

Have you ever walked into a room and completely forgotten why you went in there? It happens to all of us. You stop... think...you try to retrace your steps... you think, "What was I doing?" It's a little frustrating—but usually harmless.

But there's a different kind of forgetting. It's far more dangerous. It's not forgetting where you put your keys. It's not forgetting why you walked into a room. It's forgetting what God has done—in your past, and in the past for others.

Because when we forget what God has done, we start to:

- Doubt His goodness
- Question His presence
- And hesitate to obey His voice

The Bible has a word for this problem: forgetfulness.

And it shows up again and again—not because God isn't faithful, but because we constantly forget that he is. Memories of God's faithfulness leak out of our hearts if we don't intentionally revisit and remind ourselves. This is why so many of our worship songs review and remind us of God's faithfulness.

That's exactly where Israel is when we come to Deuteronomy. They are literally standing on the edge of everything God promised...And the greatest danger they face is not the enemies in the land—*It's forgetting the God who brought them there.*

[Transition] - So how did they get here. Before we jump into this new series in Deuteronomy, I want to help us all get our bearings. To fully

appreciate what we're about to hear over the next 8 weeks, it's important to remember what has happened up to this point.

Getting our Bearings in Deuteronomy:

1. God Creates and Calls a People

In the beginning, God created the world—and it was good. Humankind was made to live in relationship with Him, under his loving rule.

But sin entered the world, and everything broke:

- Relationship with God was fractured
- Humanity turned inward
- The world became marked by sin and death

But God didn't abandon His creation. Instead, He made a promise. He called a man named Abraham and said, "I will make you into a great nation... I will give you a land... and through you, all nations of the earth will be blessed."

[Transition] - That promise becomes the foundation of everything that follows.

2. They grow from family to nation

Abraham's family grows:

- Isaac
- Jacob
- And then the twelve tribes of Israel

But instead of immediately becoming a great nation in a great land, due to a severe famine they end up in Egypt. Egypt starts out as safe haven. But over time it sours. For 400 years, the people of Israel are oppressed, enslaved, and crying out to God.

[Transition] - Finally, after 400 years God raises up a leader named Moses.

3. God rescues them from Egypt

Through Moses and mighty acts—plagues, signs, wonders—God confronts Egypt and delivers His people.

The defining moment is the Exodus:

- The Passover
- The Red Sea parting
- The defeat of Pharaoh

This becomes the central act of salvation in the Old Testament.

From that point on, when Israel thinks about who God is, they think: He is the God who rescues, the God who delivers.

[**Transition**] - After rescuing them, God brings them to Mount Sinai.

4. God forms his people at Sinai

And there, He does something crucial.

- He doesn't just save them—He forms them.
- He gives them His law.
He establishes a covenant.

In essence, He says: "You are now My people. And this is what it looks like to live distinctly as my people."

[**Transition**] - Then comes a critical moment. God brings them right to the edge of the Promised Land—the land he had promised Abraham generations earlier. This is their big moment. This is what it's all been building to since the promise was given to Abraham. But they choke.

5. Fear leads to failure.

Instead of trusting God, they give into fear. They see the size of the cities...the strength of the people...and they refuse to go in.

[**Transition**] - So, God disciplines them.

6. A generation is lost

That generation does not enter the land. Instead, they wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

Not because God abandoned them—But because he is both just and faithful.

During those wandering years:

- God sustains them
- God guides them
- God remains present with them

But it is also a season of waiting, shaping, and consequence.

[Transition] - And that brings us to the book of Deuteronomy. Now, 40 years later: The old generation is gone. A new generation stands ready. They are once again on the edge of the Promised Land

And Moses, their leader, is about to die. So, what does he do? He preaches.

Deuteronomy is a series of sermons—Moses' final words—calling this new generation to:

- Remember what God has done
- Understand who they are
- And commit to living faithfully as they enter the land

And this is why *remembering* is so crucial. Because this new generation didn't personally experience everything their parents did.

