

Do Over

Deuteronomy Overview

(preached Pine Grove 2/1/15; Sunday PM)

Introduction

We have all been there.

Your car pulls up to the family gathering.

The kids are in the back seat, but before they get out and take off into grandma's house..

Dad turns around and lays down the law for the day.

Remember, we have rules that you are expected to follow.

Even if grandma says it is okay, you need to follow our rules.

Which means no junk food before lunch.

No running in the house.

No playing outside by yourself.

Then, you move on to cover anything that the kids shouldn't say once they get inside.

Don't tell grandma and granddaddy this...

Don't tell Aunt Sally this...

Please don't stare at Uncle Bob's big plate at supper.

Then you always end with..

You need to obey us.

We are your parents and we expect you to do as we say.

Then the doors fly open in those twenty steps to grandma an amazing thing occurs...

The words that you have just spoken are permanently erased from the minds of every child.

They go in, grab a Pepsi and some Doritos and run upstairs to jump on the beds while saying hello to Uncle Bob while staring at his plate of food.

Such is the nature of taking your kids into someone else's home.

IT is almost as if it becomes a license to sin for your kids when they walk through the front door.

So, what do you do to prevent it..

You try to recap everything that you have ever taught your kid in that 30 seconds before you open the door of the car.

And that is almost exactly what we see in the book of Deuteronomy.

God is about to lead Israel into the Promised Land.

It has been 40 years since the nation walked out of Egypt.

For 4 decades, they have wandered in the wilderness as judgment for complaining against God.

Though God has provided for them and not abandoned His people, he has sent them to the wilderness while the grumbling generation dies.

And we arrive at the book of Deuteronomy, that generation has almost passed away...

And a new generation is ready to walk into the land.

Now, if you remember, this is the land that God promised Abraham back in Genesis 12.

After the world fell into sin and underwent the worldwide of the flood and the worldwide scattering at the tower of Babel...

God called to Abram.

His plan was to work through a nation to make His name great in the world.

So, he called to Abram who would be called Abraham...

And he promised to make Abraham's descendants a great nation...

And he promised to bless the whole world through Abraham..

And he promised Abraham and the nation that would come from him a land.

So, God grows them into a great nation in the beginning of the book of Exodus...

He leads them out of Egypt and gives them laws and teaches them that HE is holy is the book of Exodus.

Yet, as he goes to lead them to their land in the book of Numbers, it is delayed by their grumbling and impatience..

So they wander in the wilderness in the book of Numbers for 40 years waiting for that generation to die...

And then finally, God leads them to the edge of the promised land on the east side of the Jordan River..

And it is in this place called Moab where the entire book of Deuteronomy takes place.

And it only covers a period of approximately one month.

What we are going to see on the eastern side of the Jordan River is Moses giving three sermons to his kids in the backseat of the car.

Though I didn't touch on it last week, Moses was forbidden to take Israel into the promised land.

In Numbers 20, he disobeyed a command of God, and God forbid him from going into the Promised Land.

So, these are his last sermons to His people.

He is not going to be able to walk with them, so he gives them some preaching before he leaves them.

And that is simply the best way to outline the book of Deuteronomy....

To look at it as a series of three sermons.....

And then to see Moses' Final sermon which is the record of the days leading up to his death...

So, let's begin with.....

I. Moses' 1st Sermon: What God Has Done (1-4)

The first sermon of Moses to His people is simply a rerun of what God has done for them to get them to this point.

We mentioned last week that it is helpful to have a mental note in your head of what God has done for us.

That we can flip through like a photo album and remember His goodness to us...

When trials come our way...

Or uncertain days face us..

This is a group of people headed into a new land.

There is reason for fear and feeling unsettled.

Personally, new environments are very hard for me.

I mean I love being around people and getting to know them, but meeting them in a new setting is tough.

I remember the first time I opened that door and sat down before the search committee.

I remember the Friday night when we got to meet all of yall.

You have Israel here on the verge of going into a new land.

Surely, there is anxiety and worry.

Most of the spies said that there were giants in the land.

So, what does Moses do?

He reminded them of the Lord's goodness up to that point in their journey.

And then the first few verses of chapter 4 really summarize what is happening in the book of Deuteronomy.

If you will, flip to chapter 4 and let's read a little section that is really a summary of the book.

4 "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ² You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

The Pharisees obviously ignored this rule.

As we saw this morning, their whole religious system was built upon adding to God's Word.

³ Your eyes have seen what the Lord has done in the case of Baal-peor, for all the men who followed Baal-peor, the Lord your God has destroyed ^[a]them from among you.⁴ But you who held fast to the Lord your God are alive today, every one of you.

