

Deuteronomy 27-30

“Remember your Covenant”

Introduction

- Tonight we are going to continue our study in the book of Deuteronomy.
 - **The word Deuteronomy literally means “the second law.”**
- And that is what Deuteronomy is – it is Moses repeating to the children of Israel everything they have heard before.

But before you let that scare you remember even though they had heard this all before, this was a new generation.

- It is done differently.
 - When the law is given in Exodus and Leviticus and even into Numbers – it is given with great detail to help out the elders who were helping Moses make judgments and it was for the Levites so they understood how many bulls to offer for this sin offering or burnt offering.
- This time when Moses reiterates the law he doesn't repeat all that detail because this time it is for the people – Moses adds emphasis and encouragement as the Lord sees fit.

And because of that, this second law, the book of Deuteronomy is one of the most quoted books in the New Testament.

- It is third on the list in fact behind Psalms and Isaiah, which were pretty important books.
 - Jesus quotes from the book of Deuteronomy over and over again and uses it exclusively to fight the temptation of Satan in the wilderness.

So the book of Deuteronomy is important.

- And we are studying it at the same exact speed in which it was originally given.
 - **The book of Deuteronomy is five sermons of Moses given over a period of 37 days.**

And we are looking at this book, over 5 Wednesday Nights over a period of 35 days.

- One sermon of Moses each Wednesday Night, over five weeks.

The outline for the book we are following correlates with each of Moses five sermons each with a different emphasis of remembering.

- Moses wanted them to remember certain things before they went into the Promised Land.

The Book of Deuteronomy – 5 Sermons

#1 - Remember your History – Chapters 1-4

#2 - Remember your God– Chapters 5-11

#3 - Remember your Law– Chapters 12-26

#4 - Remember your Covenant– Chapters 27-30

#5 - Remember your Leader– Chapters 31-34

Well tonight we move into the fourth sermon of Moses before he goes home to be with the Lord and the children of Israel enter the Promised Land – and for this sermon Moses wanted the people of Israel to “Remember Your Covenant.”

- And what Moses is doing is a lot like a commencement address.

You know when graduation time comes some speakers lay it out it for you.

- If you do this – this is the direction of your life.
 - If you do this – this is where you are heading.
- And Moses in this same fashion – spells out the covenant.

- What will happen if they follow it?
- And what will happen if they don't.

And we will follow this simple outline tonight.

Remember your Covenant – Deuteronomy 27-30

The Set up for the Covenant – 27:1-26

The Blessings of the Covenant – 28:1-14

The Curses of the Covenant – 28:15-68

The Covenant itself – Deuteronomy 29-30

- Lets consider those on at a time starting with...

Remember your Covenant – Deuteronomy 27-30

The Set up for the Covenant – 27:1-26

- Read 27:1-13

As they are about to enter the land, Moses again wants to teach them an important lesson.

- Go this way in your lives you will be blessed.
 - Go this way and it will be cursing upon you.

But in order to teach them, Moses sets up this great activity or illustration to hammer the truth home.

- Moses has half of the tribes of Israel go up on Mount Ebal, and the other half go up on mount Gerizim.
 - **Pictures of Mount Ebal and Gerizim.**

Half of the tribes were to go up to Mount Ebal and set up an alter.

- And God says I don't want you to use iron tools, I don't want you to write out the law with flowery language – I just want you to pile up some stones to offer sacrifices, I just want you to write the plain Word of God.
 - And from Mount Ebal I want you to proclaim the curses of not following the Law.
 - And from Mount Gerizim I want you to proclaim the blessings of Obedience.

Well that must have been a bummer for those on Mount Ebal – having to be the tribes that read off the curses, I would have rather been on Mount Gerizim

But also remember – the alter was on Mount Ebal.

- The instrument by which they would receive forgiveness from their sin was on Mount Ebal.
 - And this was a blessing, because something happens when I am confronted with my sin and even more so when I am confronted with the fact that I am forgiven of my sin.

