

Choices for an Abundant Life

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[0 : 00] Welcome. Everybody hear me alright? Good. Everyone knows me. I'm Steve Taberski. I've been chosen to speak today.

You know, we've been speaking through this book and I've gotten kind of lucky. The last two times I've gotten to get up here and preach, it was speaker's choice.

Today's speaker's choice. I don't have to use someone else's material to tell you what God is telling me about it. So in the spirit of choosing, I'm going to talk about choices today.

One of the things is every one of you guys made a choice this morning to come here. Thank you for coming. You could have done a number of things, but you chose to come here this morning.

So that's great. And somebody asked me, so one time, what's the title? I don't usually give titles. I was thinking, okay, title to my sermon. And I came up with a title, it's Choosing Your Way into an Abundant Life.

[1 : 14] That's the catchy title I've given today's sermon. So let's pray before we get started.

Father, I thank you, Lord, that you've made a beautiful day today.

The sun's shining. Lord, there's a prospect of rain coming along. I thank you for all the people that are here this morning. I thank you for the great outpouring of your love yesterday and all of the 10,000 boxes of food that got distributed.

I thank you, Lord, for the people that are here this morning. And I pray, Father, that you would speak to all of us. Lord, this morning, I pray that you help me to do a good job.

Lord, not for my will, but your will, Lord. Help us to understand you better. Help us to know how to live our lives such that, Lord, we can have an abundant life.

In Jesus' name, amen. So, never in the history of mankind have we been in a position we can make as many choices as we make today.

[2 : 25] Because of the Internet, not only, you know, you used to say, what am I going to do for a living? Where am I going to live?

And where you, most of the time, what you did for a living, that kind of dictated where you live. But now there are so many people that have the choice to work remotely that there are people living all over the world doing their job.

Cheryl and I like to watch House Hunters International. And there's people just moving everywhere. And a lot of times I'll say, I've got to have an office because I'm working still.

So, these choices, you know, although it's good, it kind of puts a little stress on you too. I mean, you had to, this morning you had to choose to come here.

You also had to choose what you were going to wear, right? And I'll guarantee you, some of you in here and probably all over this nation, you were standing in your closet looking at rows of clothes and you were thinking, I don't have anything to wear.

[3 : 35] Because the choice is too big. You don't, it's hard to choose. It's hard to choose where you're going to eat. You know, there's so many choices out there. You want Chinese?

Yeah, sure, I guess. Whatever you want. But there's just a lot of choices to make in life. Used to, wasn't that long ago, you want to have some coffee.

It would be like, your choice is, you want a black? You want cream? Or cream and sugar? Or one or the other? And that's pretty much it. Now, coffee.

I went on Starbucks website online. Not that I'm a proponent of Starbucks. I'm not, you know, proposing that we support Starbucks.

But they're well known for their coffee. So I said, well, let me go to Starbucks website. Starbucks claims that it offers over 80,000 different drink combinations.

[4 : 36] 80,000, some websites I saw there was like over a billion. 80,000 seems more reasonable to me. But some of the things, instead of you get your coffee with cream and sugar or just black, you can get a tall, nonfat latte with caramel drizzle.

Grande iced sugar-free vanilla latte with soy milk. A triple venti half-sweet nonfat caramel macchiato or whatever that is.

Yeah. Decaf soy latte with an extra shot of cream. A tall half cafe soy latte at 120 degrees.

A nonfat frappuccino with extra whipped cream and chocolate sauce. I'm not going to read all 80,000 of them for you. But it just goes to show you there's a lot of choices to be made in life.

And it's no accident that we have so many choices. You see, God created us in his image. Not that we're exactly like God or equal to God in any way.

[5 : 45] But he has given us the ability to reason, to think, to have a relationship with him. And he's given us the ability to choose.

He didn't make us to be robots that are going to perform exactly how he programmed us. He gave us the ability to make our decisions on our own.

The first decisions that we know that man had to make, well, the first one that's really recorded where we failed is Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

God said, look, all of these trees that bear fruit, they're all food for you. Except the one tree. Don't eat of that tree.

Because in the day you eat of it, you'll surely die. So they had a choice. What did they do? They chose wrong, right? They chose to eat of that fruit.

[6 : 50] And with that, death came into the world. And that death has been thrust upon all of us. Because of what Adam did, Adam and Eve did, we now have death for ourselves.

The Bible says in Romans 5.12, Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned.

You're a sinner. All of us are sinners. That's one thing you don't have a choice about. You're a sinner.

It's in your blood. We're all descendants of Adam, and we all now have this sin nature, and we are sinners. We didn't have a choice in that.

