

Friday, May 4, 2018

Careful

Deuteronomy 4-5

"Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them."

Deuteronomy 4:9

Moses—the man of God—is speaking to the next generation. I try to picture the gathering as he speaks. Hundreds of thousands of people listening to these words, through Moses, from God for His people. These are words of love. These are the words of a good Father to His children. "Be careful." I think of how many times I have said that to my kids. I read 5:28-29 and I hear the heart behind the giving of these special laws. They are not restrictive, they are liberating. They allow for the most abundant living. God loves this people. He loves this nation He has established. He longs for them to experience the joy of His presence and to have that joy win the hearts of all men and women in all the nations—for all generations to come. To experience that joy requires being careful. Careful to watch and not forget and to teach the next generation. Teach the next generation the love of the Father, displayed in His rules, planted deeply in the heart. I must see this for myself and the church. We must watch ourselves closely and let the truth of our loving Father's words change our hearts. We must be careful not to let them slip away as long as we live. We must teach them by example to our children and our grandchildren so the world can see our loving Father's goodness.

Dear LORD, help me be careful to keep Your truth in my heart and on my lips. Amen.

Saturday, May 5, 2018

Treasured possession

Deuteronomy 6-7

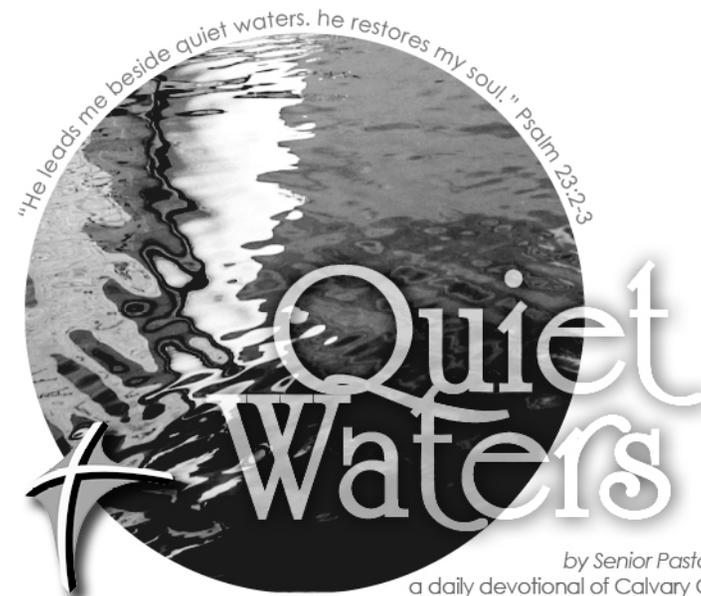
"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."

Deuteronomy 7:6

Moses goes on to remind the people it was not anything about them that was so special that caused the LORD to choose them. Rather, it was God's choice to love them for the sake of their ancestors and His promise. These people are for Him a treasured possession. He cares for them as a Father—deeply concerned, watching over them, and meeting their needs. He has chosen them out from among all peoples to bestow His love upon them. It just seems they never grasp this truth as a nation. Individuals do, but not the whole. Because of misunderstanding, they reject the love extended. Instead of living in loving response to the One who cherishes them, they live in captivity to the one who despises them. God speaks through Moses to give them assurance that they can rest in the provision and protection of the One who sees them as a treasured possession. I need to see this as well. As an adopted child of God, because of the sacrifice of Jesus applied to my life, I am grafted in to this people that is treasured by God. So, I am treasured as well. What difference does it make in my life to realize that God sees me as His treasured possession? Does it cause me to dance in His love and the freedom that that love secures for me?

Lord, who am I that You would consider me to be a treasured possession? Who are You that You could love me so much? Let my heart always and forever be Yours. Amen.

April 30 - May 5, 2018



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, April 30, 2018

And then

Numbers 32-33

"But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them."