In Luke chapter 7 Jesus is having dinner at the house of the Pharisee by the name of Simon.

- And as Jesus is eating, a woman comes in who was a prostitute and she is weeping, and she anoints Jesus' feet and wipes them with her tears.
 - And Simon says within his heart, not out loud –if this man was really a prophet, he would know what kind of woman this is.

And Jesus says to Simon, I have a story for you – One man owed a debt of 500 denarii and the other 50 denarii, and the creditor forgave both of their debts.

- Which one loves their creditor more?
 - And Simon says, well I guess the one that was forgiven more.
 - Jesus said exactly.

“Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of

her head. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are many*, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same loves little.*” – Luke 7:44-47

- You see what I believe Jesus was saying is when I am confronted with my sin, how gross it really is and not just my sin but the fact that God loves me and forgives me, that is good for me, because I love Him more.

I just point that out because sometimes we hear, well I don't like reading the Bible because it makes me feel bad about how I live.

- Good – its suppose to.
 - And now that I'm thinking about your preaching, I don't really like your preaching, because I feel like you are yelling at me.
 - Good! Good!
- Precious ones it is good for us to realize how really messed up we are.
 - But then don't stay there.
 - The Word and hopefully the preaching – makes you realize you are a sinner and that you are lost.
 - But then the Word and hopefully the preaching lets you know, but God loves you, you dirty nasty sinner.
- And Jesus has paid the price for you – you are forgiven.
 - When we realize how much we are forgiven, what we have really been saved from.
 - That is not a bummer but a blessing.
 - To whom much is forgiven, that person loves much.

And you do realize what Jesus was saying – it was not that Simon the Pharisee didn't have as much sin as the prostitute – it was the he didn't realize it and so he didn't respond with love toward Jesus.

- So I say – the Word makes you sad about your sin – good!
- The preaching makes you feel like you don't measure up – good!
 - Because you don't, I don't, we don't.
 - But Jesus has forgiven you and me.
 - And I love Him so much because of it.

Those on Mount Ebal were the unfortunate tribes men but they were the fortunate ones, because they realized the dept of sin and saw the forgiveness of sin on the alter – and I bet – it produced love in their hearts for the Lord who had forgiven them so much!

Now they will actually do this in the book of Joshua, half the tribes go up on Mount Ebal and build an alter, so we will get back to that in a few weeks.

- But that day, Moses simply has the Levities read the curses and the people would say “Amen.”
 - In fact – lets do it together – you have one line – Amen – it's there in the text, here we go...

➤ [Read 27:15-26](#)

Now understand – these elders, these Levites were not speaking in prophecy, or in other words – this is what will happen if you don't obey, that will come in the next chapter.

- But they were not prophesying, they were asking God to judge them if they did not keep the law.

- And by saying “Amen” the people were affirming – we want to be under this covenant.
- They are agreeing with God – if these things come about in our lives – we understand cursing will and should follow.
- Wait – what were we just doing a moment ago, not you – you under a new covenant, sort of, oh we will get to that in the minute...

Remember your Covenant – Deuteronomy 27-30

The Set up for the Covenant – 27:1-26

The Blessings of the Covenant – 28:1-14

- God lays out for them in the first part of this chapter what would happen if they would simply take God at His Word and obey.

And the blessings are intense – I mean who doesn’t want what we just read.

- What you put your hand to will be blessed.
 - You will have so much you will lend and not borrow.
 - Everything you do will be blessed.
- You get to be the head and not the tail – I have had a dog for a year now, and I am now well aware of why you want to be the head and not the tail.
 - Crazy stuff sticks down there and its not pretty to be the tail.
- Yes – Lord I want to be the head.
 - I want to just increase and expand.
 - I want to be blessed in what I do.

I love the imagery of verse 2 – blessings shall come upon you and overtake you.

