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"Choosing Life over Death"

By Rev. Edgar Solís

Intro.

Kenneth Wright was a high school football star and later an avid wrestler, boxer, hunter, and skin diver.

This young man suffered a terrible accident.

A broken neck sustained in a wrestling match in 1979 left him paralyzed from the chest down. He underwent therapy, and his doctors were hopeful that one day he would be able to walk with the help of braces and crutches.

But apparently, the former athlete could not reconcile himself to his physical disability.

He prevailed upon two of his best friends to take him in his wheelchair to a wooded area, where they left him alone with a twelve-gauge shotgun.

After they left, the tragedy occurred.

Kenneth Wright, twenty-four, committed suicide.

Jim McGowan, at the age of nineteen was stabbed and left paralyzed from the middle of his chest down. He was confined to a wheelchair. However, and amazingly, he made a successful parachute jump, landing on his target in the middle of a lake.

News people learned several things about Jim.

He lives alone, cooks his meals, washes his clothes, and cleans his house.

He drives himself in his specially equipped automobile.

He has written three books, and he did the photography for our country's first book on the history of wheelchair sports. Two men: one chose life and the other one didn't.

As Robert Frost wrote: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I took the one less traveled by – and that has made all the difference."

In life, we all make choices, crucial or straightforward.

What is the option you will take to make a difference in your existence?

20-22 is a golden opportunity to make an outstanding choice with our life and ministry.

Bible passages

It is amazing to reflect and believe in what we can read in the Bible.

Let's recall today's Bible passages.

In the Old Testament, we have God vehemently saying: Choose life!

It is not that God only lets us choose what we want, leaving all to our free will.

The idea of a divine plan with promises, life, and joy for us is in God's heart.

Here is where Jesus' words make sense: "I am the way, and the truth and the life. Jesus identifies himself as the point of access to life with God and the embodiment of that life. Putting all of this together, we can say that God is exceedingly passionate about providing his word, presence, and guidance in order to make life possible and accessible to everyone!

Invitation

The two stories that I shared in my introduction depicted the reality of two men in their lives. Challenges and problems could represent a powerful motivation for a wrong decision or could be an excellent opportunity to thrive and succeed.

Still, God wants us to experience abundant life always and everywhere!

Today we are called to believe the will of God for us as people of faith.

How many of us want to see our church thrive?

How many of us want to see families with children coming to our church ministry?

How many want to see people of different colors, from different nations and cultures sharing this space of welcoming, acceptance, compassion, and service?

How many of us want to see our church building being used for the service of our community, bringing people to enjoy fellowship, arts, culture, and more development of community services and spirituality?

Dear church, as a pastor I do believe that Jesus is calling us to participate in a living church. Our Church consultant Paul Nixon states: *In a church, choosing life means reframing the playing field for your ministry in a way that enables you to concentrate on what is living and thriving. Tend primarily to what is living, not to what is passing away.*

We are invited to choose life, to be servants of life, we are invited to refuse, ever again, to be servants of death. I choose life – I choose the life of Christ in me, in all aspects of my existence, I choose life for 2022. I'll preach about life. I'll share the life

of Christ to others! Do you want to walk this journey with Christ? Do you want to walk along with me?

Application.

Finally, I want to give you three actions that can show that we choose life for our church.

1. Let's spend more time in prayer and communion with the Holy Spirit.
2. Let's dedicate more time to building bridges in the community.
3. Let's put more time and energy into developing people's lives in ways that will take the church into its future.

As we move forward toward the future, let's be confident that God will lead us to put into practice these three actions.

Let's choose life and move forward to a brighter future! Amen!