

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"WARNINGS OF DANGER AHEAD"

For individual study or group discussion

During our study of the *Shema* last week, we were reminded that God's people are called to complete devotion, worshiping him alone (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). And in today's passage, Moses reiterates the importance of remembering. The children of Israel are to remember and obey the commandments, testimonies, and statutes God gave to them, for they will preserve and protect them as they enter the Promised Land. Along with the call to remembrance, Moses issues a **warning of dangers ahead**, for he recognizes the people's tendency toward forgetfulness, idolatry, and doubt (vv. 10-16). At the same time, he offers them a two-fold remedy for the very real dangers they will soon face (vv. 17-25).

An urgent reminder of the danger ahead (vv. 10-16)

Beginning in verses 10-12, Moses reminds the people that it was God who delivered them from Egypt and the bonds of slavery. On the verge of entering a land with "cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant," Moses warns the children of Israel that *fullness in life can lead to forgetfulness*.

- What was Israel told to remember when the Lord brings them into the Promised Land (v. 12)? Read Psalm 103:1-5. What does the psalmist tell us to remember? Why is it important to remember the blessings God has given to each of us?

Likewise, Moses instructs the Israelites to serve the LORD and not go after other gods. With the constant lure and temptation of rival religions, *the influence of culture can lead to idolatry*.

- What is the consequence for following other gods? (cf. Romans 1:18-32)
- Idolatry is at the root of all sin because worshiping the good things that God gives us, instead of worshiping God himself, robs God of the glory due to him alone. What are some of the things that compete with God for worship in your life? How can you keep those things in their proper place? (cf. John 4:19-26)

In verse 16, Moses refers to the time their parents tested God at Massah (Exodus 17:1-7). During that period, the community doubted God's ability to provide water in the parched land, and they were ready to stone Moses as a result. Trusting God during dark and difficult times is not a problem exclusive to the wilderness wanderers. Moses warns the future generations that *difficulty and hardship can lead to doubt*, but they are to persevere in faithful obedience.

- Read Luke 4:1-12. How did Jesus respond to difficulty and hardship?
- Read Matthew 6:25-33. Why should we not be anxious? What should be a believer's greatest desire (v. 33)?

A two-fold remedy to the very real dangers (v. 13, 17-25)

*Our obedience should be rooted not only in our reverence, but also our redemption. When our children seek to understand why serving God matters, remind them of God's faithfulness through stories. Reading and retelling Scripture to them will be a formative part of their spiritual maturity as they listen to the narratives of God's redemption. As one commentator points out, "The words of the parent explain [and] serve to create a memory for the new generation. Deuteronomy itself can be seen as creating such a memory for the new generation it addresses by painting pictures (8:7-10; 29:22-23) and telling stories (6:20-25), so the children may receive as real what they did not experience."*¹

- What were the Israelites instructed to reply when their children asked them the meanings of the testimonies, statutes, and rules? Is there anything similar to this in your own family practices? How can church ministries like Sunday school and youth group reinforce multi-generational faithfulness?

DATE: April 30, 2023

SPEAKER: Wil/Frank

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 6:10-25

Family Dinner Table

Psalm 119: Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio

Within the book of Psalms, you will find a treasure trove of references pointing you to the glory of God's law. Psalm 119 in particular is a focused discourse on God's law divided into twenty-two sections. Even more significant than the psalm's length is how often the psalmist rejoices in remembering God's commandments—no less than 173 times in 176 verses. If the book of Deuteronomy points us to remembering God's law, Psalm 119 shows us how it is done. Meditation is the starting point for remembering. Martin Luther elevated Psalm 119 as a master-piece of meditation that magnifies God's law: "*Thus you see in this same Psalm how David constantly boasts that he will talk, meditate, speak, sing, hear, read, by day and night and always, about nothing except God's Word and commandments.*"² Luther recognized with the psalmist that the habit of remembering and reciting God's law could train Christians for a life of faith. Luther labeled this habit as *oratio, meditatio, tentatio* (prayer, meditation, trials). Even with vigilant prayer and meditation, trials are inevitable for God's people. But those trials should lead us back to God's Word for certainty and comfort.

- Read Josh. 1:8, Ps. 119:15 & 97, and 1 Tim. 4:15. Pray for a transformed heart that can truly listen to and love God's law.
- Meditate on Psalm 119 this week.
- Do trials cause you to find certainty and comfort in God's Word?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

RUF at Carson-Newman,
denominational partner ministry

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Maggie and Jonathan, supported
missionary partners

¹ Miller, Patrick D. *Deuteronomy: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. 1990. Louisville, John Knox Press. 109

² Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works: American Edition, vol. 34*. 1960, Augsburg Fortress.