Psalms 51.5 says, Surely I was sinful at birth. Sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

[7 : 56] So we didn't have a choice on that. And because of this sinfulness, that brought death. Romans 6.23 says, For the wages of sin is death.

But many of you know this verse, and know that that's not the end of that verse. There's a but in there. Thank the Lord for but's, right?

But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. You see, God in His grace and mercy has made a way for us to escape this death that has been thrust upon us.

First, 2 Corinthians 5.21 says, For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Because of His great love for us, Christ, who knew no sin, became the sacrifice for our sin. He, um, He, um, you see, see, this is what happens with age.

[9 : 16] A thought just pops in, right out of your head. You're going, you know. What was I going to say?

Yeah. Now, so, Christ became sin for us. See, I know what I was going to say. He's not a descendant of Adam. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

So, Adam is not his, it wasn't in His blood to sin. He was perfect. He was a perfect man. And it's by His blood we are saved.

And we can have eternal life. So, how do you get this eternal life? 1 John 5, 11, 12 says, and this is the record, or here's the, here's the, here's the scoop.

God has given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life. He that has not the Son has not life. It's as simple as that.

[10 : 23] You have the Son, you have life. You don't have the Son, you don't have life. Notice it doesn't say, if you're a member of the church, you have life.

It doesn't say, if your good deeds outweigh your bad in your life, then you have life. It doesn't say, if you do penance and say, 50 Hail Marys, then you have life.

It doesn't say that. It just says, you have the Son, you have life. It doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter who your parents are. It doesn't matter how much money they gave to the church.

It doesn't matter how much money you give. It doesn't matter how many good deeds you do. If you have the Son, you have life. So how do you get the Son?

John 5.12 says, but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.

[11 : 31] Galatians 4.6 says, and because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son to dwell in your heart. So, you receive Christ's sacrifice for your sin.

And by faith in Christ's death and resurrection, and you believe that God has raised Him from the dead, and you believe that He died for your sins, you become a Son of God.

And when you become a Son of God, God's Spirit is sent to dwell in your heart according to Galatians 4. That's how you have the Son. Do you have the Son?

Has there been a time in your life that you've said, God, I know that I'm a sinner. I have faith that Jesus died for my sin. Please, Lord, save me.

And once you do that, then you're saved. Then you have the Son. So many, I've heard all kinds of people say, I remember one time, it was so sad, I heard a little boy ask his mom about, am I saved?

[12 : 49] Mom, am I saved? And she said, oh yeah, son, we had you baptized when you were a baby. You're set. It's terrible. It's sad. See, the Bible says that, well this is, by the way, this is another thing you don't have a choice on.

Man has decided in his infinite wisdom and choices that there are a lot of ways to get eternal life.

That's why there are so many different religions and so many different denominations out there. everyone thinks that they know the way. And I'm not telling you, I'm only telling you what the Bible says here. The Bible says you have the Son, you have life. You don't.

You don't have life. There's, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me. Acts 4.12 says, neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

Jesus is the only way. That's another thing. You don't have a choice. You can't say, well I'm going to get there on my own. I'm, you know, he's a loving God.

[14 : 08] He's, he's very sincere. I'm, I'm very sincere so he's going to, he's going to bless me. You know, I think I'm alright. And unfortunately, there's going to be a lot of people that stand before him one day and say, Lord, I've done many wonderful things in your name.

He's going to say, depart from me. I never knew you. There's only one way. And that's faith in his death and resurrection for your life. Another thing that Jesus said in John 10.10, he says, I am the, I have come that they might have life and they might have it more abundant.

Now, we just talked about this life, this life that we can get through accepting the son. What about this life more abundantly part?

See, that's, if you've chosen life, that's good. That's the first step in having this abundant life. You have to accept Christ as your savior. So how do we have an abundant life though?

Luckily, Jesus and his grace and wisdom has given us the Bible. This is our instruction book here for having an abundant life.

[15 : 22] And I chose, there's a whole bunch of things that we can talk about that God says, these are your choices. And I chose a few of them probably because I have been convicted myself of, of these things that I'm about to talk to you.

number one, you need to figure out who's your Lord. You know, Christ, you might, you might believe that Jesus died, you may be saved, but you're not really making him Lord of your life.

You're choosing other things, whether it's a sports or whether it's your job or your family or whatever, they become your God instead of letting God lead you and be your God.

I like what Joshua said in 24, 15, but if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose you for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you're living.

He said, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. Have you, have you made that choice? Are you going to serve the Lord or are you just going to have him as your Savior and your fire escape?

[16 : 39] Are you going to serve him? If we don't, if we choose not to serve him, it's going to be hard to have that abundant life. Oh, you'll have life, you'll, you'll, but not that abundant life.