⁵ “See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. ⁶ So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him?⁸ Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?

⁹ “Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.

There was a need to remember the Lord’s goodness but to also pass it along to their children...

Which in my opinion, the Jews did very effectively.

Many of their celebrations were meant to appeal to the younger generation, so that the nation would continue to serve the Lord.

Then, we arrive at chapter 5, and we see...

II. Moses' 2nd Sermon: What God Expects (5-26)

A. Living with God (5-11)

In the first part of this second sermon, Moses goes through the 10 commandments again.

Many people look at this as simply a repetition of Exodus 20, but it is much more than that.

As we watch Moses teach the 10 commandments again, we need to be reminded that Israel is not the same nation as in Exodus.

They have 40 years of life behind them now.

They are also made of a new generation of people.

Moses is not wasting time here.

This section is not a useless section of the Bible that is just like Exodus 20.

No, these commands are going into new ears.

The commands are going into the lives of people who have wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.

Let me ask this...

Are you more attentive to what God has to say when you have gone through a trial?

Are you more likely to listen after a rough stretch in life than while the going is good?

Though Israel is the same nation, it is made of a new generation who has seen the judgment of God.

In many ways, they have a new view of God.

Maybe they didn't know that God was serious about his commands after they left Egypt.

But now they know that he takes his commands seriously.

So, when Moses goes through them again here in this second sermon, it serves a different purpose than the first time they heard them.

Then, in chapter 6, we need to take a stop here.

In verse 4 of chapter 6, we see a very key passage in the entire Bible...

⁴ “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

Two incredibly important truths that God was trying to teach to Israel and to us in this passage.

First, Israel need to know that they were not worshipping many gods like the Egyptians and other nations did.

No, they were worshipping One God.

Then second, their worship was based upon love.

They were commanded to love God.

This was not to be a relationship based upon rules and following commands.

The commands that God gave the nation were given in love...

And they should be obeyed in love.

Let me give you an example that any parent in here will understand.

As parents, we have family rules for our house.

We share them with our children.

Let's just say that we have a rule of no running in the house.

Well, I see one of my children running and I remind them of the rule.

So, they stop running, but stomp as they walk off.

Are they keeping the rule?

Yes, they are.

They aren't running.

Are they obeying from the heart?

No way!

Their heart is still disobedient even though their feet aren't running.

That is obedience without the heart.

And we totally understand that as parents.

We want our kids to stop running because they love us and desire to follow the rules.

The point of not running is for their protection.

It is not meant to be a burden, but as parents we expect obedience.

In many ways, that is God's desire from his people.

Here are my commands.

Obey them and live, but obey them out of love.

That is the bottom line in our relationship to God.

It is based upon love for him, or it should be.

If you grit your teeth and wish you could keep your money instead of putting it in the offering plate, you are not giving out of love.

You are like that kid stomping all the way down the hall, and God is not pleased with heartless obedience.

That is why after Moses goes through the commandments again, God uses chapter 6 to say...

Write these commands on your heart.

Obey these commands from your heart.

That is true worship of God, and it was established in the minds of Israel early in the history of the nation.

Unfortunately, they never quite understood it, and their relationship to God eventually became a religion of rules without any heart obedience.

And so, Moses uses the next few chapters to remind Israel of what the Lord expects in their relationship to him.

And then in the second part of this second sermon beginning in chapter 12,....

God begins to detail some laws for the land that they are about to enter.

B. Living in the Land (12-26)

Chapter 13 deals with a constant temptation in the nation of Israel..

And that was the temptation to listen to false teachers and follow false gods.

So, God established harsh penalties for those listening to false prophets and serving false God.

That was a problem because they were surrounded by false religion and false gods.

And we will see idol worship time and time again in the OT.

We also see it today, as people run after all kinds of idols.

No, they are carved images made of gold or wood, but they are just as real.

When we place anything above our relationship to the Lord, we make an idol of it.

And it can take many forms...

Jobs, sports, fashion, money, dieting, family, hobbies, cars, houses, even our own children can be become idols in our life...

You name it, people can idolize it and it happens more often than you may imagine.

Yet, God is not pleased with that.

He wants to be worshipped above anything else.

That was clear in his instruction to Israel, and it is just as true today.

Then in chapters 16-18, he deals with some of the events that were to be celebrated in the land...

And instructions about worship and how to maintain justice in the land.

Then in chapter 19 all the way through chapter 25, God offers laws to govern the relationships between people in the land.

Remember the first law is to love God with all your heart, but the second is to love your neighbor as yourself.

It is the vertical and horizontal love that governs all we do.

We are love up, and we are to love out.

