

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
5-25-22

Deuteronomy 6

Remember The Commandment Before Entering Canaan – Verses 1-3

¹ These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

6:3 For a nation that had wandered 40 years in a parched wilderness, a land flowing with milk and honey sounded like paradise. It brought to mind rich crops, rushing streams, gentle rains, and lush fields filled with livestock. The Israelites could have had all that 40 years earlier. Numbers 13 and 14 explain how the people missed their chance. Now Moses was determined to help the people avoid the same mistake by whetting their appetite for the beautiful land and then clearly explaining the conditions for entering the land.

The Great Commandment: Love The Lord Your God – Verses 4-5

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6:4-5 What God most wants from us is our love. We often think God demands a hundred other things from us - our money, our time, our effort, our will, our submission, and so forth - but what God really wants is our love. When we really love the LORD with all of our heart, soul, and mind, then everything else is freely given to the LORD. If we give the LORD all the rest - money, time, effort, will, and so forth - without giving Him our love, it is all wasted - and perhaps, all is lost.

Jesus called this the great commandment (Matthew 22:37-38); and He said the second commandment, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, was like this first, great commandment. When we love the LORD our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, we will find it easy to love our neighbor as ourselves.

6:4-5 This passage provides the central theme of Deuteronomy. It sets a pattern that helps us relate the Word of God to our daily lives. We are to love God, think constantly about his commandments, teach his commandments to our children, and live each day by the guidelines in his Word. God emphasized the importance of parents' teaching the Bible to their children. The church and Christian schools cannot be used to escape from this responsibility. The Bible provides so many opportunities for object lessons and practical teaching that it would be a shame to study it only one day a week. Eternal truths are most effectively learned in the loving environment of a God-fearing home.

6:4 Monotheism—belief in only one God—was a distinctive feature of Hebrew religion. Many ancient religions believed in many gods. But the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God of the whole earth, the only true God. This was an important insight for the nation of Israel because they were about to enter a land filled with people who believed in many gods. Both then and today, there are people

who prefer to place their trust in many different values, belief systems, and “gods.” But the day is coming when God will be recognized as the only one. He will be the king over the whole earth (Zechariah 14:9).

The Continual Reminder Of The Law – Verses 6-9

⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

6:7 The Hebrews were extremely successful at making religion an integral part of life. The reason for their success was that religious education was life-oriented, not information-oriented. They used the context of daily life to teach about God. The key to teaching your children to love God is stated simply and clearly in these verses. If you want your children to follow God, you must make God a part of your everyday experiences. You must teach your children diligently to see God in all aspects of life, not just those that are church related.

6:8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand: By the time of Jesus the Jewish people based the practice of wearing phylacteries on this passage. Phylacteries are small boxes holding parchment with scriptures on them, held to the forehead or hand with leather straps. Jesus condemned abuse of the ostentatious as a display of greater spirituality (Matthew 23:5).

In the end times, there will be a Satanic imitation of this practice, when the number of the Antichrist will be applied to either the hand or forehead of all who will take it (Revelation 13:16).

6:9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your houses: This command leads to the Jewish practice of the mezuzah. This is a small container holding a passage of Scripture that is nailed to a doorpost.

The Danger Of Leaving God In Times Of Prosperity – Verses 10-12

¹⁰When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹²be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

6:10-12 Moses warned the people not to forget God when they entered the Promised Land and became prosperous. Prosperity, more than poverty, can dull our spiritual vision because it tends to make us self-sufficient and eager to acquire still more of everything—except God. The same thing can happen in our church. Once we become successful in terms of numbers, programs, and buildings, we can easily become self-sufficient and less sensitive to our need for God. This leads us to concentrate on self-preservation rather than thankfulness and service to God.

How To Avoid Apostasy In Times Of Prosperity: Honoring The LORD In Everything We Do – Verses 13-19

¹³Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. ¹⁴Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; ¹⁵for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. ¹⁶Do not put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah. ¹⁷Be sure to keep the commands of the LORD your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. ¹⁸Do what is right and good in the LORD’s sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take

over the good land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors,¹⁹ thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the LORD said.

