

NOTES: “Remember... God’s Steadfast Love”

Deuteronomy 5:22-33

WELCOME

My name is Tim

Do consulting work w/ churches

Been coming up from PDX to help regularly for 3 weeks shy of 2 YEARS

Worked with music

Now helping w/ preaching support

Great to be with you all again

INTRO

Today = finishing up brief series

“The Plains of Moab” - Remembering God’s Saving Work

Looking at a passage in Deuteronomy

Israel @ a key turning point

After wondering for decades in the “wilderness” - nomadic

On the edge of entering land God promised them

A new chapter in their life as God’s OT people

SCB = similar place

On the verge of significant change

A new chapter in the life of this church

This series →

look back on God’s faithfulness

look forward to the what he has in store in the coming season

So let’s look one more time at Deuteronomy 5...

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LAW 5:22-33

Setting the stage...

Moses gathers Israel for his final message

Gives a bit of a historical review - 1:6-3:29

From the giving of the law at Horeb/Sinai to the present

Ending w/ God's judgement on Moses to not enter the land 3:23-29

Teaches on covenant as he prepares to read the 10 commandments ch4

He retells the story of God giving his law

Starting with

The giving of the 10 commandments ch. 5:1-21

What follows in ch. 5:

- the people respond to God's law
- then God responds to the people

The people respond to Moses reading the 10 commandments 5:22-27

v.22-23 → the people see Moses on the mountain w/ fire, cloud & thick darkness

Moses comes down

The leaders of all 12 tribes come to him

they say...

24 And you said, 'Behold, the Lord our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day **we have seen God speak with man, and man still live.**

They believe from other teaching

That NO ONE can hear God's voice and live

They say...

26 For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, **and has still lived?**

They are amazed by what just happened

They are FREAKED OUT by what just happened !!!

So...

27 **Go near and hear all that the Lord our God will say, and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it.'**

“How about you go talk to God some more

And then tell us what he says

He seems to like you

And we don't want to push our luck...

Then, tell us what he wants us to do

And we'll do it!!! ”

Moses continues to tell the story as...

God responds to the people 5:28-33

28 “And the Lord heard your words, when you spoke to me. And the Lord said to me, ‘**I have heard the words of this people**, which they have spoken to you.

God hears their response

And he approves of their reverence & humility

They rightly fear & revere God

And commit to obey his word

God says:

They **are right in all that they have spoken.**

But then God says something really interesting
This is the key verse we are going to look at and unpack

He approves of their initial response
But there's a catch...

- | **29 Oh that they had such a *heart* as this always,**
heart → center of their being

- | to **fear me**
fear → reverence

- | and to **keep all my commandments,**
keep - observe, be careful to observe

- | **that it might go well** with **them** and with their **descendants** forever!

Notice that it starts with **Oh...** → “sigh of lament”
This is the key to understanding what God is saying
And how he feels about their response

God says...
“This is a good response
If only that would ALWAYS be their response
To revere my name and my word
To carefully observe all I command them
For their own good
And the benefit of both them
And all their future generations
BUT...
I know it won't be this way
I know they will NOT always follow my words
And it grieves me deeply”

This about this...
God knew his people would NOT carefully observe his teaching
And yet he continued to give it anyway

Why?

To what end?

What's the point?

We'll reflect more on this in a few

God gives this cryptic lament
and then continues to instruct his people...

30 Go and say to them, **“Return to your tents.”** **31** But **you, stand here by me, and I will tell you the whole commandment** and the statutes and the rules that you shall teach them, **that they may do them in the land that I am giving them to possess.’**

He says

The people can go back to their tents

Moses, I'll give you all the rest of my law

And you teach it to the people

32 **You shall be careful** (same word as keep in v29 - carefully observe)
therefore to do as the Lord your God has commanded you.

You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. **33** You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, **that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess.**

God's way = metaphorical path to follow

Don't turn from the path of my teaching

Like The Mandalorian - “this is the way”

If you stay on the path → it will go well with you - long life

If you don't → it will not

So...

Do they stay on “the path” ???

What happens next...