- The language is awesome – overtake you – literally means the blessing will pursue you and you will not be able to get away.
 - That’s a pleasant thought isn’t it???
- But notice – because your worth it, because you deserve it?
 - No – Because you listened to God and His Word – plain and simple.
 - This is the idea of blessing.

You see – God loves me; God loves you, just because He wants to.

- We are saved, not by works of righteousness that we have done.
 - But by the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
 - Plain and simple.

But – fruitfulness in your life – blessing in your life, in your marriage, in your family, in your ministry, I believe is very much tied in to your willingness to take God at His Word and do what He says.

I believe everyday you and wake up and have one of two choices, just two.

- You will either serve the Lord with gladness or you will serve the enemy with sadness.
 - And I didn’t make that up – look at 28:47,48
- Serve the Lord with joy and gladness.
 - Or serve the enemy with sadness.
 - Your choice – everyday, every moment.
 - And to hammer home that point next we get to the curses.
- The first time curses were mentioned the people were affirming – if we don’t keep your Word, we wouldn’t realize these things would come upon us.
 - Now God is saying – this is what will happen if you disobey.
 - He didn’t want them to think it was just random circumstance – He wanted them to know what they were experiencing was the result of their sin.
 - A very sobering section of scripture but lets read it together.

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- It is sad to consider the history of the Jewish people, people I love with all my heart, but it is sad to see their history in light of this prophecy.
 - Because everything, every single curse that we read came upon them at one time or another in their history.
- Be it the siege of Assyria, or Babylon or Rome in 70 AD or Hitler in the 1930's – every single thing has come upon them.

In fact if you notice verse 62, you will be few in number, and you consider that there are 1.6 billion Chinese people in the world today, there are 1.4 billion Indians as in from India, 1.6 billion, 1.4 billion and there are just over 13 million Jews in the world today.

- Now think through what I just said, The Chinese, the Indian culture and the Jewish people are all about the same age as far as a people group.
 - 1.6 billion Chinese
 - 1.4 billion Indians
 - 13 million Jews

“You shall be left few in number...” – Deuteronomy 28:62

- Sobering!!!!

In modern Christianity we don't like to talk about the subject of cursing.

- We like the image of the blond haired fair skinned Jesus walking along the shore of Galilee, patting little kids on the head and saying, “sin no more.”
 - That is the picture of the God I like, that is the one I like to talk about.
- The idea of God bringing or sending judgment and curses upon any people is an idea we can find repulsive.
 - But as I have been studying this passage, the Lord has shown me some things I want to share with you that have really opened up my understanding of things.

The word in our text, “cursed” or “to curse” is the Hebrew word “arar” and it comes from the root of another Hebrew word – “Qalal” which at its root means to pull away from, or to lessen.

- The word is first used in Genesis 8:8 speaking of waters of Noah's flood being abated, or going away.

And the picture there is very important for us to understand.

- You see some people misunderstand the word of God, especially in passages like this in the OT, is that God bringing curses upon people?
 - And that does seem to be the way it reads in the English.
 - But as you examine it, you see what is really happening.
 - To curse, at its root is to pull away from or to remove the hand.

We understand from scripture (Psalm 16:11) – In His presence, speaking of God, is fullness of joy – At His right hand are pleasures forever more.”

- In other words with Him, with the Lord is great joy, blessing, protection and even pleasure.

However if you and I choose to go a different direction than God is going in our lives, if we choose to get involved in things that are contrary to whom He is...

- It is not that God in anger brings cursing.

- “You offended me and now I will make your life miserable” – that is you and me, that is how we act and respond.
- No – instead as we pull away, He curses, He withdraws.
- And all that is left is the absence of His presence – pain and the effects of sin.

But it says in verse 63 – The Lord rejoices to destroy them – no – think about it like destroying a rotten home in order to build it again.

- God will destroy the sin and the effects of sin, to build again.
 - But He would rather we run from sin in the first place because He knows what it will do to you.

