

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### "THE CALL TO HOLINESS"

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: May 7, 2023

SPEAKER: Chad/Brian

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 7:1-6

## Family Dinner Table

### The War Is Normal

excerpt from *desiringGod.org*

*"Consider the condition of your heart before God rescued you: dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), captive to ungodly passions and pleasures (Titus 3:3), blind to the beauty of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4), walking in ruin and misery (Romans 3:16). Your heart was Sauron's Mount Doom, the White Witch's winter, Babylon's stronghold. You may have known peace, but it was peace with enemies of God. But then the Holy Spirit beat down the gates of your heart and expelled sin from the throne. Now, he's taking his army through all the corners of your life. Until he annihilates every enemy outpost, you will be a man or woman at war (Galatians 5:17). So don't be surprised if you wake up to war. Don't be surprised if you sometimes feel like death inside, as if everything you've loved needs to be laid in the grave. Don't be surprised if you discover lairs of darkness in your flesh you never dreamed possible. Instead, take heart. The war is normal. More than that, the war is essential. Battle is an indispensable mark of all who have declared open rebellion against sin and Satan. As J.C. Ryle writes, 'We are evidently no friends of Satan. Like the kings of this world, he wars not against his own subjects. The very fact that he assaults us, should fill our minds with hope' (Holiness, 76)."*<sup>3</sup>

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you to be "doers of the Word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22; Luke 11:28).

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

RUF at UGA led by Reverend Ben Coppedge, denominational partner ministry

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Alexander, supported missionary partner serving in central Asia

Recall Israel's history up to this point: God chose Abraham and his descendants to be his people. Enslaved in Egypt, God rescued and redeemed them, covenanting with them at Mt. Sinai as he made known to them his law. God did not wait for his people to become holy before he gave them his law, "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6). **The call to holiness** followed Israel's redemption. As one pastor explains, "By revealing His law to Israel after redeeming the nation from Egypt, our Creator establishes the basic principle of sanctification. Strictly speaking, we do not make ourselves holy. First, God saves us from sin and sets us apart as His holy people."<sup>1</sup> God's call to holiness provides the foundation for the divine initiative and action prescribed in today's passage of Deuteronomy 7:1-6.

#### Sure and Sovereign (vv. 1-2, 6)

God's call to holiness is sure and sovereign. His absolute sovereignty was made clear when he chose Israel "out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth" (v. 6). Subsequently, Israel's call to holiness to live according to God's law, was so that the surrounding nations might know Yahweh is the one, true God (Deut. 4:5-7). In today's text, Israel in its mediatorial role of bringing the nations to Yahweh, also acts as an agent of God's judgment (vv. 1-2). Theologian Meredith Kline calls the judgment described in today's passage "the intrusion ethic" where God, rather than waiting until "Judgment Day when his Son returns, brings a judgment down on those people 'early.' Thus God, the Judge of all, can determine to begin to mete out justice on them now, rather than waiting for the Last Day. The judgment 'intrudes' on the present. This is not totally unusual, because the blessings of the Gospel are also intrusions of the future grace into the present."<sup>2</sup>

- Read Leviticus 18:1-30. What were some of the abhorrent practices of the Canaanite culture?
- As Christians, we have a continued calling to battle against ungodliness found in our hearts and lives. Discuss the enemies that threaten your relationship with God. Why does God want us to completely destroy these enemies?

#### Cooperative and Complete (vv. 2-5)

God's call to holiness is cooperative and complete. As the Israelites acted cooperatively as instruments of divine justice, the justice they exact upon the corrupt inhabitants of Canaan was to be complete. Notice that there were to be no power-grabs or pretexts for plunder, but only the possession of the land promised to them.

- Ongoing conflict with sin and Satan is common among all believers. How must we decidedly deal with the sins that war against our souls? (See 1 Pet. 2:11, 5:8-9; Eph. 6:10-18)

#### Covenantal and Caring (v. 4)

God's call to holiness is covenantal and caring. The pattern for God's covenantal love holds just as true today as it did for the Israelites of old: God rescues and redeems us from slavery to sin and calls us to a life that wages war against flesh (Eph. 6:10-18), warning us to heed his voice and not harden our hearts to his Word (Deut. 6:16-17; Psalm 95:7-11).

- Why is the Christian life often described in battle terms? (See 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3; 1 Pet. 2:11.)
- How does one live distinctively from the world (Deut. 12:29-32), "bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1)?
- Discuss the ways God cared for his people in the wilderness. How can we also learn to trust God during difficult and trying times? (See also Isaiah 41:8-13; 1 Peter 5:6-7.)

<sup>1</sup>Batzig, Nick. *The Mosaic Covenant*. August 1, 2014. Ligonier.org. <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/the-mosaic-covenant>

<sup>2</sup>Keller, Tim. *Judges for You: The Issue of "Holy War"* [http://storage.cloversites.com/stmartinsanglicanchurch/documents/TimKeller\\_HolyWar\\_2.pdf](http://storage.cloversites.com/stmartinsanglicanchurch/documents/TimKeller_HolyWar_2.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>Hubbard, Scott. *You Can Win the War Against Sin: Three Promises for Today's Temptation*. February 21, 2018. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/you-can-win-the-war-against-sin>