

March 19 — The ‘If’ of Obedience

READ

Deuteronomy 26:1-29:1

Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15 *“If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God ... However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all His commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you...”*

THINK

Surely over the course of reading Deuteronomy, you’ve noticed a central theme: Obedience. It almost seems utterly redundant, right? How many times did Moses have repeat the same lesson? Evidently, a lot because God’s people had a tendency towards idolatry and disobedience — just like us. And at that point, more than ever, they needed this reminder because they were getting ready to enter a season of battles like they had never faced before.

In chapter 28, we see a juxtaposition of blessings and curses with a big focus on the word “if.” “If you do this, you’ll be blessed. If you do that, you’ll be cursed.” God was making it abundantly clear that His people had been called according to purpose and promise; they were to be holy before a holy God. The same is true for us today as Christ-followers.

As you consider your daily choices, whatever they are, whether it’s giving in to peer pressure, who to date, or how you’ll respond to your overbearing boss, remember the word “if.” Think about the consequences of your actions — good and bad. And, let today’s reading be a reminder that IF you obey, blessings will follow. It’s a far better alternative than the fallout IF you choose to disobey!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for reminding me of the importance of choosing obedience. I know that if I obey You, blessings follow. Guide my decisions this day to reflect Your holiness in the world around me. Amen.

March 20 — Secrets and Revelation

READ

Deuteronomy 29:2-31:29

Deuteronomy 29:29, *“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.” (NIV)*

THINK

Imagine the Israelites gathered with their families, listening to Moses' final sermon. He'd just given them a long list of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. They were about to enter the Promised Land, uncertain of what exactly the future held. What kind of world were they about to inherit? What kind of opposition would they face? Possibly sensing their apprehension, Moses paused, as we see in the verse above, to address two major principles.

First, God has secrets that belong to Him. Does this mean He's trying to be sneaky and deceptive? No! Is He mysterious? Yes! The Bible makes it clear that God's ways and thoughts are higher than our own. This means that there'll be times when we can't make heads or tails of what's happening. But we must remember that God *does* know and trust that, regardless of our confusion, He is in control. Faith lives within unanswered questions as we lean into Christ for comfort and strength.

Second, God speaks to us through His Word. What He's revealed in Scripture “belongs” to us and future generations for eternity. God never leaves us hanging but provides the insight and information we need to experience the life He has for us. That's part of our promise and inheritance — He's given us all we need to know so we can live obediently within the space of His grace, blessing, and favor.

Therefore, choose obedience, trust that you won't always understand, and stand firm in the knowledge that God has and always will give you what you need — right when you need it!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, You are a mysterious God! I trust that within Your secrets, You are working on my behalf. Help me walk in obedience and cling tightly to Your Word. Amen.

March 21 — Life is Short...

READ

Deuteronomy 31:30-32:52

Psalm 90

Psalm 90:12, *“Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.”*

THINK

We could find endless quotes to remind us how short life is and how to make the most of the time we've been given. But some of the greatest teachers of this truth are those who are at the end of their life. They can see with a different perspective and inspire us with their experience. We can benefit from their wisdom and make the most of today.

In Moses's song, he was doing just that. He was reminding the Israelites of God's power and authority and pleading with them to turn back to Him. He wanted them to remember that sin is not worth the disappointment it causes and the separation it creates from our Creator. He implored them to seek the real wisdom that only God can provide because it's wisdom that ushers in true joy and success in life and eliminates regret. He challenged them to make the most of their lives by running from sin and chasing after God — a sign of great wisdom!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for my life. Help me to recognize the brevity of it and give me the wisdom that only comes from You. Grant me the courage to flee from temptation and boldly stand with You. In Jesus 'name, Amen.

March 22 — You are NOT Your Past!

READ

Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12

Joshua 1:1-2:24

Joshua 2:1, *“Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove. He instructed them, ‘Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho. So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night.’”*

THINK

Have you ever thought, “How could God love me?” Maybe you aren’t proud of the past or where you are now. Perhaps you have skeletons in your closet that you feel preclude you from fulfilling any God-given purpose. Or, possibly, you have yet to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus and only know what you’ve heard about Him doing in the lives of others. Well, here’s the good news: No matter what you’ve done or are currently involved in, God DOES love you and has big plans for you! He wants to be intimately involved in every aspect of your life.