Numbers 33:55-56

This will be a verse that lives throughout the Old Testament and into the New. The Israelites had an opportunity. They could live in one of two promises. The one described in verses 50-54 or 55-56. God was making it clear that the land they were about to enter was His. It always has been and always will be. He will decree and allow people to live there at His pleasure. If the Israelites were obedient, God would be pleased to bless them with a land flowing with milk and honey. But if they chose not to obey and drive out all foreign gods, then *they* would not be allowed to be in the land either. I need to remember to watch for this as I continue to read through the account of this chosen nation. Of course, history tells me that they did not purify the land as God decreed and then God did to them what he had planned for their enemies. It is so important for me to see that I need to rid myself of anything that is vying for my heart of worship. All other gods and idols must go. They must be destroyed in my life, because they will give me trouble and they will bring the discipline of God.

Dear Lord, help me remember to live in the promise of Your provision and grace. Please move in my heart to rid myself of everything in my life that is opposed to You. Amen.

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Shechinah

Numbers 34-35

"Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the LORD, dwell among the Israelites."

Numbers 35:34

God dwelling in the midst of Israel is represented in the Hebrew term "Shechinah."

In this verse I get a chance to see the reason for the laws about murder. Immediately my mind goes to Cain and Abel. God says that Abel's blood cries out to him from the ground (Gen. 4:10). Bloodshed pollutes the land and only the one who shed that blood can atone for it. It is the land that the Israelites live in, but it is the land where God dwells—at His discretion, as He dwells among the people. Since it is the land in which He dwells, it must not be polluted in this way. We understand that many deaths will be happening in this land as the Israelites move in and purify the land. Those deaths are decreed by God. These are not the deaths God is speaking of here.

What I need to see in this is that because God dwells in me in the Person of the Holy Spirit, I must be very careful not to pollute my heart, mind, or soul in any way. It also means that as I live in community with other followers of Jesus, I, must be very careful not to pollute that body in any way either! My sin impacts the whole. It even extends to the larger body of Christ—every follower in the world!

Dear God, I am overwhelmed to think that You dwell in me. Please forgive me for all the ways I pollute Your dwelling place. Help me, please, to find joy in keeping Your dwelling place pure. Help me see the importance of that in the community of Christ followers as well. Amen.

Wednesday, May 2, 2018

Words

Numbers 36-Deuteronomy 1

"These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the desert east of the Jordan—that is, in the Arabah—opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth and Dizahab."

Deuteronomy 1:1

The oldest title of this book can be translated as "The repetition of the Torah." But for some, the book is called *Devarim*, translated as simply "Words." These are the final words of Moses as he calls the next generation together to remind them of what had transpired and a reminder for themselves of what God had said. There must have been a great sense of anticipation as they listened to the only leader many of them had ever known tell them about God and His Law once again. They were getting ready to take possession of the Promised Land! Finally! A trip of forty years has reached its goal. The first words of Moses remind them that this trip could have taken 11 days. He also reminded them—yet again—of exactly what it was that caused the delay. It is important for them to hear this. They would need the reminder—often. I try to place myself in the crowd, straining to hear Moses remind me once again that I must have faith that God will take me to the place He has prepared for me, if I am ready to move with Him in complete obedience. In some ways it is the same for me today. Do I anticipate excitedly the victories that God can give me in every aspect of my life?

Dear God, reminders are so important—positive and negative. Help me live in both as I move ahead to take control of that for which You have taken control of me! Amen.

Thursday, May 3, 2018

Worship

Deuteronomy 2-3

"The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything."

Deuteronomy 2:7

In the retelling, Moses reminds the people of the faithfulness of God. They have not lacked anything. That is such a big statement. Here is a group of as many as two million people traveling in tents through a desert and Moses says that they did not lack anything. That is a God who provides. They had food each day—until it came out their ears. They had the presence of God in their midst leading them each step of the way. We are not told all that God provided, but we are told it was all they needed. In telling the story, it would be easy to focus on the negative, but Moses reminds them of the positive. Even when the people did not trust the LORD, He still continued to provide—for the whole community. This was not about individual needs; rather, it was about how God met and meets the corporate needs. They could worship Him for that! I need to be ready to worship God in all that He is for all that He provides. He has given me life and I lack for nothing!

O Lord, You are so utterly amazing. I am complete in You and You leave me lacking for nothing. I praise You because of who You are. Even though I may wander, You are always there. I join my voice with all Your followers. Amen.