Starting w/ ch. 6 Moses reviews all God told him

As he went back up on the mountain

20 more chapters

How do the people respond?

Moses up there hearing from God → 40 days

Part way through the people get antsy & anxious

The people who just days before said to Moses,

“Go hear from God, teach us and we will hear & obey.”

Gather up all the precious metals they can find

Make an idol to worship

Cast a Golden Calf and put their hope in it for direction & provision

Because they assume Moses died

A little bit of time

Some anxiety and uncertainty

And they quickly turn from “the path” God called them to

And this is how it goes for Israel

Remember the meaning of their name = struggles w/ God

Over and over

God leads them

Provides for them

They follow him for a bit

And then turn away

Joshua leads them into Canaan

They get the land

But things are rough after Joshua dies

The time of the Judges - “where everyone did what was right in their own eyes”

Then they look to a king for answers - turning from God

Best it ever got was David & Solomon → 100 years - mixed bag

Downward spiral of judgement & exile

Conquered & ruled by Assyria, Babylon, Persia

God laments in a very similar way to Deut 5 in Isa 48:

“*Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea;*” (Isaiah 48:18, ESV)

Again and again they turn from him and his commands

There are consequences

But he never turns away from them

He always keeps loving them

And what about his promised land?

Continually conquered and occupied

Persia gives way to Greece

Greece gives way to Rome

And that leads to...

JESUS

Jesus came

As a fulfillment of all God's promises to Israel

Unlike any other human before or since

Jesus perfectly followed God's law

But God's people had made up their own version of the law

Adding rule on top of rule → till it started to look like the IRS tax code

And Jesus took great delight in defying their laws

Because of this they saw him as a threat to what they'd built

They rejected him

And as he entered Jerusalem for the last time before his death...

Jesus echos the lament of Deuteronomy

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” (Matthew 23:37, ESV)

John describes it this way:

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. (Jn 1:10–11)

Jewish leaders had him killed

As Jesus died on a humiliating Roman cross

He took all our rebellion onto himself

All the ways we failed to follow his instruction

Making a way to know God apart from following the letter of the law

We are saved by following Jesus, not following his rules!

Paul describes this in Romans 3...

²⁰ For **by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight**, since through the law comes **knowledge of sin**

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested **apart from the law**, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God **through faith in Jesus Christ** for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**, ²⁴ and are justified by his **grace as a gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

So what is God's law and instruction for?

“So then, the law was **our guardian** until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by *faith*.” (Galatians 3:24, ESV)

Paul says

The law was our guardian

It pointed the way to right living

But ultimately pointed to our need for a Savior

JESUS !!!

God's OT law

In a similar way to Jesus' sermon on the mount

Along with all the other ethical, behavioral & moral commands of scripture

Were given for our instruction

To show us how his kingdom people should live

This teaching should guide our lives

But following the rules does not earn God's favor in itself

No one can follow them closely enough (Rom. 3:20)

God gave them in full knowledge of all the ways we would fall short
to reveal sin and heighten our need for Jesus

And so I want you to...

REMEMBER GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE

God's love in the OT = **Steadfast Love** - Heb. *HESED*

Shows up 245 times in the OT

"Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love"

Sally Lloyd Jones - Jesus Storybook Bible

Covenant love

One sided

Not dependent on performance

In the NT this is called **GRACE**

*What is grace? Grace is love that **seeks you out** when you have **nothing to give in return**. Grace is love coming at you that has **nothing to do with you**. Grace is **being loved when you are unlovable**. It is being loved when you are the opposite of lovable... Grace is a love that has nothing to do with you, the beloved. It has everything and only to do with the lover. Grace is **irrational** in the sense that it has **nothing to do with weights and measures**. It has nothing to do with my **intrinsic qualities or so-called 'gifts'** (whatever they may be). It reflects a decision on the part of the giver, the one who loves, in relation to the receiver, the one who is loved, that **negates any qualifications the receiver may personally hold....Grace is ONE-WAY LOVE**.*

In steadfast love and grace
God teaches us
Leading us through his word
Patiently forgiving us for our failure
Loving us with a:
Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love

Until we enter the true and final “promised land”
When Jesus returns
And we are with him forever

That, my friends
Is the good news of the gospel
The only truly good news
That you can find in this world
That has no catch

And so a few...

