

## God Chose You

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our text for this Sanctity of Life Sunday is from the Gospel reading. **Jesus said to his disciples, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.”** Here ends our text

It might surprise you to hear that God is Pro-Choice, though maybe not in the way that we usually think of Pro-Choice in the world of politics. But God is Pro-Choice. He’s all about giving us a choice, letting us choose, letting us decide. God doesn’t mandate anything or force His will upon us but gives us freedom to choose. However, besides the freedom of making our own choices, there’s also consequences to the choices we make.

In the garden of Eden, God gave man many choices. **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.”** Adam and Eve could pick any fruit they chose – apples or pears or oranges or lemons or limes – from any tree they chose. They were even free to eat from the tree of life and continue to live forever. But God also said, **“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.”** God gave Adam and Eve a choice and even made their choices simple. Eat from any tree you like, and you will live, but just avoid eating from one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or you will die. Make your choice in line with God’s will, and you will live. Make your choice outside of God’s will, and you will die. The choice was simple until Satan slithered into the garden. Sadly, Adam and Eve chose to play god and listen to Satan’s voice and their inner voices instead of listening to God’s voice. By choosing not to follow God’s way, they chose to follow the way of sin and death. And their sin-filled DNA has passed on to every one of us, infecting us with sin and its consequential affects.

Now God still lets us choose. Remember He’s Pro-Choice. You can decide before you go to bed at night when to set your alarm to get up in the morning. You can choose what to eat for breakfast and what to wear for school or work. You can choose what vocation to study and even change your mind later in life. You can choose what to do with your free time: watch TV, read a book, go out for dinner. Many of the choices you make are insignificant while others have lasting effects. And you’re free to choose. God’s not stopping you. But some of our choices have consequences. And they can have life-changing consequences for us, especially if we fail to allow God to guide our choices. Can you think of a time when you regretted a choice you made after you saw how selfish and damaging that choice was? If we’re honest with ourselves, we’ve all made some bad choices like Adam and Eve, and we have the physical and emotional scars to prove it.

Our choices not only have significant consequences for us, though, but also for others. And some of these choices are not so simple but complicated. Technology and science often race ahead with life-altering choices before our culture can consider the potential consequences those choices will have on us and others. Just because we *can* choose to do something doesn’t mean we *should* choose to do something, especially before we know the consequence of that choice. But, like Adam and Eve, we often find ourselves playing god, thinking we know better than our Creator what to do with our lives and the lives of others. We make wrong choices because we’re guided by convenience and comfort and control instead of by the conviction that God is in control and His Word offers us the courage and clarity we need to make the right choices. We choose to live in sexual immorality and then we choose to abandon our parental duty and abort babies in the womb. We choose to artificially create an untold number of human beings and then choose to let them die in petri dishes. We choose to use contraceptives that are abortive. We choose to use fertilized embryos and fetal remains in the name of science to benefit our own medical health while disregarding the life we have taken. Like Adam and Eve, we have chosen death – death for others and death for ourselves.

If we could only reverse some of the bad choices we’ve made and reverse the consequences. If we could choose life instead of death. However, that’s one choice we can no longer make ourselves. When we were conceived in the womb, we inherited the genetic disease of original sin from Adam and Eve. Their

choice of death clung to us. We could no more choose life than a person who has coded on the operating table or bled out at an accident scene. We were born spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins. And dead people can't choose. We can't choose life for ourselves because we can't choose God for ourselves. Our sinful nature is hostile to God and would rather die than choose to believe in Him and His ways. In the choice between life and death, we can only choose death.

But thankfully, God chose us. "You did not choose me, but I chose you." And God didn't choose to abandon us because we were too much trouble, nor did He choose to abort us because we were defective. In our Epistle reading the apostle Paul says, "**God chose what is foolish in the world; God chose what is weak in the world; God chose what is low and despised in the world.**" God chose us! The God who chose to create us chose not to let us die in our sin. He chose instead to redeem us so we could be reconciled to Him. God chose life for us. God came looking for Adam and Eve in their garden of sin and death and despair, and He gave them hope when He said to the serpent Satan: "**I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.**" For all the times our life choices have crushed us with guilt and shame and regret, God chose to send His Son to crush Satan and be our Savior! The God who chose to give us life at the moment of fertilization is the same God who chose to rescue us and redeem us and give us salvation. And He did it by choosing and sending His Son, Jesus, to experience every stage of human life so we could be forgiven and given life everlasting with Him! In our Old Testament reading, God chose Jesus in the womb to be His servant and redeem His people, Israel. But God also said of Jesus, "**I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.**" God chose Jesus to be the Savior of the world.

But remember that God is Pro-Choice. He didn't force His will upon His Son. Jesus had a choice. Jesus could have chosen to remain in the comfort and glory of heaven and left us to deal with the consequences of our choices. And who could blame Him for choosing to do that? But because of His love and compassion for all of us, Jesus chose to become one of us so He could provide salvation for all of us. Jesus chose death for himself – death upon a cross – so he could rise and choose life for us. Isaiah says that Jesus, "**The Holy One of Israel . . . has chosen you.**" Jesus chose to rescue us and restore us so we could be God's forgiven children and heirs of life everlasting in the new heavens and new earth.

But Jesus not only chose life for us in heaven. He chose life for us here and now on earth. He chose a life of purpose and service and godly choices for us. On the night Jesus was betrayed, on the night He chose to do His Father's will, on the night Jesus chose death for himself, Jesus said to His disciples, "**You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.**" Like Christ chose His disciples, so God chose you in Christ to bear good fruit. God chose you to embody the sanctity of life. God chose you to announce the sanctity of life as more than popular opinion or political controversy. God chose you to enact the sanctity of life as better than personal choice. God chose you to help and encourage in the surprise pregnancies. God chose you to comfort in the terminal diagnoses. God chose you to declare and demonstrate how He creates, redeems, and calls every human life as His own precious treasure from fertilization to forever. God chose you to proclaim courage and hope for the endangered embryo and elderly neighbors. God chose you to show compassion for impaired and incapacitated persons. God chose you to deliver pardon and peace in His gracious forgiveness of those who have participated in abortion, assisted suicide, and other violence against life. God chose you to speak truth that changes hearts. God chose you to show love that saves lives.

In love and grace, God chose you before the creation of the world to be His children. In Baptism, we were claimed by God the Father to be His children, we were connected to the saving work of His Son, and we were converted into temples of the Holy Spirit. The God who created us and redeemed us and lives in us has put His seal of ownership on us! He has chosen us and appointed us for a purpose—to live as Jesus' disciples by bearing fruit for His kingdom. By God's grace, and with His help, may we bear good fruit and make God-pleasing choices that glorify God who chose to create us and save us! Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.