

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 8/14/2023

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, August 15 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for the people of Hawaii following the devastating fires that destroyed homes and businesses, and taken so many lives. Ask GOD that they may be comforted in loss and receive the blessings of help that comes locally and globally to help them. Pray for the support and hope that comes especially through the people of GOD.*

In Deuteronomy 30:19-20, Moses speaking to the people on behalf of GOD says, “*This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your GOD, listen to HIS voice, and hold fast to HIM. For the LORD is your life, and HE will give you many years.*”

A choice. That you get to make. Every day. Life and blessings? Death and curses? The Common English Bible captures the Hebrew meaning, “*life and what’s good versus death and what’s wrong.*” You choose.

Doesn’t seem like a hard decision to make, does it? Life and blessing or death and curses? In fact, this choice is probably one which we don’t even think about daily...or weekly...or even at all. After all, when was the last time you saw someone choose death and destruction and then fall down dead, or have a meteor come out of the sky on their head, or suddenly break out in boils? And, for that matter, if it really worked like that, would someone pause and say, “Today, I think I’ll choose death and curses?”

But the choice that GOD is offering in this verse is not about an immediate decision. It’s an opportunity each day to decide what you want for your life in relationship to GOD. It’s more than just about mere existence. It’s not simply “to be or not to be; that is the question.” It is a much broader focus regarding obedience and loyalty to GOD. It’s about the relationship that began at Holy Baptism when GOD said, “You are mine,” and continues in Holy Communion where GOD says, “I am yours.” This relationship is described in three specific phrases:

love the LORD your GOD,
listen to HIS voice,
hold fast to HIM.

In other words, to desire to be with GOD every day through conversation (prayer), to live in ways that bring you closer to GOD (worship), and to do what GOD wants you to do for yourself and for those with whom you come in contact.

Choosing life leads us to experiences with GOD and with each other that enrich our lives and gives it greater meaning and purpose. Choosing life means having a clearer sense of what it is to know GOD and what GOD desire for us. Choosing life means following the guidance of GOD in our decision-making that enrich our lives and the lives of our family, friends, neighbors, and others. When we reject this choice or limit our participation in those things that bring us closer to GOD, we find ourselves with a kind of emptiness that the Hebrews would call “death.” We end up making decisions that, though they might seem beneficial in the short-term, hurt us or others in the long-run. When we commit ourselves to that relationship with GOD that began at baptism, we are choosing for a life that is filled with the blessings we see all around us, blessings that make life wonderful, and that we want to share with others.

It’s your choice. Choose life with GOD!

In CHRIST'S love,

Pastor Jeffrey