

A photograph of a snowy park path, likely Central Park in New York City. The path is covered in snow, and the trees are bare and heavily laden with snow. A person is walking in the distance, and a few street lamps are visible along the path.

Daily Reflections

February 15, 2018

Scripture

Deuteronomy 18: 15-20

Moses said to the people:

"Today I have set before you
life and prosperity, death and doom.

If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God,
which I enjoin on you today,
loving him, and walking in his ways,
and keeping his commandments, statutes and decrees,
you will live and grow numerous,
and the LORD, your God,
will bless you in the land you are entering to occupy.

If, however, you turn away your hearts and will not listen,
but are led astray and adore and serve other gods,
I tell you now that you will certainly perish;
you will not have a long life

on the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and occupy.

I call heaven and earth today to witness against you:

I have set before you life and death,
the blessing and the curse.

Choose life, then,

that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God,
heeding his voice, and holding fast to him.

For that will mean life for you,

a long life for you to live on the land that the LORD swore

he would give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Our Scripture Reflection

Deuteronomy purports to be a speech by Moses to the freed Israelite former slaves as they are about to enter the Promised Land. Moses calls them to choose life. How? By living the commandments of God once they enter the land "flowing with milk and honey." Please note: For Moses, the commandments are not simply a bunch of rules and regulations....they are the tools representing the will of God that will bring them prosperity and goodness when obeyed. How could one not want to follow them?

Food for your Journey

Did you ever go into the paint store looking for a simple color, only to be handed one of those color charts with dozens of little colored squares on it? "Let's see what we've got here," says the clerk, trying to be helpful. "Do you want Pearl Gray, or Battleship Gray? We have Confederate Gray (with just a hint of brown in it). There's the ever-popular Blue-Gray. And over here's Mount Vernon Gray, faithfully re-created from the 200-year-old wainscoting in George Washington's back bedroom."

If only the ethical options in life were black and white. Choosing would be so much easier! Would that every option came with a helpful little tag labeled "Right" or "Wrong"!

When you're driving a car, if you try to turn the wrong way onto an exit ramp, you'll see a big red sign blaring back at you: "Wrong Way!" There's no mistaking that instruction.

Yet, so many of our ethical choices do seem to be painted in shades of gray. Do we drop a coin in the panhandler's cup? (He looks hungry, but what if he uses it to buy wine?) If our dinner host asks what we really think of his latest culinary creation, is it better to be honest and say it tastes like cardboard -- or to hedge the truth a little? And what about that questionable deduction on the tax return?

"Choose life!" Moses proclaims. But how?

It's never easy. But choose we must. That's Moses' point. Hem and haw over every decision, and we'll never glimpse the promised land.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You summed up all the commandments into one great commandment: Love God and neighbor as self. Open my mind to realize that You desire nothing more than my salvation. May I keep the commandments out of love for You. Amen