

Choices: September 6, 2026

Deuteronomy 30:11-20, Matthew 7:13-14

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Would you rather have eyes in the back of your head or be able to taste with your fingers?
Would you rather have a head the size of a small grapefruit or the size of a giant watermelon?
Would you rather have a food fight or a water balloon battle?
Would you rather wear a Dracula cape everywhere you go for a month or a pirate eye patch?
Would you rather have a lifetime supply of ice cream or a lifetime supply of chips?
Would you rather see Jesus walk on water or Moses part the sea?

We make choices every day, all the time. Some choices are easy, some hard. Some change very little and some make all the difference in the world.

We are wrapping up our summer series on the first 5 books of the Bible. The Hebrew Torah, the Pentateuch, the Books of Moses. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and today Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy is Moses giving his final speech. He is giving the new generation of Hebrew people the Law of the Lord to take with them and guide them as they settle into the promised land.

If we have learned anything about human nature in these first 5 books, we can say that it is not consistent, reliable, or perfect. But neither is it unimportant. Again and again the people, and we, are given choices. Opportunities that impact ourselves and others.

Passage today from Deuteronomy and Jesus words recorded in Matthew's gospel speak about making choices. Would you rather choose life or death? Prosperity or destruction? But it isn't quite that straight forward.

I want to pose 3 questions that might make us dig a little deeper into these choices set before us:

1. What if the easy road is actually the dangerous one?

We might instinctively assume that if everyone is doing something, it must be relatively safe. Jesus says the opposite. Popularity is not evidence of truth. Majority opinion is not evidence of wisdom. I wonder if there are things in our lives we have stopped questioning simply because everybody around me does them?

Moses instructs the Hebrew people that they will be living differently than the people into whose land they are going. They aren't to "go with the flow" but remember that they are covenant marked peoples.

The broad road is easy to enter. It has room for everyone. No squeezing through a narrow gate. No difficult decisions. No resistance. You can simply drift onto it.

We tend to think that spiritual distress or failure happens because someone makes enormous or terrible decisions. But often it's much quieter:

- We stop praying because we're busy.
- We stop forgiving because we're justified.
- We stop serving because we're tired.
- We stop confronting our sin because it's uncomfortable.

We don't have to choose the wrong road to end up on it. Sometimes all we have to do is stop paying attention to where we are going.

Shema: Dt 6:4-9

"Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Support for daily devotions starting this Thursday.

2. What if the narrow road isn't narrow because God is stingy.

We can easily hear "narrow" as exclusion: *God has made the rules difficult, and only the spiritually elite get through.* But in the context of Matthew 7, Jesus has been talking about things like loving enemies, refusing hypocrisy, trusting God, seeking His kingdom, forgiving, and doing the Father's will.

The narrowness isn't primarily about knowing the secret password. It's about the shape of discipleship. Jesus doesn't merely say, "Believe the correct things." He says, Follow me.

And following Jesus will necessarily narrow some of your options. If I'm following Jesus, I can't simultaneously make money my master. I can't make resentment my identity. I can't make sexual desire my authority. I can't make public approval my god. I can't make comfort the highest good. The narrow road isn't narrow because God wants less life for us. It's narrow because following Jesus requires saying no to other things that compete for the centrality of Jesus in our lives.

God isn't stingy about only letting a few people in. God is particular about shaping those who follow him into a people that reflect who He is.

3. Who is setting the destination?

There's an interesting detail in the passage: Jesus doesn't simply contrast two roads. He contrasts two destinations.

We tend to evaluate decisions by immediate consequences: "Did this make me happy?" "Did this make my life easier?" "Did this get me what I wanted?"

Jesus introduces a longer horizon. Where does this road go? Because a road should be evaluated by its destination, not merely by how pleasant it is along the way.

Jesus doesn't describe the narrow way as something that simply appears in front of us.

"Find it." There is a searching involved. The narrow way is discovered by people who actually want God's way more than they want their own way. Sometimes the problem isn't that we can't find the narrow road. It's that we don't really want where it leads.

Moses describes the Promised Land as a place where life is “loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you...”

If that doesn't mean life to you, then you aren't going to head in that direction!

o perhaps the choice before us is not simply, “Which road do I want to take?” The deeper question is, “Who do I want to become, and who will I trust to show me the way?”

Every day, we are choosing. We choose what we give our attention to. We choose what we love. We choose what we allow to shape our hearts. We choose which voices we listen to and which road we follow. And most of those choices don't feel dramatic in the moment. But over time, they become a direction. And that direction becomes a destination.

Moses stands before the people and says, in effect, “You have a choice before you. Choose life.” And Jesus stands before us and says, “There is a way that leads to life. Find it. Follow it.”

And the good news is that Jesus doesn't just point toward the narrow road from a distance. He walks it with us. He calls us to follow Him.

So as we leave this series, and as we step into another season, may we be people who pay attention to the road we're on. May we listen for God's voice. May we choose faithfulness when the easier choice is to drift. May we choose forgiveness when resentment feels justified. May we choose service when comfort calls. May we choose Jesus when other things are competing for our hearts.

Because in the end, the question isn't simply, “What would you rather have?” The question is, “What will you choose?”

Moses says, “Choose life.” Jesus says, “Follow me.”

So church, let us choose life. Let us choose the way of Jesus. Let us hold fast to Him—not because the road is always easy, but because we know where it leads.

And may the choices we make, day after day, lead us ever more deeply into the life that God has called us to live.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood...
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

- Robert Frost. The Road Not Taken