

The Weekly Word
October 21-27, 2013

We return to the OT this week. The book of Deuteronomy, Moses' final words to Israel before he dies. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, October 21: 2Thessalonians 3– Giving every ounce...

Verse 5 seems to be highlighted in yellow as I read, so after finishing I went back and pondered this one sentence. *May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.*

My first meditation went down this line. Wow, now that's a way to pray for others. Most of the time my prayers for other people, and myself for that matter, have to do with God meeting some need. I pray for a job or some healing or for this or for that. Paul prays that the Thessalonians will grow closer to the Lord God. As I think about the difference in Paul and my prayers, isn't Paul's the more basic and more important prayer? I need to chew on this some more.

My second meditation traveled the roadway of the prayer foci of this sentence... *God's love and Christ's perseverance.* How often is love the intended outcome of God's will? When asked to sum up the law and prophets, Jesus said, 'Love God and love others'. So a prayer to grow into God's love seemed normal. It was the second half, *Christ's perseverance*, that caught me off guard. Perseverance... 'stick-to-it-ness', pushing on, keeping going, despite the hardships, obstacles or persecution. Perseverance is a powerful attribute, but when coupled with Christ it becomes even more so. Jesus persevered unto the cross. He gave every ounce of His life to the mission of God, redeeming lost people. It seems this prayer is aimed so that we do the same. So that we give every ounce of our lives to the mission of God, spreading God's Gospel across the face of this earth. And, yes, I have more to chew on here as well.

Lord, may these phrases and Paul's prayer stick with me. May You direct my heart into God's love and Christ's perseverance. Amen.

Tuesday, October 22: Deuteronomy 1–Remembering our story...

As I read Moses' recounting of Israel's early days in the desert, the thought came to me about how helpful it is for us to remember where we came from. Remembering our story, our past, our ups and downs, our faithless and faithful times, this is healthy. It grounds me in reality. It helps me see God's hand in my life.

I don't know how long you have been walking with the Lord, only a few weeks or many decades, but it has been almost 40 years for me. I don't have the greatest memory, but as I recall those years, God's hand of leading and protection are obvious. I feel a thankfulness welling up inside of me for His providential hand guiding me. I feel praise building as I recall the many 'God-incidents' that have shaped my life, led me to be the person I am and have the life I have had. I also feel a weightiness and sorrow for times I have not been faithful, for times I slipped and fell and disappointed my Lord.

Such has been my journey remembering my story. In recalling my story I see God's story being played out in and through my life. And to be part of God's story... that is gift; that is amazing; that drives me to prayer...

O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder consider all Your hands have done... I see Your protection, I feel your ever-presences, I hear Your voice guiding me a right...

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee. How great Thou art. How great Thou art.

You are great and Your blessings and leadings and directions and Word are a gift. Thank You, Lord, for Your presence in my life. Through my Savior, Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Wednesday, October 23: Deuteronomy 2— God is a keeper of His word...

As I have read and written on the scriptures over the years, I have noted often how God keeps His Word. God is a keeper of His Word. God made promises to Israel and He kept them. Eventually these promises found their fulfillment in Jesus and the Gospel message of redemption and abundant life for all who believe in Jesus.

What I noticed this morning, which I don't believe I have seen before, is that God kept His word to Esau and Lot as well. When it comes to the Land, I usually think only of God giving the Land to His people Israel. But today I noticed that God gave land to Lot and Esau as well. And Israel was to be careful not to encroach on their lands.

Give the people these orders: 'You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, but be very careful. Do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own (4-5).

So we went on past our brothers the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. ... and traveled along the desert road of Moab. Then the LORD said to me, "Do not harass the Moabites or provoke them to war, for I will not give you any part of their land. I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession" (8-9).

God keeps His promises... ALL of them. This is precisely where it paused and pondered today.

Oh Mighty Promise Keeper, I rest in Your promises given in Your Word, and more importantly, given in Jesus Christ, Your Son and my Lord, Savior and God.

I would be lost in my sins and sin-filled-ness. I would not know Your way of life and living. I would be a citizen of the kingdom of darkness... were it not for Your promises, actions and Word.

Praise and thank You, Lord God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Eternal God. Amen.

