

Saturday, November 20, 2021

What's the Deal with Ebal?

Intro

- Deacon Anointing next week
- Prayer night at 7
 - Fasting from 7 on sat
- This morning our passage is about two different mountains
 - Obviously our Mtn is the best. All the other Mtns wish they were our Mtn.
- Similarly, Jesus had a conversation with a woman at a well about a couple Mtns. Which is the right one? You guys worship over there, we worship over here. Our Mtn rocks, yours sucks.
- There is a lot more going on there than just geography, as exciting as that is. This passage is about worship.
 - What is worship? How can we worship? The solution to true worship. The results of worship.
- Let's pray and dive in

What is Worship

- *Deuteronomy 10:12–22 (ESV): And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?*
 - Requirement
 - Fear
 - Grand Canyon or Ocean
 - Walk

- The process of going in God's direction. The way that leads to life is hard and those who find it are few
- Love
 - And action word. Intellect yes but intellect put into practice through obedience
- Serve
 - Heart
 - The center of your will. Thought. Deed.
 - Soul
 - What makes you you. God should be the weightiest thing in your life. This is worship.
 - OT makes it clear that God doesn't delight in ritual or going through the motions.
- Keep
 - Perfect obedience. And this puts us in a predicament. Yet right away God says that these commandments and statutes are for our good, our joy. They are not the wishes of a capricious megalomaniac, but rather the pathway to life and joy.
 - And therein lies the problem. On our own we are unable to keep the law of God. Life in abundance is held out to us, we need it, yet we can't completely grasp it. We are fallen. Even our obedience comes with wrong intent as we come expecting something from God rather than coming to Him for His sake. He continues
 - *14 Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. 15 Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.*
- Everything is God's, us included
 - To the LORD belongs the cattle on a thousand hills.
 - He has everything. He is without need.
 - Our worship of Him does not give him something he is missing

- He could've picked anyone yet he picked Israel and through them us. Not because we were great but because He set his love on us. This happened before we even thought to worship him. Grace always comes before obedience
- *16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.*
- It's a little strange how frequently Christians talk about circumcision. Not really a topic among every day conversation.
- Circumcision was given to Abraham as a sign of the covenant. Pauls say this in Romans 4
 - *Romans 4:1–12 (ESV): What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: 7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin." 9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. 10 How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.*
- Francis Schaefer says this
 - *"Abraham did not try to come to God on the basis of his works, because he understood that he was a sinner. He came, rather, on the basis of what God supplied. Paul's argument in Romans 4 is that the Old Testament people of God had to come to God exactly as we do, even though Christ had not yet died. If they tried to come on the basis of humanistic works, they could never*

make it. God is infinite; man is finite. Man has deliberately sinned; therefore, an infinite chasm of moral guilt exists between God and man. How can man with his good works or his worship cross the gap? He cannot. So Abraham's return to God was not by works, but by the way God prescribed."

- Circumcision of the heart means that we set ourselves apart for the way of God. We believe the Gospel by faith, just as the Jews believed God word by faith, we trust in what he says to be true of us and it is counted to us as righteousness. Then because we are already righteous we set ourselves apart to become in practice what God has already declared us to be
- This is what God says next
 - *Deuteronomy 10:17–19 (ESV): For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. 18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. 19 Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.*
- True worship is this James says
 - Widows orphans and foreigners
 - Social justice
 - There is always an aspect of Social justice included in God's commands. This is because we so easily revert to thinking proper worship is about only the mind. If we think the right things, we are good.
 - But right through apart from right action is dead. James says
 - *James 2:14–17 (ESV): What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*
- The basis of worship. Everything in our worship is built on what god has done for us
 - Exodus
 - Ransom
 - Rescue

- Redemption

How can we worship?

- Unconditional Grace
 - *Deuteronomy 11:1–7 (ESV): You shall therefore love the Lord your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always. 2 And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it), consider the discipline of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm, 3 his signs and his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land, 4 and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots, how he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord has destroyed them to this day, 5 and what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place, 6 and what he did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben, how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel. 7 For your eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord that he did. You shall therefore keep the whole commandment that I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and take possession of the land that you are going over to possess, 9 and that you may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and to their offspring, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10 For the land that you are entering to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it, like a garden of vegetables. 11 But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, 12 a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.*
 - Liberty
 - Law
 - Land
- Conditional Blessing
 - If
 - *Deuteronomy 11:13–17 (ESV): And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 he will give the rain for your land in its season, the*

early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. 15 And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full. 16 Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; 17 then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the Lord is giving you.

- Blessing and Cursing
- What are the conditions?
 - Therefore
 - *Deuteronomy 11:18–25 (ESV): You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall 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, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 20 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 that the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth. 22 For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the Lord your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him, 23 then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. 24 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your territory shall be from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea. 25 No one shall be able to stand against you. The Lord your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you.*
 - Word of God
 - Heart and Soul
 - More than just outward obedience
 - No one drifts into a holy life. It takes effort. Blood sweat and tears. Dedication.
 - The way we come to know the character and nature of God is through the scriptures. How we know what pleases him is through his word.

