

Choice for God or against God is up to each one of us

Christian life is a series of daily choices for God or against God, as we choose to live out or reject the truths He has revealed through His prophets and especially through His Son Jesus. The fundamental choice we make determines how we live our lives, deciding whom we will serve. God has blessed us with free will (freedom) to choose what's good for ourselves but at the same time we have to bear the consequence of those choices that we make.

Jesus challenged Jewish people and His apostles, to make their choice: to accept Him as the true Bread from Heaven who gives them His Body and Blood as their Heavenly Food or to join those who have lost their Faith in Jesus and left Him, expressing it as the hard teaching (Jn 6:53, 60-69). The Jewish leaders and many others chose badly; Judas made the worst choice of all; pretending to follow Jesus while planning to betray him and never even dared to ask for forgiveness for the wrong choice he made in life. Peter and the other apostles chose well; "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" (Jn 6:68-69). Many other disciples abandoned Jesus because they did not understand His teaching, so they did not accept it, and thus refused to believe in Him. Their attitude could be ours too; we do not understand it, so we do not accept it. This happens because we lack faith. Faith is must to understand and accept Jesus and His teaching. Faith is not a given. It is not simply a set of ideas to be held on to. Most of us are baptised when we were babies, faith is handed down to us by our parents, grandparents and godparents. But as we grow to be an adult, all we need is to personalize and grow deeper in the faith. Faith is a living relationship with God and His vision of life. It is a relationship that needs to grow and be deepened with the years. It is a relationship that has constantly to be re-appraised in a constantly changing world.

Jesus did not negotiate with those who were leaving Him; neither did He compromise the truth of His doctrine to win them over. He did not bargain with them and call them back. He just let them go. There are truths in the teachings of Jesus that are non-negotiable. There is the danger we have: we are Christians that tend to pick and choose, a customised Jesus, a Jesus who fits in with our likes and dislikes, a Jesus whom we find comfortable and convenient. We like and long for His love, mercy, compassion and forgiveness but when it comes to anchoring our life with His way, life and truth, then we find it challenging and hard. The life that Jesus proposes is swimming against the currents of society. For sure, they are challenging but they lead us to eternal life. Perhaps we too will feel like leaving Jesus, leaving His Church. Many times in our life we may experience some serious doubts about our faith and find no meaning in it. Perhaps we have had that experience already. No doubt, living faith is a challenge and not easy in this fast changing digital world. It can be very painful and disconcerting. There are many reasons why this can happen to any one of us. And it is also human to encounter those challenges. But many have reflected that, in spite of the difficulties and doubts, there is really no viable alternative to the way of life that Jesus proposes. It is a way of life that is not invalidated by the scandalous behaviour of some of Jesus' followers. We learn to make a clear distinction between the essence of Christ's vision and the messy way in which His followers try to live it. Jesus wants us to choose Him over evil, choose life over death, choose the good over bad and be faithful to our part of the covenant that we have made with Him on the day of baptism to love God and our neighbour above everything else.

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