

With All Your Heart

Go Sunday

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Lake Webb | Associate Worship Pastor

Week 10

Deuteronomy 31-32

1. Pastor Lake began the message by sharing about a song that takes him back to a memorable moment in his life. "...It unlocks an identity of who I was and how I saw the world at that time in my life. It reminds me of me, in that moment, and in turn, it shows me who I no longer am." What is a song from your past, that if you hear it would take you back to a memorable moment in your life?

As we near the end of our time in Deuteronomy, let's remember what this book teaches us. We have two parties: God who has been faithful, and Israel, who has not.

In response to Israel's unfaithfulness, God does not abandon them, He disciplines them. There comes a time where God once again calls Israel to follow Him in obedience to the Promised Land, not because they've proved themselves worthy of it, but because He made a promise to their ancestor Abraham.

And the way they were going to take the Promised Land was not by building the biggest army, or spending the most time in the gym, or stockpiling the most wealth and entering with diplomacy, but by trusting the Lord who miraculously led them out of the land of Egypt and loving Him with their whole hearts.

And how do you love the Lord with your whole heart? Remember the thesis of Deuteronomy: "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, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good." (Deut. 10:12-14, ESV)

2. Many might see following God's law as a burden. But God tells Israel, keeping my commandments is "for your good!" How has following God's ways been for your good?

We arrive at Deuteronomy 31. Moses has presented the Law to the Israelites before they are to enter the Promised Land. The covenant that God had made with them at Mount Sinai has now been fully reaffirmed. Moses tells the people that they now have the choice to obey, to love God, or to turn away

from Him. They have the agency to choose a path that leads to their blessing, or to curses against them. They choose between a life with God, or death in opposition to Him.

Moses has completed His purpose on earth. Remember, He does not get to enter the Promised Land because He had displayed His hardness of heart, just like the generation that was brought out of Egypt. So, God let's Moses know that there is one last thing for him to do before his death.

And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die. Call Joshua and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may commission him." And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. And the Lord appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud. And the pillar of cloud stood over the entrance of the tent. (Deut. 31:14-15, ESV)

Moses and Joshua go to the Tabernacle for this sweet torch passing moment. Even though Moses isn't going to get to experience the Promised Land, He's done everything in his power to prepare the next generation and now Joshua is going to be given the reigns by Yahweh Himself. Read Deuteronomy 31:16-18.

Can you imagine the grief in Moses' heart? After all that, after everything we've been through? God, you said there is hope in following your Law and despair in disobedience to it. Am I to die in despair knowing this will be in vain?

3. When have you experienced the type of regret that made you feel like your failures had disqualified you from God's purposes?

But before Moses can open his mouth, God gives him one final word to the people of Israel: Read Deuteronomy 31:19-22.

God gives the people a song. God says that even when the people forsake the Law of God, this song will like unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring. Even in the midst of new wandering, this song will call on the genetic memory of the people of God back to the moment before they entered into the Promised Land. It will be more than a melody – it will bring clarity in a way that evidently is not found in other forms.

What is the purpose of this song? This song is to testify to their guilt. The Lord asked them to love Him with all their heart, and they won't do it. But even though this song that is to be passed down generation after generation will be a witness against the people of Israel (verse 21), this song will comfort them.

4. How can those two exist at the same time? How can they be made starkly aware of their depravity, yet comforted?

Let's examine pieces of the song together and see what this calls, not just the people of Israel to, but what it calls us to today as people adopted into the family of God.

Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. (Deut. 32:1)

Remember the Shema from Deuteronomy 6? Hear, O Israel. The Lord your God, the Lord is one. Moses calls who to hear?

In this song, who is Moses calling to hear? All the earth and all the heavens. Everything that can hear, listen! Israelites, pagans, people in the future, angels, demons, everyone hear this song!

Why? Verse 3... For I will proclaim the name of the Lord; ascribe greatness to our God! "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he. They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children because they are blemished; they are a crooked and twisted generation.

God has not changed. He is the Rock. He is firm in His commandments. He is relentless in His promises, and right up front, this song tells you that when the Israelites find themselves far from God in the future, it's not because God has moved, but they have! They have dealt corruptly with Him. They have renounced their sonship to Him. Verses 7-18 says even though God came through on His promises, the people will follow the pattern of their ancestors: They will become complacent, they will idolize creation rather than the creator, and they will forget the Lord. Or as verse 18 says: You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth (Deut. 32:18, ESV)

5. How weak is your heart, apart from God? When have you experience deliverance and power as the Lord goes before you, or abundance and security as the Lord provides all the means necessary for you, and your heart still turn away from Him?

Your heart will fail. And what happens when your heart fails?

And I will heap disasters upon them; I will spend my arrows on them; they shall be wasted with hunger and devoured by plague and poisonous pestilence; I will send the teeth of beasts against them, with the venom of things that crawl in the dust. (Deut. 32:23-24, ESV)

God breaks you. The people will be utterly shattered by God. How will this happen, God will use nations to rise up against them, and we see this throughout the Old Testament – Assyria, Babylon, Persia,

Rome. This is definitely a witness against Israel. For Moses receiving this before he dies, he has to be completely heartbroken. But remember, Moses is supposed to give this to the people for their comfort. Where's the comfort? The comfort exists in their brokenness. From verse 34 through the end of the song, God makes Himself known not just to Israel, but to all nations when He avenges His people.

For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free. (Deut. 32:36, ESV)

When they are utterly broken and all of their power is gone, God will deliver them. Why? ...for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land. (Deut. 32:43b, ESV)

The final word from the Lord in Deuteronomy isn't another Law. It's not a prophecy of the people keeping it. It's a promise of redemption in spite of their impending failure. Generation after generation sings this song and they wonder "when is this day coming?" And as decade after decade, century after century passes, they begin to clearly see the judgement of God that is played out in the song. They will be oppressed by neighboring nations during the time of the judges. They will be exiled and scattered by the Assyrians. They will be exiled and destroyed by the Babylonians. They will be captive to the Persians. They will be dominated by the Greeks. They will be persecuted by the Seleucids. They will be occupied by Rome. But all the while, this song will promise them redemption by the hand of their God. Why? Because He is a God who remembers His covenants.

6. Can you recognize your own story in Israel's song? This is the song of every sinner standing before a holy God. Though we have too failed, God remains faithful to His promises. And for all who believe and trust in Jesus, there is a promise of redemption. What step will you take in your life to trust Jesus more fully?