If they forget the story...they will repeat the mistakes. And the same is true for us. *If we lose sight of what God has done before—we will struggle to trust Him in what He's calling us to do now.*

[Transition] - The book of Deuteronomy opens by telling us where they are: the plains of Moab.

Deuteronomy opens on the edge of next (Deut. 1:1-8).

This is a transition moment. The older generation—the one that came out of Egypt—is gone. These are their children. A new generation. A people who didn't personally experience everything their parents did.

And God speaks. Verse 6 says: *"You have stayed long enough at this mountain."*

In other words: It's time to move forward. God had already made His promise. He had already said, *"Go in and take possession of the land."*

But before they go forward, Moses calls them to look back. Why? *Because forward movement without backward memory leads to spiritual instability.*

[Application]- This relates practically to our lives. We often want God to show us what's next:

- What decision should I make?
- What direction should I go?
- What is God calling me to do?

But God often says: Before I show you what's next, I want you to remember what I've already done. *Because confidence for the future is built on clarity about the past.*

Some of you are in a "plains of Moab" moment right now:

- A transition
- A decision
- A new season
- A new opportunity

And the temptation is to rush ahead. But God is saying: Pause. Remember.

[Transition] - Why? Because forgetting the past allows fear to override faith. Read verses 19-36.

Forgetting allows fear to override faith (Deut. 1:19-46)

Moses takes them back to one of the most defining moments in their history: Kadesh Barnea. This was the moment when everything could have been different. God had already brought them out of Egypt. He had parted the Red Sea. He had provided for them in the wilderness. And then He brought them right to the edge of the land and said: "Go in."

But instead of going in, they sent spies. And the spies came back with a divided report. A few said, "We can trust God." But the majority said, "The people are too strong. The cities are too fortified. We can't do it."

And the people listened to fear. Listen to what they say in verse 27: "The LORD hates us...." Think about that! The God who rescued them from slavery in Egypt...The God who sustained them in the wilderness with manna and water. They now say: "He hates us."

This is what fear does. Fear doesn't just affect your decisions—it distorts your theology. They didn't lack evidence of God's faithfulness. They misjudged God's heart.

And before we judge them, we need to recognize how often we do the same thing. When life gets hard, we question God's goodness. When prayers go unanswered, we doubt his care. When the future feels uncertain, we assume the worst. (Oh gosh this is me ☹)

Fear whispers: "God is not for you." And when you begin to believe that, disobedience always follows. That's what happened here. They refused to go in. And the result? They wandered. They missed what God had for them—not because God failed, but because they couldn't find it in themselves to trust Him. Fear was too noisy.

Let's be clear: *The greatest barrier to obedience is not lack of ability—it's lack of trust in God's character.*

This is where we need to look beyond Deuteronomy and remember Easter, the cross and the resurrection we just celebrated last week. Because if there was ever a moment where God proved His heart—his love and commitment to you, it was there. God did not spare His own Son. Jesus willingly went to the cross, taking on sin, absorbing wrath, defeating death.

So now, when fear whispers, “God is against you,” we can look at the cross and say: No way!! That’s not true. Friends...the cross settles the question of God’s heart forever.

[**Transition**] – Now as we step into chapter 2 and the first part of chapter 3, *It’s too much to read in the time we have, so let me summarize.* Israel continues their journey in the wilderness. For a long time, they’ve been wandering, circling the same territory. But now, God begins to move them forward with very specific instructions.

Remember, God always remains steady. (Deut. 2:1-3:11)

First, He tells them where not to go. Certain nations, God says clearly: “Don’t fight them. Don’t take their land.” Why? Because he had already given those lands to other people. So, right away, Israel learns something crucial—God is not just their God over their land; he is sovereign over all lands and all nations.

So instead of conquering, they must pass through peacefully. They even have to buy their own food and water. This is a different kind of obedience. It’s not about strength or victory—it’s about restraint, trust, and listening carefully to God’s voice.

