



'Worship at home' February 12th 2023



We come to worship God
who gives life and love in abundance
when we choose to follow Christ's ways.

Light a candle to remind you of Christ's light to show the way.

Opening

We come to worship God.

We come to give praise and thanks.

We come to read God's Word.

We come to learn and grow.

We come to experience God's grace.

**We come to open ourselves
to the Holy Spirit at work among us.**

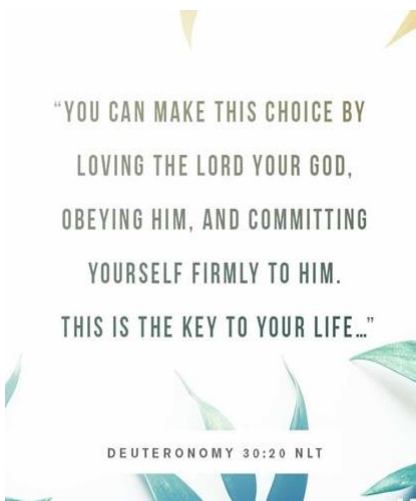
We come to seek God's truth.

We come to follow Christ's way of love.

Amen!

**Reflect on times in your life
when you have had choices to make.**

Who or what has helped you make these choices?



"YOU CAN MAKE THIS CHOICE BY
LOVING THE LORD YOUR GOD,
OBEYING HIM, AND COMMITTING
YOURSELF FIRMLY TO HIM.
THIS IS THE KEY TO YOUR LIFE..."

DEUTERONOMY 30:20 NLT

There are many factors which influence our choices in life, some of which may include our values and integrity, our traditions and teaching, our own expectations and those of others... So often there is not necessarily a right or a wrong choice, just different choices. When we follow Christ, we may try to make choices that reflect Christ's light and love, and which bring light and love to our lives and to those around us, who may be impacted by our choices. 1

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

"Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death. If you obey the commands of the Lord your God, which I give you today, if you love him, obey him, and keep all his laws, then you will prosper and become a nation of many people. The Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are about to occupy. But if you disobey and refuse to listen, and are led away to worship other gods, you will be destroyed - I warn you here and now. You will not

live long in that land across the Jordan that you are about to occupy. I am now giving you the choice between life and death, between God's blessing and God's curse, and I call heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Choose life. Love the Lord your God, obey him and be faithful to him, and then you and your descendants will live long in the land that he promised to give your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." *Good News Bible*

This scripture from the book of Deuteronomy is attributed to Moses. It is part of a speech given to the Israelites as they were about to enter the land promised to them, after their long journey in the wilderness. Deuteronomy is part of the Jewish Torah, the books of the law, and is thought to have been put together around the 6th century BC. The name means "second law giving" and affirms the rules for living that had been passed down from Moses through the generations. Obedience to these rules and religious practices was crucial for the Jewish understanding of their faith. These rules reflected the covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people: that they would walk in God's ways, and God would be faithful to them, blessing them and protecting and keeping them always, that they might flourish.

In this scripture, the people are encouraged to choose life. It is suggested that the key to this is to love God and be faithful in following God's ways.



Each of us make choices throughout the day...

...what shall I eat for breakfast...?

...when is a good time to phone my mother...?

...shall I book that holiday...?

At times, it may seem that our lives are full of choices. At other times, it may seem that we don't have enough choice. We don't choose to lose our job, or for our partner to develop cancer...

We cannot choose our external circumstances, but we can always choose how we respond to them

Epictetus

PICTUREQUOTES.COM

At times, it seems our whole future and wellbeing depends on the choices we make. At other times, we realise that it is not the outcome of our choice that matters, as much as that we are living in love and following God's ways.

There are many things in our lives that we cannot choose, but we can choose how we respond.

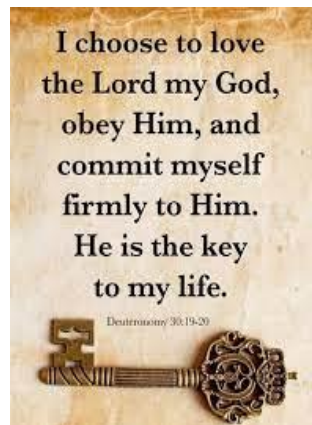
We seek to live in Christ's ways, being true to who God calls us to be. Which car we buy, or where we holiday, is less important than living out our faith, placing God at the centre of our lives, and seeking to love God and love others.

So often, we only know the outcome of our choices later in life when we look back. Sometimes it is helpful to remember that God's love and grace cover our choices, when we seek to walk in Christ's ways.

Perhaps the only basis on which we can really choose is this:

Is this choice in keeping with my desire to love God?

Is this choice in keeping with the command to love others?



Pray for:

- all those who seek to walk Christ's ways and to live faithfully
- those with difficult choices before them at this moment
- those who live with choices that have not always been life-giving
- those who have had their choices taken from them
- those who work for healing, reconciliation and love in the lives of others
- communities of faith who seek to support each other in their lives of faith



Worship with all your heart. Pray genuinely. Love your church. Believe that God loves you. Remember the stories of Jesus. See Christ in the people around you. Share God's love with someone who has forgotten it. Delight in God's good gifts. See that all of life is holy. Open your heart to the Spirit. Search for something deeper and better than your own comfort. Live in the joy beneath it all. Let God make your life wonderful.

Brett Younger; Feasting on the Word, p. 343

Closing

The Law of Moses says:

"You can have life or death. Which will you choose?"

We choose life.

Live the life God is calling you to:

obey the commandments of God,

love God, and walk in God's ways, so you will grow.

We choose to grow.

Jesus Christ says,

"Love God above all and love your neighbour as yourself."

We choose to follow Christ's ways. Amen.

adapted from Worship ways https://www.ucc.org/epiphany_6_february_16