

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
6-29-22

Deuteronomy 11

Remember The Ways God Has Already Blessed – Verses 1-7

¹ Love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. ² Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; ³ the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country; ⁴ what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea as they were pursuing you, and how the LORD brought lasting ruin on them. ⁵ It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the wilderness until you arrived at this place, ⁶ and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when the earth opened its mouth right in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them. ⁷ But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done.

11:1 Therefore you shall love the LORD your God: God commanded Israel to love Him. Love is not a matter left entirely up to our impulse or our feelings. We choose to love the LORD or not. Additionally, this reminds us of what the LORD really wants from us - our love. We could give Him a hundred other things, but none of it really matters unless we give Him our love. As Jesus said to the Ephesian church in Revelation 2:4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. If we lose love, we lose all.

11:1-2 And keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments: Love for God never goes against His word. Some people think their so-called love for Jesus allows them to disregard His commands, but this isn't real love at all.

11:6 Dathan and Abiram: These were the two key associates - perhaps the instigators - in the rebellion of Korah Numbers 16, where God vindicated His servant Moses and leader over Israel, when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram challenged Moses' leadership.

11:7 Israel had strong reasons to believe in God and obey his commands. They had witnessed a parade of mighty miracles that demonstrated God's love and care for them. Incredibly, they still had trouble remaining faithful. Because few of us have seen such dramatic miracles, it may seem even more difficult for us to obey God and remain faithful. But we have the Bible, the written record of God's acts throughout history. Reading God's Word gives us a panoramic view of both the miracles Israel saw and others they didn't see. The lessons from the past, the instructions for the present, and the glimpses into the future give us many opportunities to strengthen our faith in God.

Blessings In The New Land – Verses 8-12

⁸ Observe therefore all the commands I am giving you today, so that you may have the strength to go in and take over the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ⁹ and

so that you may live long in the land the LORD swore to your ancestors to give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden. ¹¹ But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. ¹² It is a land the LORD your God cares for; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end.

11:8-10 Therefore you shall keep every commandment: Remembering what God did in history should lead Israel to greater obedience, and enable them to take the Promised Land. A land flowing with milk and honey: The sacrifices in obedience were well worth it for Israel. They had the promise of a land which was far superior to Egypt, which did not need to be artificially irrigated, but was watered by rains which God would send upon the obedient nation.

11:11-12 In calling Egypt a place where they watered by foot, it refers to the system of artificial irrigation, using foot-driven pumps to lift water from the Nile to nearby fields. Canaan was so rich it did not need this kind of irrigation.

Blessings In The New Land – Verses 13-15

¹³ So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul— ¹⁴ then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil. ¹⁵ I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

11:13 If you earnestly obey My commandments: God simply promised to provide for Israel if chose to obey Him and put Him first. As Jesus said: seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33).

11:14 The promise of the blessing of rain was important, because one of the attractive of the Canaanite gods was Baal - the god who was said to control the weather and rain. Perhaps the Israelites would be tempted to think, "well, we are in Canaan, and if we want rain, we should worship the Canaanite god of rain." But the LORD makes it clear that if they would worship and obey Him, He would supply abundant rain.

The early rain and the latter rain: The early rain fell in October and November, and was important to help soften the ground for plowing and preparing the soil for the seed. The latter rain fell about April, and helped the crops come to final harvest.

11:15 A land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year: God declared His special care for the land of Israel, both then and now.

The Danger Of Blessing: Turning From God In Times Of Prosperity – Verses 16-17

¹⁶ Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. ¹⁷ Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut up the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you.

11:16 Lest your heart be deceived: God had to warn Israel against the deceptions of prosperity. The person who turns from God in prosperity is simply deceived. They believe they are somehow responsible for the blessings received, and become proud and self-reliant.

11:17 He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain: Just such a judgment came upon Israel in the days of Ahab, the wicked king over Israel in the time Elijah was a prophet (1 Kings 17:1). The constant need for rain kept Israel in constant dependence on the LORD. It is good for us to have things that keep us in constant dependence on the LORD. We should never despise those things and long for the day when we will no longer need to depend on God as much.

Blessing Is Gained By Keeping The Word Of God Always Before You – Verses 18-21

18 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **19** Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **20** Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, **21** so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

11:18 Lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul: God called Israel to not only read the Word of God and to know the Word of God, but to treasure it. In the same way, we should love God's word and miss it when we are separated from the Word of God. We should call it to mind with longing, having laid it up in our heart and soul.

11:19-21 Speaking of them: God's Word was to be the topic of their conversation. We can fairly measure our love for God's word by how much we will talk about it with others. God doesn't want us to have a secret love relationship with His word.

The Promise Of Blessing – Verses 22-25

22 If you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow—to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him and to hold fast to him— **23** then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and stronger than you. **24** Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea. **25** No one will be able to stand against you. The LORD your God, as he promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go.

11:22 To love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him: All the commandments are summarized in these three phrases. Each of these speaks of more than a bare, compelled obedience; they speak of a real relationship of love between God and His people, with obedience flowing naturally from that relationship.

11:23-24 The LORD will drive out ... and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations: God promised to fight the battles for an obedient Israel. Many desire God to fight their battles, but have little interest in obeying Him - or cultivating the deep relationship of love which obedience grows from. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads: God repeated this promise to Joshua, just when Israel was about to cross over the Jordan River into Canaan (Joshua 1:3).

11:25 No man shall be able to stand against you: When Israel walked in love with the LORD and was obedient to Him, they were unbeatable. No man could defeat them. Greater was God who was with them than he who was in the world! (1 John 4:4)

The Choice: Blessing Or Cursing? – Verses 26-28

²⁶ See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse— ²⁷ the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; ²⁸ the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.

11:26 What is God's curse? It is not a magician's spell. To understand it, we must remember the conditions of the covenant between God and Israel. Both parties had agreed to the terms. The blessings would benefit Israel if they kept their part of the covenant: They would receive the land, live there forever, have fruitful crops, and expel their enemies. The curse would fall on Israel only if they broke their agreement; then they would forfeit God's blessing and would be in danger of crop failure, invasion, and expulsion from their land. Joshua later reviewed these blessings and curses with the entire nation (Joshua 8:34).

11:26 It is amazing that God set before the Israelites a choice between a blessing and a curse. It is even more amazing that most of them, through their disobedience, chose the curse. We have the same fundamental choice today. We can live for ourselves or live in service to God. To choose our own way is to travel on a dead-end road, but to choose God's way is to receive eternal life (John 5:24).

Making The Choice Known Unto The People – Verses 29-32

²⁹ When the LORD your God has brought you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to proclaim on Mount Gerizim the blessings, and on Mount Ebal the curses. ³⁰ As you know, these mountains are across the Jordan, westward, toward the setting sun, near the great trees of Moreh, in the territory of those Canaanites living in the Arabah in the vicinity of Gilgal. ³¹ You are about to cross the Jordan to enter and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you have taken it over and are living there, ³² be sure that you obey all the decrees and laws I am setting before you today.

11:29 You shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal: The recitation of the blessings on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal will be detailed in later chapters. Yet it is plain that God wanted the word to get to the entire nation, because the entire nation was part of this covenant with Him.