing to follow the flesh and not living by faith.
 - God spoke directly to those who were the young people the first time Israel was at Canaan’s doorstep. **vs. 2 & 7**
 - God wanted Israel to realize that life in Canaan land was much different that life in Egypt. **vs. 10-12**
 - In Egypt, they relied on their own two hands for their survival; while in Canaan, God would bless their obedience.
 - In Egypt, they relied on the government and task masters to give them direction; while in Canaan, they would be following God and man of God who cared about them.
- Once again, we find God not dictating the decision His people should make; but simple showing them the facts and allowing the Israelites to choose for themselves whether or not they would obey. **vs. 26-28**
 - A Blessing for obeying. **vs. 13-15 & 22-25**
 - The rain necessary for crops to grow. Fruitful harvests.
 - Healthy cattle. Victory in battle.
 - A Curse for disobeying **vs. 16-17**
 - No rain.
 - No harvest.
 - No protection.

Tran: Application

- God has a unique and a special place for the children of Israel, they always have been and always will be God’s people. So, how does this story apply to you and me today?
 - You need to realize that, as children of God, we are now apart of His family; and because of this we also have a special place in God’s heart.
 - When we got saved, we gained access to some amazing promises through obedience by faith.
 - Provisions – **Phil. 4:19** “*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*”
 - Protection – **Eph. 6:13** “*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*”
 - Prosperity – **I John 5:4** “*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*”
- As a child of God, you also need to realize that if you do not obey then the blessings will be forfeited, and you will be punished for your disobedience

I. Realize in every decision you make there will be a reward or a consequence.

- A. The Devil has tricked people into believing you can make decisions that make you happy and feel good; and it will not impact you or the lives of people around you.
1. Immorality – David and Bathsheba
 2. Disobeying Parents – Samson
 3. Alcohol – Lot and his daughters
 4. Disrespecting Authorities – Korah
- B. God wants us to realize that every decision we make is our choice and it has a predetermined destination that cannot be changed.
1. Path of the just. **Prov. 4:18** *“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”* – The person who travels on the right path will be able to clearly see life.
 2. Way of wickedness. **Prov. 4:19** *“The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.”* – Those who choose to follow their flesh will find themselves living a life of constant pain, confusion, and disappointment.

II. Recognize you choose whether you receive a reward or a consequence.

- Notice that in **vs. 26** God did not tell them what decision they had to make, nor did He tell them they would get what’s best by doing what felt good.
 - Notice He drew their attention to the end result of their decision.
- A. God does not want us to make our decisions based on what looks or seems easier, He wants us to make our decision based on what He has told us is best for us.
1. Doing wrong takes just as much effort as doing right, the only difference is the end result.
 - a. Recognize, that those who are wise and choose to make the right decision will be able to escape the snares of death. **Prov. 13:13-15** *“Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. [14] The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. [15] Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.”*
 - b. Recognize, the end result of the young man in this story. He perished because he made decision without seeking advice from someone who knew where the path he was on would lead. **Prov. 7:6-27**
 2. God does not expect or require you to understand why you are to make the decisions He asks you to make, He simply requires your faith to obey.
 - a. Notice God does not explain all the why’s; He simply states the facts.
Prov. 1:15-19
 - b. Notice God does not explain how soon the consequences come; He simply states what the consequences are. **Prov. 1:24-33**

- B. The devil draws our attention to the now and tries to convince people that right now is the only thing that matters.
1. Jesus' Temptation – The devil tried to trick Jesus into giving up the eternal for the temporary. **Matt. 4:1-11**
 - a. The Decision **Matt. 4:4,7,10** – To trust in the protection and promises of the Word of God. He believed God would provide something better than what Satan would.
 - b. The Destination **Matt. 4:11** – The Devil left him alone and Jesus was victorious over the devil's temptations. **James 4:7** *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*
 2. Judas' Betrayal – The devil convinced Judas he could still be a Christian and become rich by dishonesty.
 - a. The Decision **Matt. 26:14-16** – To choose riches, popularity, and acceptance from the world instead of the rewards for obedience.
 - b. The Destination **Matt. 27:3-5** – Guilty conscience and death.
- C. God teaches us that even though the right decision often goes against what seems easier, the end result is worth it.
1. Abraham – Journey of Faith
 2. Esther – Obedience to wise counsel
 3. Daniel – The Lion's Den
 - Joseph – Trusting in God's timing
 - 3 Hebrew Boys – Belief in God's protection

III. Remember God knows what is best; and if I obey, I will be blessed.

- A. We need realize that God is the One who set the boundaries on right and wrong. This means He, better than anyone else, knows the destination of each choice.
1. **Ps. 1:6** *“For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”*
 2. **Job 23:10** *“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”*
- B. We need to recognize that God is not asking us to understand or even be able to see where following Him will take you; but He does ask that we trust He will do what is best for us.
1. **Phil. 1:6** *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”*
 2. **Is. 55:11** *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”*

Close:

- Will you choose to obey and be blessed, or will you choose to disobey and be punished?
- To the degree you obey God, is the degree to which you will be blessed.

Joel 3:14

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.”