We have talked about this before – but as Peter said it is not tedious for me to repeat it again and for you it is good, it is safe.

- Sin is not bad because it is forbidden.
 - It is forbidden because it is bad.
 - And there is a fundamental difference.
- God has not created the commandments because He has nothing better to do than to mess with your life.
 - And so here are some things that I casually for no apparent reason make up to confuse you.
 - No way.
- It is because God who made us knows what will be a blessing to us, things He is into, things He is blessing.
 - And He knows things that will harm us and hurt us and be a problem for us.
 - And so for those things as a loving Father, He says – don’t go there, don’t be involved in that – I am not about that – my blessing is not upon it, because I know it is harmful to you, even if you don’t see it.

I have been asked by people before – Jason, your view on sex outside of marriage is so Victorian. I mean I believe God is into good things, and two people enjoying each other, loving one another – it doesn’t matter if they are married, it doesn’t matter if they are two guys or two gals – if its love, and fun – what the problem???

- The problem is I don’t know what God you serve, but the one I do has written a book.
 - And in that book He has shared very plainly, very basically – children avoid these things, don’t do these things – because I know you, I created you, and even if you don’t see the harm, are you going to trust dear old Dad.

You now if your doctor shares with you – put on sunscreen when you are outside – and maybe you have been living in a cave and have no idea about skin cancer – so you might be tempted to say – what, what’s the problem? – The sun is warm, it makes me feel good – if I shouldn’t be it, it wouldn’t shine – I don’t see any effects.

- And although you may feel nothing, and experience zero negative effects, inside a cancer is developing.

And I used that illustration, because I see God saying that same thing – I know more than you, I know how humanity works.

- But I don’t feel any effects, if it feels so right it can’t be wrong.
 - Oh don’t be so foolish.
- If the Lord has called it sin – He has done so for a reason – and you need to repent and get right – because the direction you going –the Lord is not there and that is not good for you.

- But repent and get back with Him, not cursing, withdrawn from Him – but confessing – speaking the same, having fellowship with Him.

We need to learn from these things.

- In the second half of chapter 28, God specifically lists things that would happen if Israel chooses not to follow His law.
 - And as you read them, what hits you if you know anything about Jewish History is this is exactly what happened to them.
 - They were taken captive by other nations, they were sold into slavery again to Egypt by the Romans – their children were dispersed all over the world – everything God said happened exactly like God said.
- You know I learn from this?????

God says what He means, and means what He says.

- And this was a lesson Israel had to learn.
 - It is a lesson our nation will have to learn as well.
 - We were founded by Godly leaders on Godly principals – you can get the journals of men like George Washington and other founders and you will realize that these were radical God fearing men.
 - And the things that happened to our country were not because of blind luck or weird circumstances – it was God.
- The pilgrims were not saved the by Indians like you are taught in school, they partnered with them.
 - Read the history – they were godly men who sought the Lord and God provided for them radically.
 - And they feasted to thank God for his provision, not to thank the Indians.

We defeated England not because George Washington and the American army were the best-trained forces in the world.

- Historical reports that you can read tell of a man, and a people who knew the importance of prayer and had a purpose by God.
 - And Historical reports record bullets flying from English guns right at our men, right at George Washington – and refusing to hit him.
 - It was God doing a work.

And yet today if you believe the News and the humanist leaders – America is blessed because of capitalism and democracy and I am a fan of those systems – but then we are told that we don't need God – just live free - anything goes will be our blessing.

No way – like Babylon and Rome before us – this country on its current course is heading for destruction.

- And salvation will not be found in republicans or democrats.
 - But only in revival and a return to God's principals for the life of a nation.
 - And most of us believe this and pray this for our country.

But the same things apply to our families, things we really can control.

- Trouble, heartache caused by sin.
 - Will not be fixed by a vacation or professional counseling.
 - But only in a return to God's principals for your life and for your family.