This was true for Rahab, the woman in today’s reading. She was a known prostitute who’d only heard about God. Yet, the Lord used her in a mighty way. Not only did she protect the two spies, but she also left her former way of life, married into the Israelites, and is listed in the lineage King David — and Jesus Himself!

Like Rahab, you are not labeled by your past! Jesus didn’t die on the cross and rise again to save perfect people. He died because of our imperfection and His unwavering love for us. So, don’t allow the enemy’s lies about your past to keep you from the amazing plans God has for your life. You’re not who others say you are. If you know Jesus, you are a child of the Almighty King, made perfect and complete in Christ!

PRAY

Dear God, Thank You for loving me no matter what I’ve done. Help me remember Your truth about my life and who You say I am. Amen.

March 23 — What are You Known For?

READ

Joshua 3:1-6:27

Joshua 6:16,20,27, *“The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, ‘Shout! For the Lord has given you the city!’ ... When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed, so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. ... So, the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.”*

THINK

When you walk into your favorite coffee shop, and the barista knows your order, it brings satisfaction because you are recognized and known. Or, when you're acknowledged by your boss in front of your peers, it feels good to be given credit for your accomplishments. No matter how big or small, it feels good to be seen and noticed.

Joshua was known, initially, as an assistant to Moses and, then, one of the spies sent into the Promised Land. But, as we read today, the Lord had even greater purposes for him and used him to lead the Israelites into their inherited land. Joshua became famous! But, as Joshua led and conquered, he pointed people back to God “ –Shout! For the Lord has given you the city!”

Consider the circles and the places YOU are known... What are you known for? Let it always be for pointing others back to the Lord!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I want to know You more and represent You well. My life is Yours, with no areas or corners left untouchable. Change me, convict me, and move me for Your purposes. Let others see You at work in me! Amen.

March 24 — The Trouble with Temptation

READ

Joshua 7:1-9:27
1 Chronicles 2:7

Joshua 7:12-13, *“I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.... the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.”*

THINK

The temptation of materialism can come in many forms. It may be the glitz and glamour of cars and clothes, the desire for a certain type of house, or the lure of the latest gadget. It's not defined by the financial value of the object, but by the value we place on it. And if we let it, materialism can take us down the path of destruction.

When Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and honor Him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.” Achan finally confessed and told him where he had stashed his plunder. He saw the riches and couldn't resist. His desire to own them was greater than his desire to obey God. His actions revealed his priorities. Because of his sin and the sins of others, it brought trouble to Israel as a nation.

It may seem harmless to indulge and give in to temptations. But once we go down that path, it ends up consuming us. We may think, “It's my life and I can do whatever I want!” However, our choices also impact those around us and can cause everyone in our circle of influence to follow suit.

God wants us to honor Him with our lives and not give in to temptation. We can't be a stumbling block to others. We need to be a leader in positive change.

PRAY

Dear Lord, I want to resist the temptations of this world. Help me stand strong and devote myself entirely to You. Guide me to be an example of Your love and lead others in the way everlasting. Amen.

March 25 — And the Sun Stood Still

READ

Joshua 10:1-12:6

Joshua 10:8, *“Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you.”*

THINK

Sometimes we forget how powerful God truly is. We see problems that seem insurmountable to us, and it's easy to become disheartened.

Joshua was in a daunting situation, facing five kings united against him, yet he did not despair. He trusted God when He promised victory, and something miraculous happened. He boldly prayed for the sun to remain in the sky until the Israelites secured victory – and God obliged! The sun stood still an entire day “till the nation avenged itself on its enemies.”

What an incredible miracle! It may even sound a little hard to believe. That's not how the laws of the universe work, we might think. But who made the universe? If anyone can reshape the order of the natural world, it's the Creator. And He did so to ensure Joshua's victory.

We can trust in God's protection and promises; He is more than powerful enough to fulfill them. The only question is whether we're willing to pray bold prayers, cooperate, and allow God to work in amazing and miraculous ways.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, You are stronger than any obstacle I face. Remove the fear from me; I put my trust in You. In Jesus 'name, Amen.