So let's, let's talk about some choices that we can make in having abundant life. Number one is choose to love.

1 Peter 4:8 says, above all, love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sins. John 5, 15, 12 says, my command is this, love each other as I have loved you.

John 4, 7 says, dear friends, let us love one another for love comes from God and everyone who loves is of God. Love. If love just came naturally to us, then it wouldn't have to tell us to do it so much.

It would, why talk about it if it's a natural thing? You have to choose love. Now, some people are just hard to love. And sometimes we have a hard time loving the people in our family even, right? [17:49] We have to choose it. We have to decide, you know what, I'm going to love you anyway. Because that's what God wants me to do. I choose love.

Another thing that we can choose if you want to have this abundant life is choose to forgive. Ephesians 4, 32 says, be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another even as Christ forgave you.

Again, it's hard to forgive people. If you've been wronged, it's easy to write somebody off. The hard thing is to forgive them and to love them back.

1 Peter 3, 9 says, do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing because this you are called because this is how you are called and that you may inherit a blessing.

So choose to love, choose to forgive. Another thing, and like I say, there's probably hundreds of them in here.

[19:06] God's given us a lot of instructions. Choose to build each other up. 1 Thessalonians 5, 11 says, therefore encourage one another and build up one another just as you're doing.

He's talking to the Thessalonians there. Ephesians 4, 29, don't let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs.

In Colossians 3, 12 says, therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

I was reading about forgiveness and believe it or not, the Mayo Clinic says that your life will be prolonged if you forgive people because it just takes so much tension away.

God knew that already. That's why He gave us those instructions. Not only that, well, I'll talk about that in a minute.

[20:16] Sorry. So, as I was thinking about this, I was thinking, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to give, and I've never seen anybody do this before, but I get to choose today.

I'm going to pause for a moment here, and I'm going to give everyone in this room an opportunity to get up and go to someone and express your love, your thankfulness, and build somebody up.

We don't do it enough. If there's somebody that you'd like to say something, and if you don't get somebody to come to you and say a good word to you, just remember, it's better to give than to receive.

So, I'm going to give you three minutes right now. Go! Go! Thank you.

I'm going to incent you to your face. Thank you.

[22:11] I appreciate you, man.

Yes, sir. Thank you. You're one of the best techs we got out there now. You know that. I don't know about that. Well, I thought I'd just say something. Maybe the only ones left. I'm really happy to see you guys here.

Thanks for coming. Thanks for choosing. Glad to be here. Sorry I snuck in a little late. Ah. But we chose to be here. Hey. I hope you're something. I can talk to you about something after.

Okay. Sounds good. Sounds good. One thing. Good idea. Awesome. Thank you.

Yep. I can't use. I can't use. I can't use. I can't use. I can't use. I can't use. I can't use. I can't use. I can't use.

[23:13] I can't use. I can't use. Oh, my heart. It's starting to bust out of my chest. Yeah. Amen.

Okay. It's getting close to the time to sit back in your seats. Everyone find a seat. Please. If we don't find a seat soon, it'll be one o'clock before we get out of here.

Oh, that's spit everybody up. You know, people need encouragement.

How can you tell when somebody needs to be encouraged? If they're breathing. If they're breathing, they need to be encouraged. So don't.

I mean, the Bible tells us to build each other up. Doesn't it feel good to build other people up, to tell them you're appreciating? So your job this week is to do that.

[24 : 49] Next Sunday, I won't be here, but I would love to hear a story of maybe next Sunday during the praise time. Somebody was saying, you know, I was really blessed by so-and-so this week.

They sent me a card or a letter or something. Build each other up. We're in this together. Another thing that you can choose, that God tells us to choose if we're going to have an abundant life, is to choose to be thankful.

1 Thessalonians 5.18 says, Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ for you. Some of my favorite verses is Philipians 4, 6, and 7.

Don't be anxious for anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. This is another thing that the Mayo Clinic and other people have said will prolong your life if you have an attitude of gratitude.

Just having that attitude. And you know what, in this country it doesn't come that naturally for us. Because we have so much. We end up not seeing what we have, but seeing what we don't have.

[26 : 11] Because there's so much to have. And we're striving to get that other thing that we don't have. Just a little bit more is what we need. And we forget to be thankful for what we have.

So you have to deliberately make yourself be thankful. You know, just look at things. And find something to be thankful for in that.

Find something to be thankful for in each other. As you're interacting with each other. I got this off of one of the medical websites.

Most of us know it's important to express thanks to the people who help us. Or silently acknowledge the things we're grateful for in life. Research has linked gratitude with a wide range of benefits.

