The Key To Life
Deuteronomy 30:20

Objective: Give people confidence that they know how to obtain God’s blessings and eternal life.

Reading: Deuteronomy 30:11-20.

Memory: Deuteronomy 30:20, “You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing your self firmly to him. This is the key to your life.”

Introduction:
1. Sometimes we make a choice and it is done. Other times, we need to keep on choosing because the choice requires constant attention and effort.
2. You have one chance to win; pick a number – it’s done; either you won or you didn’t.
3. If you choose to raise a family, that will involve the rest of your life and involves a commitment of your attention and effort for the rest of your life. To do it right, to do it successfully, to really choose it involves a continual choosing. When the baby cries at night, I remember I chose to do this and so I choose to get up and care for it.
4. Going to heaven, being with God, is that second type. It involves a decision type choice, a moment of commitment, but also a continual constant daily choosing as well.

We need to make sure we are choosing life. (HOW?)

In Deuteronomy 30, God is clarifying relations with Israel. He is re-establishing covenant agreements with the children of those who originally left Egypt. In doing so, He is clarifying for them what is needed for God’s Presence and Fellowship with them so they will receive His blessings of protection and prosperity. Though specific covenant details may change, the very essence of what God is looking for from mankind does not. The New Living Translation translates Deuteronomy 30:20 this way; “You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing your self firmly to him. This is the key to your life.” This verse very well explains the key to life. We know how to choose life and blessings.

The first and foremost thing we each need to know is that the means of choosing eternal life is

I. By loving God. (Well, what do you mean “loving”…)

A. Strong affection.
   1. “Love” is a very strong affection toward someone or some thing. Not just a matter of “believing” in God, but of loving Him.
   2. This is the most critical of all “expectations” of commands. Matthew 22:37-38 “…Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment.”
   3. Your affection for the One who made you, Who created the universe and everything in it, seen or unseen, Who gives you all good things including breath and life and you children and the means to survive, should be greater than your affection for anything else. Period.
   4. Sometimes you have to chose who or what you love MOST. Always love God most.

B. Love serves what it loves.
   1. When you love someone, you care about what is important to them. Serve their interests.
   2. Though we are basically trained by the selfishness of life to look out for ourselves, (what do "I" want, need,) genuine love for God is the motive to seek and find out what is important to Him.
   3. If I love my wife, what she wants or needs becomes more important to me than what I need.
   4. I didn’t used to do cards and holidays; until I learned how important they were to my wife whom I love. Then cards and holidays became important. Likewise, learn what is important to God and make that important to you as well.
   5. What is important to God? That’s what you would be doing with your life if you love god. so holiness, truth, integrity, justice, righteousness become important. And people.
   6. When I understand that people are important to God, then
      a. I no longer come to church for what I can get out of it. I come for what I can do to encourage and help those other souls whom God cares about.
      b. I no longer come because I need to in order to get to heaven, I come to serve God in some way and to serve what matters to Him. (People)
      c. I no longer come to church because we are instructed to do so in the Bible, but because I care
about God.
7. There are a lot of other things that compete for our love; job, spouse, hobbies, garden, car…
   a. Do any of these compete with the time you spend thinking about God or serving Him?
   b. Do you ever abandon what you know God wants you to do in order to do what you would rather do? Who are you loving at those times, self or God?

C. When you love someone, you care about their honor and reputation.
   1. This governs our actions as well
   2. Do your actions represent God highly, or would you be embarrassed if someone saw a child of God doing such things.
   3. Do people frown on Christianity, laugh at “godliness” because of your shady behavior?

Love pays attention to the One it loves. So, the next item is quite naturally, to choose life

II. By obeying Him. (Well, what do you mean “obeying”…)

A. Listening to his voice.
   1. Romans 10:17 says, “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”
      a. Why does the wording of this verse always seem somehow unusual? Because it is.
      b. The word “message” is not actually present in the original. KJV or NAS is actually better; “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”
      c. “Faith” comes from “hearing”, but how does one “hear”? Jesus quotes Isaiah’s prophesy in Mark 4:12, “...they may be ever ... hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!”
      d. How does one “hear” to understand what is essential and important? By genuinely and earnestly listening to the proclamation of the Christ event! This is the culmination of what God has been wanting us to “hear” all along. Here is the message about love, grace, obedience. Here is the illustration of it all. Here is the manifestation of it all. This is the message we need to grasp. Here is understanding of God.
   2. So, do you have a “listening” heart? One that is earnestly seeking God? Or are you locked in to previously conceived ideas and thoughts? Are you too busy to meditate and pray and earnestly seek to understand with your mind and heart the message available to your ears?
   3. Are there things God would prefer of you that you would rather not know about? (I love my wife, but honestly, sometimes I wish I didn’t know what it was she wanted me to do.) When you genuinely “hear” what God says, you need to act on it.

