

The Weekly Word
October 28 - Nov 3 2013

Wow, another month is ending! God's Word, however, is eternal and not a jot or tittle will disappear before things are accomplished (Mt 5:18) Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

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

Monday, October 28: Deuteronomy 6– This passage makes sense...

One of the central statements in the OT is called 'the Shema' (the first word of verse 4 'listen') and is recited by pious Jews daily. *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

God is one... God is alone. God is #1. There is no other god but our God. To recite this truth everyday must leave a deep impression if it is recited with any conviction!

Believing God is One, places responsibility on our shoulders... to love this *God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength*. Loving God, adoring God, serving and following God with all of who we are... this is the response of faith and belief in this God!

And if I truly love the Lord God with heart, soul, strength then verses 6-9 make practical sense. *These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*

I would want my children to love God as I do (6). And loving God with everything of who I am means I would likely talk about Him in the natural occurrences of life (7). And I would look for ways to place reminders in my life, so in my humanness and sin-filled prone to wander-ness, I stay connected with God's Oneness and His directives (8-9).

Question is, do I believe God is One? God alone is the Lord God Almighty?

Do You?...

Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I believe! I believe You alone are God and You are One! I believe Your Word is perfect and all I need to live a life faithful to You. I believe You!

Alleluia. Amen.

Tuesday, October 29: Deuteronomy 7– A tough word...

The unfolding work and plan of God is difficult to swallow at times. Destruction of all the peoples of the land God has given Israel. It is difficult for me to fathom this and to answer the questions of people who ask, "Is this loving?"

How does one balance love and hate; mercy and justice?

How difficult it can be to be the person who executes punishment on behalf of the Sovereign. That was Israel's role. They were God's sword of justice against peoples who hated Him.

How difficult that must have been.

A HUGE caution floods my heart... world history has seen many atrocities committed in God's (god's) name. My heart sighs, "Bill, it is not yours to judge others. Walk with the Lord and do right. Live faithfully unto Him and leave the judging to Him."

I cannot stay with these thoughts. I look back to the chapter and focus on verse 9: *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.* A positive faith-building nugget in a sea of judgment.

My heart begins to sing praises to my Lord God Almighty...

Oh, God, You are faithful! My life is a living testimony to that. You have protected, saved, inspired, encouraged and helped me at more times and in more ways that I can count. You have been faithful to Your people throughout the ages... Praise be to You, Lord God!!!

And You call me to faithfulness to You. You call me to keep Your covenant. Oh, God, please send Your Holy Spirit to flood my life so that I may have the strength, Your Spirit empowered strength, to do so. I am fully dependent on You. I apply my will to the task of following You, know that my strength will not be sufficient, I need Your power. I pray this trusting that You, who have begun a good work in me, will bring it to completion.

Thanks be to You, Oh Lord, my God. Amen.

Wednesday, October 30: Deuteronomy 8– Grace before meals as heart protection...

Moses gives an incredible string of instruction in verses 10-18, the essence of which I have printed here. *When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God.... Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, ... then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ... You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.*

It is so easy to grow satisfied and to believe the comfort we have ‘earned’ is all a matter of our doing. I am quite prone to laud myself when things are going well. Moses might as well have been listening to the words of my heart, *"My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."*

But Moses shows that it is a dangerous state when God is left out of the equation...when God’s role and God’s grace are forgotten.

In verse 10 I heard God’s remedy for a puffed up heart. *When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.* And if I substitute the word ‘things’ for the word ‘land’ it becomes even more personal and practical for ME.

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good things he has given you. This simple thought caused me to see how helpful pausing to pray a simple thanks-filled grace before meals can be.

In those 60-seconds of ‘grace’, I acknowledge God’s role in providing what I am about to eat. In those 60-seconds, my mind focuses on God who provides, not only food, but shelter, family, health, etc.... These 60-seconds put a shield of protection around my heart and mind, warding off arrogance and self-reliance, while at the same time creating space for dependence, thanks and appreciation to grow.

Who would have thought that those simple 60-seconds could be so helpful and God-life breathing?!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above you heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Thursday, October 31: Deuteronomy 9– Recognize who you were...

As I read this chapter, I couldn't help but feel the weight of God's pounding. Reminding Israel who they were, a stiff-necked rebellious people. I felt like a defendant standing before the Judge right before sentencing. "Mr. Israel you have been convicted of the following crimes." Then the Judge begins reading the list of crimes.