Thursday, October 24: Deuteronomy 3— Remember...

Standing on the plains across from the Promised Land, Moses reminds the people of the mighty acts and deeds of the Lord.

It is good to remember and to be reminded of what God has done in our lives and in the lives of His people throughout the generations. So many of the Psalms recount the exploits of the Lord.

It is good to remember... and it is good to be reminded of what God has done. Recalling God's faithfulness in the past gives us strength to trust God for the future...

Before praying and closing down my time with the Lord, I took some time to

- Remember God's many deeds in my life.
- Recall God's saving acts, particularly Jesus' work during the incarnation.

- Remind myself of the many ways God showed Himself to be faithful and mighty throughout the centuries from the time of Acts to the present.

Lord, You have been there for Your people throughout the ages. ... a mere thank You seems so insignificant compared to the wonder of Your love and faithfulness.

Praise be to You, Lord God. ...

Amen.

Friday, October 25: Deuteronomy 4– Keep God’s decrees...

Moses stood on the plain opposite the Promised Land and taught the people, one final time, the decrees of the Lord. **Follow them** so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you (1).

Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time (40).

As I read and meditated on this chapter today, the bolded words above drew me in. It wasn’t enough for the people to hear God’s Word or even to know God’s Word (‘know’ as if it were facts to be mastered for some test). No, the point of Moses’ final words was that the people would **follow them** and **keep them**, God decrees and commands.

There is a substantive difference between knowing and following, hearing and keeping! And this is what God was impressing on my heart today!

Looking back over Moses’ words, I find it fascinating that following and keeping God’s decrees comes with a promise... living in the land of God’s promise.

During OT times, ‘land’ was a physical reality defined by the lands God was giving to His people Israel. Now in the NT times, I take ‘land’ more metaphorically, in that we are living in the realm of God’s kingdom, God’s blessing. We are living in the place of God’s care and love.

God’s call is to follow and keep His decrees and God even blesses us when we do this... my take away for today in God’s Word.

God, I need to begin with following and keeping. I admit I do this inconsistently. I still give into sin and stray from Your way. Forgive me and give me strength to stay strong with You.

Holy Spirit, lead me. I recommit my surrender to You and my desire to listen for Your voice in order to follow it... Praise be to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Saturday, October 26: Deuteronomy 5– Our first-person God ...

I have been slightly confused the last couple of days. Moses is speaking to the Israelites before they enter the Promised Land, but he has been speaking to them as if they have all seen the wonders of God who brought Israel out of Egypt. Problem is the generation, who lived in Egypt and saw first hand all God did, died during the 40 years of the desert wanderings because of their faithlessness. How could those standing before Moses have first hand knowledge of all God did? Thus my confusion.

As chapter 5 opened, I saw an answer to my confusion in verse 3. *It was not with our fathers that the LORD made this covenant, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today.*

God stands above and beyond time. God created time and although He understands time and chooses to enter time for us and for our sake God nonetheless is beyond time and not confined by time.

This allows God to be always present with those of us who are alive and also allows God's covenants to be ever present with those who are alive.

Technically, according to calendars and clocks, God did make His covenant with Israel's forefathers. However, since God is beyond time, He also made that same covenant with all of His people throughout time. So as they stood on the plains overlooking the Promised Land, God could speak to them in the present tense as if they were there when the miracles and covenants were made because for God they were... *It [the covenant] was ... with us, with all of us who are alive here today.*

This same 'beyond time-ness' of God is evident in the celebration of the Passover, which is always celebrated—even by Jews today- in the present tense as if the present-celebrants were liberated from Egypt.

Anyway, I am awed by God, our God, the one and only God, who is beyond time yet chooses, for our sake, to step into time to rescue and save us.

I hope you can shout 'Amen' to this...

Lord God Almighty, maker of time and space, I praise You. I praise You for the wonder of who You are. Beyond time, yet mindful of me (us) and that we are confined by time. You enter my time (our time) to reveal Yourself to us, to save us, to love us and to invite us into Your eternal reality through faith in Jesus Christ.

Alleluia. Praise be to You, Lord God Almighty! Amen

Sunday, October 27, 2013, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click [here](#) for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.