CLOSING WORDS FOR SCB

Remember God’s steadfast love to Sound City Bible

Began in 2006
Multi-site “satellite service” of a mega-church called Mars Hill
like a video overflow room for the north burbs
As MH grew you were the guinea pig for every model and structure we tried
And there were a LOT of them
MH died in 2014 in conflict & controversy
But you continued as an independent church
Lived a nomadic life for years (not unlike Israel)
Eventually joined w/ Martha Lake Baptist
Settled here in this building
Held fast through a pandemic and divisive times

Now going through a key leadership transition

God has been SO GOOD to SCB

I have been in vocational ministry for 26 years - almost to the day

I've seen a LOT of churches fold under the weight of less drama than I just listed

Your story defies logic and church leadership models

It is a testimony of God's grace

His steadfast love for you!

Remember God's promised land is with Jesus

God promised his people a land flowing with milk and honey

Where their descendants would grow like the stars in the sky

And make them a people drawn from all nations

He led them to Canaan

But since they got the land under Joshua's leadership

To the present day - as we speak

That land is still contested

Either God is not very good at keeping promises

Or he had something else in mind

God's ultimate promised land

Is the new Jerusalem

The fully realized kingdom of God

That comes down from the sky

And makes all things new

When Jesus returns

As described at the end of Revelation

It's SUPER tempting to desire God's promised land on earth

Through your family

Through political leadership - election year

Through your church

These are all good things

But only a foretaste of God's promises fulfilled
And will always be a mixed bag

It will be tempting for some of you to think of Reece
As a bit of a Moses
Sent to lead you to a promised land of better days
But once you get to know Reece
And Reece gets to know you
Neither of you will seem as spectacular as you seem today
Just like your spouse, kids, job and country

I thank God for Reece
And I believe he will be a blessing to you
But continue to hope most deeply in God's steadfast love through Jesus
Then, when you fail each other
There will be grace

Thank you...

I started in church leadership in March of '98 - almost 26 years ago
I was 23
I left local church leadership in '21 - age 46
Half my life on church staff
Amazing things happened
Really painful things happened
I needed a break more than I realized

God opened doors for me to serve churches more broadly
Teaching, music, training, coaching, consulting
I love the church
But also wanted to keep some distance for a time
From the pressure & drama
I needed to heal
I have
Still a lot to go - Won't be fully healed till I see Jesus
I still cared for people

But from more of a distance
I was guarded

Then I started working with you early '22
Started as pure consulting role
Helping from a distance
But slowly - imperceptibly - it became something deeper
I got to know more of you
You encouraged me in many ways
I was able to encourage you at times
I began calling SCB my "church home away from home"
You became DEAR brothers and sisters to me

Then, last month
I was preparing to preach how Jesus brings peace in our anxiety
It was a very personal message for me
I struggle with anxiety in many ways
And the week before my sermon was a DOOZY
I was in final prep
And praying for a number of you by name
Those who I know struggle with anxiety
And I heard God's voice suddenly and almost audibly
That as I have preached these last 6 months
That you have "nursed my shepherd's heart back to life"

It was a stark and clear image
Of recovering from an injury in the hospital
Slow recovery
Bit by bit being able to walk again
In gifts I used to walk in more confidently
But got beat down along the way by a lot of pain

I don't know exactly where God is leading me in this practically
But I know he has deeply formed me through my time with you
And I will always be thankful for these years

I praise God for all he has done in and through and around SCB
To sustain it
And how you have ministered to me

Remember his love and grace going forward
Can't wait to see what he does in and through you

RESPONSE

COMMUNION

Remember Jesus died for all the ways you fall short
Whether you work hard to follow all the rules
Or you push back against any rules at all
Jesus died for you
So that you could know God
He patiently waits for you to follow him
Knowing full well all the ways you would not

We remember his body broken in bread
And his blood shed in wine or juice

Anyone who believes this is welcome to come forward

SONG

Sing Holy Spirit
Crying out for more of God's presence
To become more aware of his love in our lives