

## Review

Deuteronomy 11:1-32

One of the hardest classes I ever had in school, college and seminary, was Beginning Greek. The two semester class was actually a prerequisite for my degree, so I had to take the class in the summer. In six weeks we covered the material for a two semester college course in a foreign language. Three hours of class time every day for six weeks. And those three hours of class took about 10-12 hours of additional study time. Every day.

I had studied Greek on my own for a year prior to that time, so I knew most of the material for the first week or two, but that was it. And with that head start I was able to keep my head above water, but by the end, just barely. The hardest part was that there was no break. Some people got behind the first week, and were never able to catch up. There were no review days! The schedule was just too intense.

When I was in school, I always appreciated review days. Good teachers schedule review days into an ordinary curriculum. Good students always benefit from them. That is just how our minds work, unless you have some sort of photogenic memory. You review. You go back over the material you have learned, so that you can remember what you have been taught. And you are all the more prepared for whatever test is coming.

That's what we have here in Deuteronomy 11. A review. Nothing new in this chapter, but by way of review, we will study the whole of God's covenant relationship with his people. This review is not so much a history review, because in terms of history, not much has happened or changed in the last several chapters. The review is more about life, life as God's people. Life in covenant relationship to God. And in that context, the

application for us today is exactly the same as it was for the people of God in the days of Moses, just as I have focused especially the past several sermons.

I will begin with,

### **I. THE AWARENESS OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS GOD'S PEOPLE.**

Most broadly, what does that include? What does that involve? "What does the Lord require of you?", as we studied last week from,

Deut. 10:12 "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"

Now, this morning,

v.1

Please recognize that the answer to that question of what God requires, the defining of our responsibility as God's people, is to love God. We are to be lovers of God. That love is well defined in terms of his commandments, and I will consistently link those two ideas together, love and obedience. Love and the law. Love is actually defined as the fulfillment of the law, or keeping the commandments.

So if you love someone, you will not lie. If you love your wife, you will not commit adultery. If you love a friend, you won't steal from him. And if you love God, you will live according to his commands, as a demonstration of that love, a testimony of that love. But mere obedience is never enough. Going through the

motions is not enough. External conformity, especially if and when it becomes self-righteous or hypocritical, is not enough. What is required is,

#### **A. Love and devotion to God.**

Again, for my point here, the emphasis on obedience is the emphasis of devotion. The devotion of love in action.

v.1

Then also, v.13

Please remember just how directly Jesus connected these ideas of love and obedience as well, with his familiar answer to the trick question of what commandment is the greatest?

Mat. 22:36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” 37 Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Love is the comprehensive summary of all that is in the law! Law is the overarching definition of all that love is. And such loving obedience is what devotion to God is all about.

Devotion is word that focuses your attention upon God. It means your obedience is focused upon God, focused upon the desire to please him, to honor him. To serve him. That’s devotion. It’s not about you at all. It’s not about how you feel, or what benefit you might enjoy. It is all about devotion to God. Love and devotion. Loving devotion.

That is what God requires of his people. Devotion. With a particular definition of,

#### **B. Obedience to God’s law.**

Again, as I’ve read,

v.1, 13

More explicitly, look at,

v.18-22

And the chapter ends,

v.32

You can’t miss the intentionality in all of that. The intentional commitment. Devotion in action. Lay up these words in your heart. Bind them on your hands. Frontlets between your eyes. Teach your children all the time, all day long. It is all very specific and very intentional. It takes effort and commitment, like if you take piano lessons. You have to practice. You have to work at it.

That’s our responsibility as God’s people. Not merely obedience, but the love and devotion of obedience, like a newly married wife learning how to love her husband, or a husband his wife. That’s what Moses is reminding the people as they prepare to enter the promised land. That is a necessary and constant reminder for us as well today as God’s people.

Yet with that awareness of our responsibility as God’s people, note secondly Moses’ emphasis upon,

#### **II. THE AWARENESS OF GOD’S MERCY TO HIS PEOPLE.**

We had our new kitchen floor laid this week, porcelain tile, and there was our contractor whom I hired along with three workers he paid. One of those workers was very inexperienced, and not terribly focused or able to listen very well. So the boss watched over him very carefully. I was glad for that, because it was my floor they were installing. But I wouldn’t have wanted to be that laborer, either. Because the boss was ALWAYS watching him.

Always correcting him. Always telling him what to do, and what not to do.

That's the way some people view God, and it isn't healthy because that view of God misses this whole awareness of God's mercy. The prophet is not simply telling God's people what they were supposed to do, that's not his only emphasis. Nor should it be mine as a preacher.

Sometimes, regularly, we need the reminders to remain aware of our responsibility. In a sermon, that is usually called application. We need to hear the word of God in terms of that application, that we might stir one another on to love and good works. But we also need the reminders of God's mercy. As did the people of Israel as they were about to enter the promised land.

So with that reminded with regard to obedience to the law, we have this great encouragement proclaimed loudly and clearly.

#### **A. God has redeemed his people.**

So as I preach, as Moses spoke to the people of Israel, this theme is repeated prominently. Look at what Moses says in, v.2-7

He is speaking to those people who had seen and known what the Lord did to redeem his people out of Egypt. He is speaking to a people who recognize by their own experience just how much God has been merciful to them. The Lord brought the plagues upon Egypt, until Pharaoh would finally let them go. He made the waters of the Red Sea part so the people could pass through, only to drown the Egyptians soldiers who followed after them in pursuit. And the climax of verse 7, "your eyes have seen every great act of the Lord which He did."