God tells the people – these are the curses – this is what happens when you choose to go the way I have told you is harmful.

- I will still love you and you are still my people.

- But I will curse you – I will withdraw my hand of blessing and protection and allow you to walk in the effects of what you have chosen if this is what you really want.
- It is not me – it is the end result of the sin.
 - But there is another choice.
 - I just want to read chapter 29-30, in one go through, I want you to imagine Moses preaching and then I want to draw some happy conclusions here tonight.

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God establishes this covenant with them.

- If you follow me, you will be blessed.
 - If you don't – my hand will be removed and you will be left with the results of a life away from me.
- He doesn't say that He stops loving them or that they will not go to heaven.

Wait a second pastor Jason, it says in chapter 29, verse 20 that if they disobey God is going to blot their name out.

- Not out of the book of life but under heaven.
 - God says you are going die – life away from Him is dangerous and sometimes we pay the ultimate price.
 - But God still loves them even though they are not saved.
- But the effects will be brutal.

But then I love chapter 30, but when you return to me, verse 2, what does God do.

- He welcomes them back and begins to bless them again.
 - Because that is just who He is.
 - He is faithful even when we are faithless.
 - That doesn't mean we won't experience the effects of sin when we choose to walk away from His hand.
- But it doesn't mean when we choose to come back to him, He will not turn us away.
 - There may be consequences but He will faithfully welcome you back in His blessings because that is just who He is.

You know lets say we took a field trip to Yellowstone National Park to see old Faithful – every 93 minutes it erupts but you don't want to wait 93 minutes, you see a goose and it runs into a field and you think, now that is fun – so while you are off on your wild goose chase, Old Faithful erupts and it is amazing and we are blessed and you come back and say – ah I missed it, what was I thinking – that's it – I'm staying here. Old Faithful is not going to say – oh, so now you want to see a water show huh. What about your goose, that is it, if you love your wild goose chase more than me, I'm not erupting anymore – no way- Every 93 minutes, it will erupt because that is just what it does. And in the most reverent way, I say, God is like Old Faithful.

- He pours out blessing.
 - Now if you're off chasing sin – you will miss out, it doesn't mean He doesn't love you, doesn't mean you are not saved.
 - But you will miss out.

- But if you decide, I'm tired of the fruitlessness of chasing wild things.
 - I want to stay right here, by the spout where the blessings pour out.
 - Oh that might be some lingering effects because of sin.
 - But God is not going to say, prove yourself, lets see if you are really serious this time – that is how we treat one another.
- God is welcoming you back – like the Father running to meet his prodigal son.
 - And He will pour out His blessings – not because you deserve them, we never deserve them, but because that is who He is and what walking with Him produces.

I do not believe that some of us are just lucky and others always get the raw end of the deal – I believe you win or you lose by the way you choose.

- And God says here in chapter 30, verse 19 – choose life!
 - Like the Jewish phrase – Le Heim – to Life.
 - Choose to follow God – choose life!

But I don't understand why this happened to this person or what happened to them – were they in sin, were they not, what are you saying?

- Hey I love how God closes chapter 29.

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” – Deuteronomy 29:29

- The secret things, the things we don't understand, they belong to God.
 - But there is so much we do understand about walking with Jesus.
- And as we have been exhorted – don't sacrifice on the alter of what you don't understand, do what you do understand.

You do understand – God has laid before you a choice.

- He loves you – that doesn't change.
 - If you have received Him as your Lord and savior that doesn't change.
- But you have a choice.
 - To take God at His word and obey Him.
 - Or to choose to walk in your own way.
- He will keep loving you.
 - You will always be His.
 - But if you choose walk without His hand upon you.
 - Cursed will you be.
- And that is not just an Old Testament truth – that is an all time truth.

Choose you this day, that is the key – this day, don't worry about tomorrow – you choose to serve Him, to follow Him and cling to Him today – and tomorrow you will also have a choice - so choose life– you will never regret it!