B. Obedience is an essential aspect of “faith”.
   1. The book of Romans repeatedly links obedience with faith. Romans 1:5, “Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.” You cannot have one without the other.
   2. James agrees; James 2:17-18, “... faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.”
   3. Not just to every command on what to “do”, but also on what to “be” and how to think and feel.
   4. Because I trust Him and grasp His essence, I can forgive. I can love my enemy. I can overcome evil with good.

C. Listen to actually respond to what He says.
   1. Specifics are different under New Covenant that under the Old Covenant.
   2. Under the Old were such things as animal sacrifices, the Ten Commandments, tithing, burning of incense and candles.
   3. Under the New, such things a baptism, giving generously, taking communion, and loving your neighbor.
   4. James 1:22, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”
   5. Biblically, spiritually, you can’t “listen to His voice” without obeying it. They are the same thing.

Since He is life, we choose to life and good things…
III. By committing firmly to Him.  (Well, what do you mean “committing”…)

A. Holding fast to Him.
   1. One translation uses the word “cleaving”.  As in the concept of Genesis 2:24.
      a. KJV – “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”
      b. NIV - “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”
   2. Picture of a child holding tightly to mother’s pant-leg for safety.  That one won’t be seen in aisle crying in desperation for mother, like one who gets bold, distracted and wanders off to toy aisle.

B. Don’t allow anything to separate you from God.
   1. There will be forces that attempt to separate you from God.  To draw you away.
   2. Distractions that become “god’s” as they take our focus and devotion away from God.  Lots of times they are “good” things.  Nothing wrong with that hobby, deed, practice, except priority!
   3. Distractions that simply rob our heart and focus off our first love.  Could be business, doubts.  Self reliance.  Friends or problems.  Or friends problems.  What competes for you attention to God?
   4. 2 Timothy 1:12, “…I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.”
      a. What have I entrusted?  Me, my soul.  I am totally entrusted into His care.
      b. Whatever He says, I will do.  Even when it doesn’t make sense to me.  If He says love my enemy, I will.  If He says overcome evil with good, I will.  If He says go to my brother and confront them gently whenever I suspect they are caught up in a sin, I will, though I can come up with 20 reasons why not right now.  If He says to give generously to the poor, I will.  If He says seek first His kingdom and His righteousness without worrying about what to wear or eat, I will.

C. Father, give me unity with You.
   1. Let your thoughts be my thoughts.  Let me think and feel what you would think and feel.
   2. Help me to remain always pure and holy so that you can abide with me.  And me with You.
   3. Let NOTHING come between us.  Help me to commit me to you.  Completely and continuously.

So What?
   See, there is set before each of us today the same choice; life and good, or death and evil?  You have the power to choose.  Love the lord your God, Father Son and Holy Spirit.  Listen to the very spirit of God’s message through Jesus Christ.  Cleave faithfully to Him, letting nothing draw you away even for an instant.  Decisively and continuously, choose life.

Closing Prayer:
The Key To Life
Deuteronomy 30:20

Reading: Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Memory: Deuteronomy 30:20

"Y_c_m_t_c_b_l_t_L_y_G_, o_h_, a_c_y_s_f_t_h_.
T_i_t_k_t_y_l_.”

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We know how to choose life and blessings.

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B. Love serves what it loves.

C. When you love someone, you care about their honor and reputation.

II. By obeying Him.
A. Listening to his voice. Romans 10:17 Mark 4:12

B. Obedience is an essential aspect of “faith”. Romans 1:5 James 2:17-18

C. Listen to actually respond to what He says. James 1:22

III. By committing firmly to Him.
A. Holding fast to Him. Genesis 2:24

B. Don’t allow anything to separate you from God. 2 Timothy 1:12

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