6:13 You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him: When we do this, the idea is not of a shrinking fear from an angry God. Instead, the idea of fear is more in the concept of an awe-filled respect, an inner repulsion at the idea of offending such a great, loving God who has done so much for us.

This is the passage of Scripture Jesus quoted back to Satan when tempted by Satan to avoid the cross and win back the world, if He would only bow down and worship Satan. Jesus rightly replies, based on the truth You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him that it was only right to fear, and worship, and serve God - and it was wrong to bow down to Satan, no matter what might be given Him in return (Matthew 4:8-10).

6:13 And shall take oaths in His name: although the concept of the oath in God's name can certainly be abused (as Jesus pointed out in Matthew 5:33-37), there certainly is a permissible use of oaths by those who follow God - since God Himself uses oaths (Hebrews 6:13). Here, Israel is being told "you are to swear an oath only in the name of the LORD, not in the name of any other god."

6:16 You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him at Massah: In Exodus 17:1-7, Israel tempted the LORD by doubting His love and concern for them. This was tempting or testing God regarding His love for Israel, something that is not only high-handed against the LORD (because we have no right to administer a test to the Almighty) but also disregarding His previous, and constant demonstrations of love and care for Israel (by demanding that God prove His love for them now by giving them what they want).

6:16 Anytime we deny God's love for us, or demand He do something for us, we are testing Him as if He must answer to our standards, and tempting Him to judge us. This is the passage of Scripture which Jesus quoted back to Satan in the wilderness, when tempted to make God the Father prove His love for the Son by spectacularly protecting Jesus if He should jump off the pinnacle of the temple (Matthew 4:5-7). Jesus knew it was wrong to demand this sort of "proof" from His Father, since every day was proof of God the Father's love for the Son!

6:18 And you shall do what is right ... that it may be well with you: This theme is constantly repeated. Under the Old Covenant, Israel's blessing was based on their obedience. When they obeyed they would be blessed; when they disobeyed they would be cursed. This is not the source of blessing in the New Covenant. In the New Covenant, we are blessed by faith in Jesus, since He fulfills the law in our place (Romans 8:3-4). The watchwords for blessing under the Old Covenant were earning and deserving; under the New Covenant, blessing comes by believing and receiving.

The New Covenant system works because when we receive the New Covenant, God sends with it an inner transformation, where the law of God and the desire to do His will is now written on our hearts. Through the New Covenant, God makes us "safe" for His grace by this inner transformation.

6:18 Under the New Covenant there is no judgment from God for our disobedience, because all the judgment we deserved was put upon Jesus at the cross. However, there may be correction from the hand of a loving God the Father (not in the sense of making us pay for our sin, but in the sense of training us not to continue in sin), and there are the natural consequences of our disobedience, which God has not promised to shield us from.

Teach Your Children To Understand And Honor The LORD – Verses 20-25

²⁰ In the future, when your son asks you, “What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?” ²¹ tell him: “We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²² Before our eyes the LORD sent signs and wonders—great and terrible—on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. ²³ But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our ancestors. ²⁴ The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. ²⁵ And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.”

6:20 In the future, when your son asks you, “What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?” : Often, the apostasy which comes from prosperity afflicts the next generation more than the present. They grow up expecting such prosperity and blessing, without understanding the repentance and walk with God which led to the prosperity.

6:21-23 Then you shall say to your son: Therefore, it was essential for Israel to teach and warn their children, so that the blessings given to one generation would not become a curse to the next generation. Key to the teaching was the simple recounting of Israel's testimony - how God saved them from the bondage of Egypt. Parents need to relate to their children how they came to a personal relationship with Jesus, so the children understand that they must come to the same relationship.

6:24 Does the phrase “so that we might always prosper” mean that we can expect only prosperity and no suffering when we obey God? What is promised here is a right relationship with God for all those who love him with all their heart. It speaks of a good relationship with God and the ultimate benefit of knowing him. It is not blanket protection against poverty, adversity, or suffering. We can have this right relationship with God by obeying his command to love him with all that we are.