

The Future is Now

(from Deut. 4-6) January 7, 2018

The first Sunday of a new year is always a special opportunity. It is change, essentially a world-wide agreement that this is a new year. With it is a natural intuition to experience change: we feel newness, some make resolutions, keepable or not is not the issue.

Some say time is a mark on a calendar; that is true, but there is more. We live with thermometers, rulers, watches, speedometers, all devices that are simply marks, but marks that indicate realities.

In Deuteronomy, Moses is living on what we say was borrowed time. After 40 years of wilderness wandering, packing up, moving on, conquering, the ever-present manna, he was instructing how to cope with the new reality – stability, city-building, developing farms – one just as filled with the miraculous as the past, but different. How did he seek to prepare Israel for the “new?”

Three words summarize his preparation of the people: Leave, Learn and Love.

1. They would have **to leave** in order to receive something better, to move forward to a whole different life. Deut 1:6-8
 - a. Israel was often characterized by enertia, as we all are;
 - b. Spiritual enertia is the energy that slows one down in spiritual progress. Phil 3:12-15

2. Israel would have to become **a nation of learners**.
 - a. The record would show they resisted learning.
 - b. Learning would have to rely on three sources:
 - i. They needed to learn from the experience of others by observation. Deut 4:9
 - ii. They needed to learn from their own experience by (the modern term is) “owning it,” taking responsibility. 4:10-14
 - iii. They needed to learn from the Word, the words of God, 4:1-8

3. They would have to learn **to love** the Lord. Deut 6:4-8
 - a. The Hebrew word for love is very passionate. It actually includes the deep desire of men and women for each other.
 - i. It calls for total involvement of the personality
 - ii. It creates a force (might) that reaches for the other. It is ultimately passionate, not passive. It leads to choice (4:37-39), grows from shared experience and communication, and finally encourages reciprocity.