It was painful as I stood and listened to God's crime list against Israel. I knew a list could easily be drafted for me as well.

Guilty. Israel and I are guilty.

Then I remembered Israel was standing on the plains opposite the Promised Land. As guilty as they were, they were about to inherit God's promise and march out under God's protection.

This was **not** a sentencing hearing. The Judge was **not** going to throw the book at them. Instead this was a probate hearing and the Judge was about to award them the inheritance of a prized and loved Son!

Israel and I may be guilty but we were also loved. And love covers a multitude of sins (1Peter 4:8, see also Proverbs 10:12)!

My mind flashed through numerous NT passages where similar pictures were painted of we who are being saved.

For example, Ephesians 2:1-5 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.... But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions- it is by grace you have been saved.*

Recognize who you were, relish in your salvation and rejoice because in Christ you no longer have to live as you used to live! This is what I heard from the Lord in my time with Him today.

***Recognize who you were, relish in your salvation and rejoice
because in Christ you no longer have to live as you used to live!***

Oh, God, I sit awed at what you did for me, for all Your people. You took a broken potsherd of a person and You restored me to life full and rich with Your love, provision and care.

*I pray, Lord, that my life reflects You, so that as I live people will praise You, the Creator and Restorer of lives!
To Your honor and glory, I choose to live as a response to Your amazing mercy and grace.*

Through Jesus Christ, my Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, I pray. Amen.

Friday, November 1: Deuteronomy 10– A good day with the Lord...

I had a few moments of thought as I read today.

First, I realized that it is good to pause occasionally and remember the deeds of the Lord and where he has taken me throughout life so far. Reminding myself of God's care and leading in days past is an encouragement for the days still to come.

In verse 10, it struck me that Moses told the people, *Now I had stayed on the mountain forty days and nights, as I did the first time, and the LORD listened to me at this time also.* The first time Moses was on the mountain he listened. I'm guessing he was in awe and filled with wonder. This time he spoke *and the LORD listened* to him. Moses and the Lord had direct communication. That blows me away! It also helped me to realize that our relationship with God grows and God invites us into closer communion as we can handle it.

I found in verse 12 a helpful summary of the life of faith. I made note of the descriptive verbs God used...

Fear the LORD

Walk in all His ways
Love Him
Serve Him
Observe the LORD's Commands

I am helped by summary statements like verse 12-13.

I found myself rolling these three thoughts over and over.

I hope you had a good day in God's Word, too. Did He show you other things?

Lord, thank You for taking time to meet with me today. I pray that my thoughts and time with You this morning will prepare me for this day in order to live faithfully for You all day. Bless You, Lord. Talk with You soon. Amen.

Saturday, November 2: Deuteronomy 11– How is faith passed along?...

How is faith passed along?

On the one hand, faith is always lived in the present tense. On the other, key events of the faith happened in the past.

For Israel, poised to cross the Jordan, the chapter begins recognizing that the children were not present when God did his great saving acts of the exodus. Moses acknowledged this in verses 2-6: *Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm...* Then he concludes like this. *But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done* (7).

In reality only Moses, Caleb and Joshua actually saw those events. Everyone else in that generation died in the wilderness. And yet, the forefathers had passed on the truth and experience of those events such that their children lived as if they lived through them personally.

And now standing on the verge of the Jordan, Moses was reminding them to pass along the truth to their children as their parents had passed it along to them.

This must be done with and for every generation.

In verse 19 Moses gives part of the how to transfer faith from one generation to the next. *Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.* It is easy to focus on the word 'teach' and miss the rest. Teaching here is not merely the impartation of knowledge and facts. It is the living of life in light of those facts, in such a way that faith is seen in you morning, noon and night. When you sit, and walk, and lie down and get up...

The transfer of living faith occurs throughout the day in any and every occasion...

Am I living in such a way that any moment and every moment could be a teachable moment about the God I serve...His love, His acts, His deeds?

This requires more thought...

Lord, may I live as if I witnessed Christ's life, death and Resurrection first hand. May what Jesus did, centuries ago, so fill me that I live as if I were there... as if I saw Jesus heal, heard Jesus teach and I felt His embrace following the Resurrection. I pray this through the name of my Risen Savior, Jesus. Amen.

Sunday, November 3, 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.