

Freedom to choose

***Ting Siew Lee
28 April 2024***

God has always valued man's freedom to choose

From the moment of creation

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen 2:16-17)

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Israel's history started with Abram's choice to obey.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram went, as the LORD had told him...(Gen 12:1-4a)

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Joshua challenged Israel to choose who to obey.

“Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD....(Josh 24:14-15)

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Jesus gave many the choice to be a disciple.

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (Matt 16:24)

A or B?

A: S\$10



B: S\$100



A or B?

A: S\$10



B: S\$100





We will always choose what is more
valuable to us.

A or B?

A: Dh 50 (UAE)



B: 10,000 Korean won



A or B?

A: Dh 50 (UAE) (S\$18.30)



**B: 10,000 Korean won
(S\$10)**



A or B?

A: 200 Egyptian pounds



B: 50 Manat (Azerbaijan)



A or B?

A: 200 Egyptian pounds (\$5.70)



B: 50 Manat (Azerbaijan) (\$40)





When we have trouble choosing, it's because we aren't sure of the value of one, or all of the options.

A look at some choices of Abram, David and Paul



What choices were before them?

Which were the values being compared?

Gen 13:8-17

Then Abram said to Lot, “Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.”

Gen 13:8-17

And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other.

Gen 13:8-17

Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD. The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are,

Gen 13:8-17

northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.”

Abram as the elder had the right to choose first.

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Choosing first: "Pick the best for myself!"

Letting Lot choose: "God will give me what is mine, and it is good."

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**Chose God's best for him
vs his rights**

2 Sam 24:21-25

And Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?” David said, “To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be averted from the people.” Then Araunah said to David, “Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him.

2 Sam 24:21-25

Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king.” And Araunah said to the king, “May the LORD your God accept you.”

2 Sam 24:21-25

But the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

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Taking the land free of charge: “Get a good deal!”

Paying for it: “My worship must cost me something.”

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**Chose sacrifice unto God,
not personal gain**

Philippians 3:4-11

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Philippians 3:4-11

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him,

Philippians 3:4-11

not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

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Follow Jesus: “Know my Saviour and be like Him.”

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Remain a Pharisee: "Gain respect and all the privileges of being VVIP."

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**Chose relationship with Christ, not
reputation**

**The Christian life is about learning
to impute the right value to the
things of God.**

**What can help us to impute the
right value to the things of God?**

Hebrews 11:23-28

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. **24** By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **25** choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

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**Deal with
your fears**



Hebrews 11:23-28

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We're
Going on a
Bear Hunt



We're going on a bear hunt

We're going on a bear hunt

I've got my binoculars

I've got my binoculars

I'm not scared

I'm not scared

Ooh, look at that tall, wavy grass

It's so tall

We can't go over it

We can't go over it

We can't go under it

We can't go under it

We're just gonna have to go through it

We're gonna have to go through it!

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**"Go through" it
with the Lord!**

**Our greatest fear should not be
failure but succeeding at what
doesn't matter.**

DL Moody

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Proverbs 31:8-9

Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
Open your mouth, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and
needy.

Galatians 6:9-10

And let us not grow weary of doing
good, for in due season we will reap, if
we do not give up. So then, as we have
opportunity, let us do good to everyone,
and especially to those who are of the
household of faith.

Hebrews 11:23-27

26 He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. **27** By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

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**Cultivate a
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Romans 8:18-25

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Romans 8:18-25

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

The Weight of Glory, CS Lewis

“It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

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**Become aware that
God is with you
always**

Isaiah 43:1b-2

“Do not fear, for I have
redeemed you;

I have summoned you by
name; you are mine.

When you pass through the waters,

I will be with you;
and when you pass through the
rivers,

they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.”

Exodus 14:13

And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”



Freedom to choose

We will always choose what is more valuable to us.

The Christian life is about learning to impute the right value to spiritual things.

- **Deal with your fears.**
- **Identify with God's people who suffer.**
- **Cultivate a longing for eternal rewards.**
- **Become aware that God is with you always.**