

The Very Heart of God
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Text: Deuteronomy 24:17-22

NOTES

A. Introduction

1. Deuteronomy is a book of Moses' speeches preparing the Israelites for the Promised Land.
 - a. It was delivered at the end of their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness after leaving slavery in Egypt.
 - b. It is a review of the Law & a preparation for their new home in the Promised Land.
 - c. These sermons reminded the people of who God is/was, who they were, and God's will and desire for them.
2. Deuteronomy 24:
 - a. Lists a variety of rules with a view to keeping Israel free from sin and society running smoothly.
 - b. Moses predicted that there would be poor people among them with no land from which to harvest food.
 - c. God's plan spoken here was for their care by those with land and crops leaving produce behind for the poor to gather.
 - d. Don't pervert justice – Deuteronomy 24:17. **Pastor Derrick:** *"Hear the heart of God, breathe the heart of God in your priorities, life, sphere of influence."*

B. God wants us to REMEMBER (Deuteronomy 24:18,22)

1. God wants us to remember from where we came. For the Israelites, it was slavery in Egypt and His miracles and provision in the desert.
2. It is the grace, power, and love of God that saves us: "There but for the grace of God go I."

C. God wants us to CARE FOR THE NEEDY (Deuteronomy 24:19-21)

1. For the Israelite, this meant leaving part of the crop in the field for the poor to gather for themselves (called "gleaning").
2. Every crop (grain, olives, grapes) was to be harvested in this untidy way.
3. God commanded this because He is loving and compassionate and has a heart for the fatherless, the refugee, the despised and rejected ones.

D. GOD WILL BLESS

1. Pastor related the story of Peter, whose parents both died. At nine years old he travelled 800 Km. to his uncle in Racecourse Village, Zambia. His uncle refused to care for him. Desperate and exhausted, he wandered to the gates of the Village of Hope. They took him in and today he is training to be a pastor.
2. This is not just an Old Testament idea: see James 1:27. What kind of spirituality is real & authentic? The kind that looks after the orphans, disenfranchised, broken.
3. Pastor told of personally meeting their family's sponsored child, Violet, then, going to her home to find two women (Violet's mother and aunt) living with a total of 12 children. The poverty shook and moved him. **Pastor Derrick:** *"I come from a single parent home. I happen to live in Canada but could have come from Zambia. But for the grace of God Peter and Violet could be me or you."*

E. THE LOVE OF GOD for the orphan is the love of God for us – John 14:18. **Pastor Derrick:** *"God wants to wrap you in His arms of love and forgiveness. The heart of God for the orphan is the heart of God for you and me."*

DISCUSSION:

1. The Israelites had memories of slavery in Egypt and God's miracles and provision in the years of desert wandering to help them stay oriented to God when they entered the Promised Land. What memories reinforce the contrast from where you've been to where you are today, physically, emotionally, spiritually?
2. The agrarian Israelite society had gleaning as a way to care for the poor. Are there ways we can mimic gleaning in our society? How? How did Jesus and the New Testament church view care for the poor (e.g. Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 6:1-4; Acts 9:36-42)? What are the main ways our society cares for the poor? Have individuals in your group share how they are involved in caring for the poor, orphans, immigrants, prisoners, elderly, homeless. What does the Bible say about such activities (James 1:27)?
3. What are the rewards of helping the widows etc. as reported by Serge and Nancy Bersaglio (founders of the African Villages of Hope: vohafrika.com)? What personal rewards have you gained from such help / helping? How does our help of the poor, disenfranchised, immigrant, outcast etc. reflect God's heart for us (John 14:18)?

PRAYER:

Dear Father, thank You for being a Father to us. Help us to catch the loving, compassionate, generous pulse of Your heart. Then show us creative, and practical ways to spread the blessings you've showed on us in North America to the poor and needy around us and overseas. Amen.