Our devotion and obedience to the word of God shows our understanding of our deliverance in the eternal word Jesus Christ

- Binding (Take this incredibly seriously)
 - Hand and Frontlets
- Teach
 - Diligently
 - A Concentrated effort
 - Children
 - Family
 - Sitting
 - In Rest
 - Walking
 - In action
 - Sleeping
 - The last thing in the day
 - Waking
 - The first thing in the morning
- *Deuteronomy 11:26–28 (ESV): See, I am setting 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 that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.*
 - Blessings
 - Obedience
 - Curse
 - Disobedience

The solution to true worship

- Unconditional Grace
 - Liberty. Law. Land
 - God's purposes cannot even be thwarted by human disobedience and sin.
- Conditional Blessing
 - Because of salvation we work hard at obedience. We do not receive salvation and then sit on our hands. If we are saved, we will work. If we are changed, we will obey. If we love him we will keep his commandments. Whoever says "I love him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar and his word is not in him.
- Two Mountains
 - *Deuteronomy 11:29–32 (ESV): And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. 30 Are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road, toward the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oak of Moreh? 31 For you are to cross over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you. And when you possess it and live in it, 32 you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the rules that I am setting before you today.*
 - Francis Shaffer says
 - *"In the midst of the unconditional promise, however, God put conditional portions. God was not going to turn away from the Jews, but the kind of blessing they would have in the land depended on the extent to which they lived in the light of God's commands. God was pointing this out to the people on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. He was teaching them, "The whole people must remember this. Many of the blessings, as well as judgments, are conditional. The continuance of the blessings depends upon your keeping My law."*
 - Gerizim
 - Blessing
 - Laid out in the end of Deuteronomy
 - Works righteousness
 - Stand on our own works. Stand on our own experience.

- Ebal
 - *This was a strong reminder to the people that they were not going to be perfect and that they would therefore need an altar. In this we should hear God saying, “You shouldn’t sin. But when you do sin, I will give you a way to return to Me, through the altar.” So while the people were warned of what would occur when they sinned, they were also taught from the very beginning that there would be a way of return.*
 - Curse
 - Grace
 - We deserve the curse. Sacrifice for our sins is the only way for us to approach a Holy God.
- The difference in these two Mtn’s is laid out in a parable of Jesus
 - *Luke 18:9–14 (ESV): He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

The results of worship

- End with An unlikely convert
 - *John 4:1–26 (ESV): Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2(although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), 3 he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. 4 And he had to pass through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that*

you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” 11 The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” 13 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” 16 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” 17 The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” 19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he

- Shaffer again:
- *“When the Assyrians carried away the northern kingdom into captivity, they transported all kinds of people into the promised land. This mixed group became the Samaritans. The Samaritans hated the Jews. The Samaritans set up their own worship and, following the thinking of men, made the center of it (amazingly) Mount Gerizim. They were the humanists. When the Samaritans came into the land and were figuring out for themselves how to worship God, they must have thought, “We won’t choose Mount Ebal. Who wants to say we’re sinners? We’ll worship on Mount Gerizim.” In other words, they stood in the place of Cain who tried to please God in his own way. And the Samaritans, from that day to this, have worshiped on Mount Gerizim, trying to come to God on the basis of their own works. The only*

sacrifice going on anywhere in the world today that has any relationship to the Old Testament is carried out each Passover season on Mount Gerizim. The leading Jewish priests from Israel travel to watch the nonJews, the Samaritans, sacrifice there. They watch with great care because there is some parallel between this and what the Jews did before the Temple was destroyed. Undoubtedly, there is a question in many of their minds: "When are we going to begin the sacrifices again?" Now we can better understand Jesus' conversation at the well with the Samaritan woman. The well stood between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. The woman must have turned and pointed to Mount Gerizim when she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20). Jesus did not reply, "Yes, you should worship in Jerusalem rather than in Mount Gerizim." He did exactly the opposite. He pointed her away from both Gerizim and Jerusalem, and toward Himself.

- Difference in worship
 - Gerizim
 - Righteousness
 - Ebal
 - Curses
 - Golgotha
 - Grace
- Gift of God
 - Cracked wells
 - *Jeremiah 2:12–13 (ESV): Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, 13 for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*
 - Well of living water
 - Never run out of grace
 - If we need a truck load. We go to the well of God's grace and fill up and right at the top of the bed it fills up. If we need a tanker full we go to the well and fill up and there is enough. The overflowing well of God's grace never runs dry

- 1 John 1

- *1 John 1:5–10 (ESV): This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

- Unconditional Grace

- Never be lost. Never be cast out. NOTHING can separate us from the LOVE of God in Christ Jesus. His hand holds us and the power of his grip secures us. You cannot run faster than God. You cannot go so far that there is no more sacrifice for you. Died not for perfect future you, but enemy you, trespassing you, sinner you, dead you.

- Conditional Blessing

- Because we have received such a great salvation, we put it into practice.
 - *1 John 2:1–6 (ESV): My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*

- Eternity starts today. Each day we are increasingly becoming citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Citizens of the greater promised land. We build on what Jesus has started in us and we are held accountable and either rewarded or disciplined based upon what we have done with what we've been given. Tenants. Judgement set
- Will we approach God on the basis of Gerizim or Ebal? Do you stand before god saying you owe me this. I've done this and this. Or do you bow your head and say have mercy on me for I am sinner. This is worship in spirit and truth. And if this is the

case, your life will exhibit the things Christ loves. Different today than yesterday, tomorrow than today. Let today be the day you approach Ebal for the first time or the thousandth, accepting the bad news about yourself that you are a sinner deserving of only the curses. But trusting by faith that Jesus took the curses on himself on the cross that you might die to sin and live to righteousness. By faith you can believe that everyone who is in Christ is a new creation, the old has passed away the new has come. All this is from God who has reconciled us to himself and has GIVEN us the MINISTRY of RECONCILIATION. All this is from God who through Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the ministry of reconciliation; God making his appeal through us, we urge you therefore as ambassadors for Christ: be reconciled to Christ.

- Be reconciled today. Run to the throne of grace to find mercy and help in time of need. Let us put it faith to practice bringing holiness to completion in the day of Christ. Let's pray.