Including strengthening your immune system. And improving your sleep patterns. Feeling optimistic and experiencing more joy and pleasure. Being more helpful and generous.

[27 : 10] And feeling less lonely and isolated. God knew that already before they figured this out. That's why He told us. To be thankful.

With thanksgiving, let your requests be made on them to God. And you know what? When you're thankful too, it makes it harder to be grumpy and grouchy. There's another thing God tells us to do in Philipians 4.

I mean 2.14-15. Do everything without grumbling or arguing. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. If you have this attitude of gratitude, it's hard to be a grumbler.

Right? And if you're not grumbling, maybe you're happy. And that's that abundant life that God has promised us. Amen. Amen. Amen.

One more thing I wanted to talk about is choosing joy. If you do these other things, the joy comes easier. But sometimes you just have to choose joy.

[28 : 12] Amen. I'm not going to let it get me down because I already know Romans something 18 sorry says this is how we know Paul was a southerner because the King James says for I reckon that the sufferings of this present day are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us I mean we've got so much to be thankful for in this Thanksgiving time just be thankful for what you have be thankful for I remember a friend of mine was really grieving over his father's death and we were discussing it and he was just telling me some of the wonderful things that he and his father had done together but now he's gone and he was just really having a hard time over that and I heard all of those things that he was saying to me and I was

I was thinking man I never had that with my father my father was kind of aloof and he worked all the time and was always away and I was like man I said and it reminded me of the great philosopher's words Winnie the Pooh Winnie the Pooh said how lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard how I told this person I said man you don't know how lucky you are to have had that with your father and I guarantee you he wouldn't want you to be grieving so much for him now just be happy for what you had and one day you'll see him again so we've got a lot to be thankful for choosing joy Philipians 4 4 says rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice it's interesting Paul we just went through this book of Philipians and Paul over and over again in the book of Philipians tells us to rejoice rejoice you know he was writing that from prison of all people that had a reason to not rejoice and not be happy was Paul he was constantly being hounded by people that were trying to get rid of him trying to put him in prison trying to shut him up poor Paul he was he was actually catching it from both ends because remember Paul Paul used to be Saul and he used to persecute Christians so when he was converted the Christians didn't trust him because he was

after them he thought it's a trick and the people who were his cohorts trying to get rid of the Christians now they didn't like him because now he's become a Christian so Paul he had it rough and Paul said in Philippians he said not that I speak with respect of want but in everything or something

I find I'm content so if we do all of these things we follow God's lesson book and like I say this is just a few of them there's all kinds of things to choose because God says do it and trust me nothing in this book has ever been disproven by science everything in this book every day it gets proven oh well that's pretty neat but I remember reading the Bible talks about the circle of the earth and people were saying that's stupid the earth is flat but it's a circle I told us it was a circle a long time before they ever decided yeah the world is round it's just neat it's neat if you read the word that's your instruction book for living there was a joke

I was supposed to tell you Mark is all the time wanting me to tell jokes at the beginning of this talking about making choices there was this it was a while back this young girl was going to have a date her date was there at the house sitting in the living room with her with the girl's mother and she you know they didn't have much so she she calls out to her mother because she wants to impress this young man she says mom um should I wear my red dress my new dress or the dress I wore yesterday and the mom yells out the one you wore yesterday is the only one you got see that would have been an easy choice right but she she wanted to impress somebody anyway sorry I didn't put that in the beginning I'm going to sum things up number one of choices choose life if you haven't chosen life yet you need to do that today you need to go and decide today like like uh

[33 : 47] Joshua said choose you this day don't think about it don't say well I'll pray about it choose you this day right now you need to choose you need to choose life if you haven't done that then please do that today because you don't know what tomorrow holds choose love choose joy choose to rejoice choose to praise God when I didn't cover choose to pray choose to forgive choose to build each other up and choose to be thankful don't wait for Thanksgiving to be thankful be thankful be thankful every day let's pray father I thank you for the words that you give me today didn't come out exactly the way I thought it was

Lord but your word is powerful father and it's your word that I was proclaiming not mine thank you for the word thank you for giving us instructions you love us Lord and you gave us instructions on how to have an abundant life and I pray father that all of us in here will choose life and choose to follow your instructions for having an abundant life folks and right now they're going to play John's going to be up here if you have something that you feel convicted over if you feel like you don't have that life I never chose life before I invite you to come up here choose life today maybe in your life you've made bad decisions maybe you've been unforgiving or maybe you've you're holding grudges or maybe you've just lost your joy you need to figure out

I need to choose joy come up here and there'll be someone who can pray with you thank you for being here today without oh take care of see you