

Deuteronomy 11 - Thursday, August 4th, 2011

(1) "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.
- We begin with what I see as the perfect place to start, in that it sets the stage of our understanding as it relates to loving God, and obeying God.
- My love for God - obedience to God, is in response to all God has done for me in spite of me. It's not the evil I've done but the good He's done.
- I never imagine the graphic detail in scripture of man's sin being God's way of showing us how bad we are, rather it shows us how good He is.

(2) Know today that *I do not speak* with your children, who have not known and who have not seen the chastening of the LORD your God, His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm— (3) His signs and His acts which He did in the midst of Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to all his land; (4) what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and their chariots: how He made the waters of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued you, and *how* the LORD has destroyed them to this day; (5) what He did for you in the wilderness until you came to this place; (6) and what He did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, their households, their tents, and all the substance that *was* in their possession, in the midst of all Israel— (7) but your eyes have seen every great act of the LORD which He did.

- Whenever I read a passage that deals with parents as it relates to their children, my ears always perk up, and this is most certainly one of them.
- I find it interesting how Moses says that he's not speaking to their children because they have not known, nor seen the chastening of the Lord.
- In other words, forty years ago, they were either not been born yet, or they weren't old enough yet, to witness all that God had done for them.

- It's for this reason that Moses starts telling them about all that God did to Pharaoh in the Egypt, and to the army of Egypt when at the Red Sea.
- Notice that he also brings up the sons of Eliab, Dathan and Abiram when his cousin Korah started a rebellion against him back in Numbers 16.
- Now the question is; "why does Moses tell them, instead of their children, "every great act of the Lord which He did, and their eyes had seen?"

- I would suggest a couple of reasons, the first of which is, our children need to hear it from us, so they can learn from our mistakes and failures.
- Of course this presupposes that we recognize the importance of telling our children about our failures, and not only about all our successes.
- We do err when we shed ourselves in such a favorable light because we are setting them up, to never measure up, and it's just disingenuous.

- Another thought is that if our children don't hear about all God has done for us, as they go through life's experiences, they won't come to us.
- When we don't tell our children these things, we forfeit our right to speak into their lives. This is why teenagers think parents won't understand.
- However, when we tell them we've gone through what they are going through, they'll be more likely to come to us, because now they feel safe.

- I found something else here that I want to draw your attention to. It has to do with the relational dynamics between parents and their children.
- I have learned, and am learning, that whether I like it or not my children will respond to me and to God, much in the same way I respond to God.
- By way of example, when they face problems, prayer and God's Word will be a first response, not a last resort, if that's what they saw me do.

- Let me hasten to say, for those whose children are now adults, "to think it's too late, is to underestimate the influence we still have in their lives."
- Perhaps you're thinking that you've already blown it by virtue of your not knowing the Lord early on, or walking close with the Lord, later on.
- That's the good news about how good God is. We see this with good Kings of Israel, coming out of homes where their fathers were evil Kings.

(8) "Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, (9) and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, 'a land flowing with milk and honey.' (10) For the land which you go to possess *is* not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered *it* by foot, as a vegetable garden; (11) but the land which you cross over to possess *is* a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, (12) 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. (15) And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.'

- This is one of those passages that has profound truth both literally in its application geographically, and figuratively in its application spiritually.
- I've been to Egypt and to Israel, and I can testify to how dry Egypt is, and how dry Israel is not. The land of Israel is not like the land of Egypt.
- In Egypt, you would have to work very hard in order to keep the land watered from the Nile river, and even then, it was still and is still a dry land.

- This has profound application to our lives in how it pictures, the old life of slavery in Egypt and the new life of freedom in the Promised-Land.
- Egypt is a scripture picture of what our lives are like in the world, and the Promised-Land is a scripture picture of what our lives are like in Christ.
- In the world, we're slaves to sin, and our lives, like the land, are dry and barren. In Christ, we are freed from sin, and our lives become fruitful.

- In the world, it comes from the earth, and we earn it by the sweat of our brow. In Christ it comes from heaven; we receive it by the grace of God.
- In the world, it comes by our foot, and is pumped up by us. In Christ it comes by God's eyes and He supplies the Spirit, poured down, upon us.
- In the world, it comes by our own strength, and requires continual labor. In Christ it comes by His strength, and only requires we rest from labor.

(16) Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, (17) lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

- Moses is warning them, about that which Elijah, yet future, would have to prophecy against them, for their worship of the Canaanite god of rain.
- It wouldn't be long before God would shut the heavens and stop the rain for three years, when they turned away from God, serving other gods.
- If you're anything like me, you probably wonder how it is that the Israelites would look to false god's for rain, and not trust the true God for rain.

- It can happen, and it does happen. If the truth be known, we're all prone to turn from God, and seek other gods of materialism and pleasure.
- There's two ways this can happen, the first of which is that I can forget God in my prosperity and abundance, because things are going too well.
- The second way this happens is that I distrust God in my adversity and affliction, by seeking other worldly ways, and worldly gods, instead.

Matthew 6:33-34 NIV But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (34) Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

(18) "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. (19) You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. (20) And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, (21) that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth. (22) "For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him— (23) then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves. (24) Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory. (25) No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.

- This is what I love about God, and about God's Word. He never commands us or calls us to do something without packaging it with how to do it.
- Moses goes from telling them what God was commanding them to do, to now telling them how to do what God is commanding them to do.
- Namely, if you keep and seek, God and His Word, first and foremost in your life, and speak God's Word into your children's life, you'll prosper.

(26) "Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: (27) the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; (28) and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. (29) Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. (30) Are they not on the other side of the Jordan, toward the setting sun, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh? (31) For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it. (32) And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.

- Sometimes I think that God's Word is so childlike simple, that it becomes too simple. What I mean by that is this; we complicate God's blessing.
- In other words, if we simply live an obedient life, we will live a blessed life, if we choose to live a life of disobedience, then God can't bless us.
- I've heard it said; "we win or lose based on how we choose." We can choose to live an obedient life, or we can choose to live a disobedient life.
- Simply put, our lives will be blessed proportionate to our living our lives in a way that's obedient to the Lord, and pleasing in the sight of the Lord.

Proverbs 16:7 NIV When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.

- One interesting final note that sort of ties the bow on the lesson of this entire chapter; Gerizim means fruitfulness, and Ebal means barrenness.
- What makes this so interesting is that the name is the nature, and we see this ever so vividly in the book of Joshua chapter eight verses 30-35.

Joshua 8:30-35 NIV Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, (31) as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses—an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings. (32) There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua copied on stones the law of Moses, which he had written. (33) All Israel, aliens and citizens alike, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing those who carried it—the priests, who were Levites. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel. (34) Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. (35) There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the aliens who lived among them.

- Now, picture this; Joshua would have half of the Israelites stand in front of Mount Gerizim, and half of them would stand in front of Mount Ebal.
- Joshua, in the valley in between, would read all the words of the law, with both the blessings, and the curses. The Israelites would say; so be it.
- I think the lesson here becomes quite clear; in front of which mountain do I stand. The good news is that there's a sacrifice on Mount Ebal.