Meanwhile, something else is happening beneath the surface. The old generation—the one that doubted God and refused to enter the land years earlier—is now gone. A new generation is rising, one that will have to learn trust in a deeper way.

Then, as we step into Chapter 3, everything shifts. God says, in effect, "Now, it's time." The time for waiting gives way to the time for action.

Israel comes up against King Sihon, and this time God says, "Go to battle." And they do—and they dominate. Then again with King Og, a powerful and intimidating enemy. Another victory!

These aren't just military successes; *they are confirmations*. When God says "wait," they must wait. But when God says "go," He also provides the victory.

So, this passage shows us a people being shaped by God—learning when to hold back, when to move forward, and how to trust that his timing is always right. It's a reminder that obedience isn't just about action—it's about listening. And when God leads, whether into restraint or into action, his purposes always prevail.

Here's what I don't want you to miss: Even in discipline, God is faithful. Yes, there were consequences for their disobedience in the wandering. But God did not abandon His people.

And this is crucial for us to understand. Because many of us go through seasons that feel like detours:

- Delays
- Setbacks
- Wilderness experiences

And we assume: God must not be working. He's rejected us. He's forgotten us.

But Deuteronomy shows us something different. God's delays are not his absence. Sometimes they are his discipline. Sometimes they are his preparation. But they are never meaningless!!

What if the season you're in right now—the one that feels slow, frustrating, unclear—is actually a season where God is:

- Shaping your character
- Deepening your trust
- Preparing you for what's ahead

Never forget, the wilderness was not wasted. And your "wilderness" isn't either.

[**Transition**] - Our section closes with an important promise. God will always fight for this people. Read verses 21-22.

God always fights for his people (Deut. 3:21-22)

As Moses brings this section to a close, he turns to Joshua—the one who will lead the people into the land. And he says in verse 22, *"Do not be afraid of them; the Lord your God himself will fight for you."*

Notice what he says is their anchor.

- Not their strength.
- Not their numbers.
- Not their strategy.

God Himself fights for His people.

Psalm 20:7 says, *"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."*

And notice what Moses does next: He reminds Joshua of what God has already done. Because the battles ahead will require confidence. And that *confidence is built by remembering past victories.*

Think about your life. When you face: A difficult decision. A challenging season. An uncertain future. Where does your confidence come from?

For many of us, it comes from ourselves:

- Our ability
- Our experience
- Our resources

But that's a fragile foundation. Because those things change.

Moses points Joshua—and us—to a better foundation: Remember what God has already done. If He was faithful then, He will be faithful now. (We sang about it this morning)

I want to point out, this chapter wraps up on a humbling Note. Also, a sobering note. Moses himself does not enter the land. Even he must trust God's plan, even when it doesn't align with his personal desires.

This reminds us God's mission is so much bigger than any one person. Leaders come and go. Seasons change. But God's faithfulness endures.

[Transition] - Let me try to make this very personal with three practical applications for our lives.

1. Remember God's Work

We are forgetful people. That's why Scripture constantly calls us to remember.

So be intentional:

- Write down what God has done
- Share testimonies
- Rehearse His faithfulness

Because what you remember shapes how you live.

2. Trust God's Heart

When circumstances get hard, don't reinterpret God through your situation.

Interpret your situation through what you know to be true about God. And where do we see that most clearly? At the cross.

3. Follow God Forward

God is calling every one of us to obedience in some area. The question is not do you know enough? The question is: Do you trust Him enough? Never forget, *obedience flows from trust. Remembering fuels obedience.*

Conclusion

Israel stood on the edge of the Promised Land. And before they stepped forward, God told them to look back. To remember:

- His deliverance
- His provision
- His faithfulness

Because remembering fuels obedience.

And we stand in a similar place. Not looking back to the Exodus—but to something even greater. We look back to Jesus. To the cross. To the empty tomb. And because of that, we don't move forward wondering if God is faithful. We move forward knowing He is.

When we rightly remember God's faithfulness, we will courageously obey His calling.