



A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

THE CHOICE IS OURS!

The days we live in afford us many abundant choices. Wide varieties of food, clothing, possessions, entertainment, and activities are available to us. God has given us one of the greatest gifts in this life – second only to the gift of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ – *our ability to choose!*

Many accounts in scripture allow us to see how the Lord has worked through mankind. Yet, in each instance, God gave man a choice which led to an outcome. Abraham chose to believe that God would bless his life through a son and that his offspring would be numerous as the sands of the sea and stars of the sky (Genesis chapters 16-21). By choosing to believe this, he and his wife were miraculously blessed with a son at an age where having children seemed impossible. Joseph, son of Jacob (Israel), chose to believe that the promise God gave him to lead his family would come true (Genesis chapters 37-47). Despite being sold as a slave, falsely accused and imprisoned, God raised him up to be second in command of one of the most powerful nations on the face of the earth. He then was able to fulfill God's promise and be a blessing to save his family.

Conversely, think of the great flood during the time of Noah (Genesis chapters 6-8). Mankind chose to become evil and distanced themselves from the Lord. The outcome was a catastrophe by water. Consider the account of the Tower of Babel, built to ascend to God in heaven, which led to the confounding of languages of all mankind, so that no one could understand each other (Genesis, chapter 11).

In these examples, choices were given to dictate an outcome. We realize today that there are many influences that can move us to make specific choices. The eternal conflict of good and evil leans us one way or another. 2 Nephi 2:16 states: *“Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.”* Are the choices we make today in our own best interest both naturally and spiritually?

As we mature in life, we learn that choices bring consequences, good and bad. Young people whose freedoms of choice are expanding can find themselves in beneficial situations or very compromising ones. So ultimately, how do we make the right choices as believers in Christ? In October 2013, the General Church Priesthood accepted a revelation to the Church, speaking about how we make choices. In this experience, a

brother was inspired to pray when he heard of a choice made by an individual that had a major effect on many. Here is an excerpt of the revelation:

“Thus saith the Lord, thus saith the Lord this night: hear now the tragedies that exist in this world. Hear now, how the evil one has gotten into the hearts of My creation; of My vessels that I have created! Your vessels are created that they would house a spirit, and I have created them, molded them, that My spirit would reside within them. And yet I have given My creation a choice today; I have given them a choice. They would choose to follow My precepts and receive My blessings, and yet there is an opposing force, there is an opposing force. And if they allow this force in, it will drive them to do things, things that are not of Me, things that I have not taught, and it is founded in the evil. It is founded in the evil! Know this day if you open your hearts and not allow My spirit in, that you walk a fine line! You walk a fine line today! For the day soon cometh when My judgments will be sure, and all will stand before My judgment bar, and all will be accountable for their own actions and their own deeds, and their own sins. Now you must choose, you must choose today to draw close, to draw close unto Me, to draw close unto My precepts, the precepts of My Son Jesus Christ, the Savior that I have sent into the world that He would atone for your sins and rectify the relationship of man and God. For I have sent Him this day out of love, that My creation would come unto Me. They would come unto Me. And when you do, you will realize that My spirit is greater! That My love is greater, for it casteth out all fear! Perfect love casteth out all fear! This is why these words are written, that you may know when My love is within you, fear cannot abide; the evil one has no place! He is pushed out! He cannot penetrate when My spirit resides! And so cling now to My spirit; and plant it deep within your heart. Know that My spirit is greater! Know that we are the victors, for My Son had victory over the grave! He had victory over sin, because I have given Him all power in heaven and in earth. Know this this day, know this this day, thus saith the Lord!”

The Lord reminds us in this revelation that we are created as vessels that would house the Lord's Spirit; our purpose is not to house other spirits, but God's Spirit! Yet these vessels can also allow an opposing force to enter if we choose. That opposing force will drive us to make choices contrary to the will of God as established through His Son Jesus Christ. When we choose this contrary course of action, the Lord reminds us that we walk a fine line. This means we may sometimes choose evil that pulls us away from the source of goodness and removes us from the benefits and blessings God has for us.

This revelation also reaffirms the benefit of choosing Christ and His precepts. By choosing Jesus, our vessel is filled with His spirit and His love. As He stated above and also is stated in 1 John 4:18: *“Perfect love casteth out all fear!”* The benefit of having the love of Christ within us pushes out fear! It pushes out the opposition because evil cannot reside in a vessel full of the love of God! This is why the Lord is encouraging us to draw closer to Him and keep our vessels filled with His spirit. More and more, we are hearing of tragedies that are happening throughout the world, even more prevalent among young people. They are taking their own lives. They are harming themselves, afflicted with

anxieties and addictions. These things do not come from God! They come from the evil force opposing God, and yet we can open or close the door to our vessels.

This battle is real today. It affects all of us. The Lord reminds us that if we choose His spirit and trust that His spirit is greater, then we find ourselves victorious. We are victors in this battle of life, the battle of good and evil. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus himself stated: *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”* Jesus reminded us that by choosing Him, we could find rest for our souls. He did not tell us that our burden would disappear, but that it would be lighter. Therefore, through our choice for Christ, we find a way to navigate this life.

Let us remember, God **chose** to send His Son as a way for us to reconcile with Him from bad choices. He **chose** to allow His Son to die as an infinite sacrifice for us to have an opportunity for eternal life with Him. He **chose** to set up a way that through faith, repentance, and baptism, we have the mechanism to be forgiven of our sins. Let us be mindful of our choices today and where they may take us. The choice is ours!

In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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