Go back to the end of chapter 10,

Deut. 10:21 "He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. 22 Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the Lord your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude."

The promise is made so perfectly clear in, v.31

That is such an edifying emphasis for all of us. This repeated, constant emphasis upon the work of God to save us as his people, every great and saving act that God has performed. To put verse 7 into the language of the New Testament, the description would, of course, be the description of who Jesus was and what he came to do. And the New Testament is just filled with those reminders! God has redeemed his people. God has saved his people, through the finished work of Jesus, who was sent by his father to live on earth as a man, to suffer unto death for our sins, and to be raised from the dead!

Over and over again we are reminded of that great promise of the gospel. Just one example, from Peter,

1 Peter 1:10 "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into."

I just love that last phrase, "things which angels desire to look into."

God has redeemed his people. God has saved his people. That's the gospel. From Genesis 3, the promise of the seed of the woman crushing the head of the seed of the serpent, to Revelation 22, the very last chapter of the Bible,

Rev. 22:1 "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever."

Yet there is still more to be made known of God's mercy. Namely,

**B. God promises glory for those whom he has redeemed.**

For the people in Moses' day, that meant a really good land!

v.10-12

Such a marvelous encouragement! It is not like Egypt. There will be plenty of rain, plenty of food. It will be a land which receives the direct and immediate care of God himself. He will give his personal attention to the land. In such a personal way.

Please understand that for us, that promise doesn't mean riches and prosperity in this age. We might enjoy that, but you might not. But this land is the hope of heaven with which we live,

even when we have to confront sickness or death. This land of our eternal glory is a land in which the Lord himself lives, where he cares for everything himself. And that's our hope, that's our encouragement, what Peter calls our inheritance reserved in heaven for us.

That's God's mercy. That is the glory that we will enjoy. And Paul is even willing to compare and contrast that glory with the sufferings of this particular age,

Rom. 8:18 "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

We need the encouragement of this awareness of God's mercy to his people. We need this constant reminder of God's mercy to us, in our salvation, from the work of Jesus in the past to the hope of glory that remains still in the future for us.

That encouragement is what provides the foundation and the motivation for your loving obedience. Do you see how all of this fits together so well? The awareness of our responsibility before the Lord and the awareness of God's mercy to us are both good and helpful for your soul. They work together to define the whole of the Christian life. Not just required obedience, like that duty of young children. And not just cheap grace, which we wrongly believe gives you an excuse to be careless with your sin.

Not one or the other, but both, equally emphasizing the nature of your covenant relationship with God, the God who has loved and saved you by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, alone. And the God who calls you to loving devotion in service to him by the conduct of your whole life.

All of that can really be summarized by,

### III. THE AWARENESS OF GOD'S COVENANTAL BLESSINGS AND CURSES.

v.26-30

That's the nuts and bolts of a covenant relationship, blessings and curses. Thankfully, the work of redemption that Jesus has accomplished frees us from the ultimate curse of the covenant, namely death. But as God's covenant people, we do well to consider this dynamic of blessings and curses. And so as the people of God prepare to enter the promised land, within the whole context of this prophetic revelation from God through Moses, there is,

#### A. A warning of a curse for sinful rebellion.

v.16-17

Take heed! Beware, as the NASB translates it. Take care, in the ESV. The root meaning is to exercise great care! With reference to personal discipline. Take heed. Why? Because we face dangers as well, don't we. And the New Testament is full of these warnings. For example,

1 Tim. 6:12 "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

Heb. 12:1 "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Similarly,

Eph. 6:10 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that

you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Prov. 4:23 "Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life."

I could go on and on. And those warnings are helpful. They are useful. They should keep you honest, they should keep you conscious of the sinful capabilities of your own heart and soul. This is a warning we should all hear, and be sober and self-conscious we you do.

Brothers and sisters, "Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them."

And with that warning, hear and receive for your encouragement,

#### B. A promise of blessings for the righteous.

This goes back to our responsibility of loving obedience,

v.8-9

v.13-15

v.22-25

Just a good reminder, this is not the prosperity gospel, as if you could simply obey God and he would make you a millionaire. You can't bring this promise of prosperity in the land of the Old Testament people of God and apply it directly to our age. The focus is again more on the age to come. But we live now in anticipation of the great glory of that day, and so we have a

measure of the blessing now. There is a measure of the blessings of the covenant that we are enabled to enjoy here and now. Blessings represented by this language of a good and prosperous land.

Ultimately, it is a promise of blessing to the church as a whole, isn't it, embedded in that great promise of the great commission,

Mat. 28:18 "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

I am with you always! That's the promise of blessing, covenantal blessing. It is the same blessing that is put in poetic form with the words of,

Psalms 1:1 "Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper."

Likewise, Psalm 34:8 "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him 9 Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. 10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing."

And don't forget the overall picture, the overall context of the greatest blessing,

Psalm 34:22 "The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, And

none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned."

Surely, that is our greatest blessing as God's covenant people.

Rom. 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

So hear the warning, and beware. Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived. And as you pay attention to that warning, hear the blessing of God's promise and apply it to your life today.

v.31 "For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it."