



### **Celebrating God's Faithfulness – March 10**

It is important to recall and retell stories of God's faithfulness in the past. This serves as a strong reminder that, as God has been faithful in the past, God will continue to guide us faithfully now and in the future.

- How do you experience God's faithful guidance in your life?
- What specific examples remind you of God's faithfulness?
- Why is it important for people of faith to be reminded regularly of God's provision and to recall the specific gifts of God?

### **Ready Deuteronomy 26:5-10**

These verses recount the Israelites' salvation history. They offer straightforward highlights of the story of Israel, from the time of their ancestor Jacob to their slavery and oppression in Egypt and finally their arrival in "this land...flowing with milk and honey" (v. 9). This enables the people to orient themselves in the present in light of the past and to move toward the future in the knowledge that they are secure in their relationship with God.

- What does this salvation history tell us about who God is? ("God hears the cries of the oppressed and responds compassionately to them. God hears the voice of the oppressed, attends to their suffering, and acts decisively to liberate them from the situation causing their suffering.")

The salvation history of Israel is not a heroic account of the people overcoming all odds; it's the story of God faithfully honoring God's promises and prevailing over any opposition to God's purposes of liberation. God is the true hero of the story. Reflect prayerfully on the confession of faith in this passage of Scripture. Give the group a little time to write or discuss their own salvation history. You might begin by writing the story of your life with God in some detail, and then condense it into a brief confession. Revisit your confession from time to time to recall God's past saving acts in your life and to build your trust in God's present and future saving acts.

## Read Deuteronomy 26:10-11

- The Israelites are told to celebrate. What are some things God has done in your life that you can celebrate?
- What are some ways we can celebrate what God has done?
- Why is it important to take time to celebrate?
- What are some things that keep you from celebrating?

This celebration is to include not only the one making the offering and the officiating priest but also “the aliens who reside among you” (v. 11). The ongoing concern for displaced people resonates with Israel’s memory of their time as aliens in Egypt. Acknowledging and caring for aliens among them honors the One who cared for and acknowledged Israel when they were resident aliens in Egypt. Because God has been good to us by delivering us from past difficulties, we can and should treat graciously anyone who is experiencing similar difficulties with love, grace, compassion, and mercy. What could be a better cause for celebration than remembering God’s goodness to us?

- What specific challenges face people in our community? What holds them captive and prevents them from flourishing?
- How can you hear and respond to the voices of those who are oppressed by social problems? Investigate how local faith communities, civic organizations, and nonprofit agencies are addressing the issues you named, and consider how you can become involved.
- How does our faith community remember and celebrate God’s good gifts?
- Are there specific ways your community seeks to include “outsiders” in our celebrations?
- Are there ways our community could be more inclusive in celebrating God’s goodness and provision? How could we better include people who face challenging circumstances?
  
- What part does celebration play in your spiritual life?
- How do these celebratory experiences inject vitality and energy into your relationship with God?
- Prayerfully contemplate specific ways you can make celebration a regular part of your spiritual life.

**Prayer:** Spend some time in prayer thanking God for his faithfulness, goodness and love.