That is the sum of all the laws that God gave to the people.

Love God. Love others.

That is the sum of all the laws.

After telling the people how to love Him in chapters 5-18, God is detailing how to love one in chapters 19-25.

And then chapter 26 ends with a few verses that we need to read...

Deut 26:16...

¹⁶“This day the Lord your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall *therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul.* ¹⁷ *You have today declared the Lord to be your God, and^[i] that you would walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances, and listen to His voice.* ¹⁸ *The Lord has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and^[i] that you should keep all His commandments;* ¹⁹ *and^[k] that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the Lord your God, as He has spoken.”*

And with that call to commitment, Moses preaches his third sermon in chapters 27-30....

III. Moses' 3rd Sermon: What God Will Do (27-30)

A. Consequences (27-28)

At the end of Moses' talk with the nation, he concludes with a promise of blessing or curses.

Chapters 27 and 28 are simply consequences of that go along with a principle that everyone understands...

You will be blessed if you obey and cursed if you disobey.

Since God knew that they would be a disobedient people, he even outlines the future that would come to them because of their hard heart.

In the second half of chapter 28, he describes how they would eventually be taken out of the land by their enemies.

First, there would be the Assyrians and then the Babylonians.

And then Moses goes on to tell the nation that they would ultimately be driven from the land and be scattered all over the earth.

Which is true even today as the nation is scattered all over the earth.

Though there is a group of Jews that went back to the land in 1948...

Countless others are still all over the world, many in the United States.

And Israel is still experiencing the consequences for disobedience to this very day..

B. Covenant (29-30)

Then in chapter 29...

Moses speaks of another covenant that God will make with the nation...

Some see this as a simple renewal of the covenant that was made at Sinai.

Similar to what you do when you remind your kids of how they need to act every time they get out of the car.

You simply renew the covenant every time you get out of the car.

You behave and you won't get a beating.

Others see this as another covenant made with their people.

They call it the Palestinian Covenant, where God would give them the land if they followed his laws.

Others see it as a preview of a covenant to come.

I take the third view, and here is why.
The covenant that God made with the nation at Sinai is impossible to keep.

And we will see that as we move through the OT.

Israel will disobey over and over.

So, Moses moves into the future and points to the covenant that God will eventually make with the nation.

This is what we know as the New Covenant.

And what is the promise of the New Covenant?

Forgiveness of sins.

And the thing that Israel always lacked I ntrying to keep the Old Covenant...

A new heart...

Look at Deut. 29:2...

***²And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them,
“You have seen all that the Lord did before your***

eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants and all his land; ³ the great trials your eyes have seen, those great signs and wonders. ⁴ Yet to this day, the Lord has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.”

When we look at the history of Israel and we gaze upon their disobedience, we wonder why they didn't get it.

How could look at the power of God in the plagues on Egypt, yet still disobey him?

How could they look upon His love for them in carrying them out of Egypt....

In providing food and water for them in the wilderness, yet never love him in return?

How could that possibly happen?

They did not have a heart that could not understand much less obey God.

Which also explains how a man or woman can live for 50 years and enjoy the blessings of the Lord, yet never love the Lord..

They need a new heart.

Have you ever shared the gospel perfectly with someone...

You shared all the truths about sin.

You talked about the wonder of Jesus.

You explained the cross so plainly.

Yet, you tell them to repent and trust in Jesus...

And they sit there and look at you with a blank stare.

How can that be?

How can someone see the love of God in the fact that He sent His son to die in their place...

Yet never have any interest in turning from sin and getting saved?

Simply put, they need God to give them a new heart before any of it makes sense to them.

That is why the New Covenant is so incredible.

It promises a new heart that wants to obey God and it gives you new desires to obey Him.

And that is what Moses was previewing all the way back in the book of Deuteronomy.

It was a covenant that was promised to Israel and it is a covenant that God will honor..

Look at Deut 30:5...

“⁵The Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and HE will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. ⁶Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul so that you may live.”

The promise of this section is that there is a day coming where Israel will experience the blessings of the New Covenant.

That day isn't today because the blessings of the New Covenant come when someone repents and trusts in Christ.

Which is something that Israel has yet to do.

But the day will come when God puts a new heart into the nation Israel and they will turn to the Lord.

This is proof of the faithfulness and long suffering patience of God.

He has promised this to Israel and He will deliver on it.

He is the Lord.

In fact, Jeremiah says that there is God's love of Israel is as sure as the sun rise and the sun setting every day.

We will see more about this promise in the rest of the OT...

But we will end with...

IV. Moses' Final Sermon (31-34)

The final 4 chapters detail the death of Moses, and the rise of Joshua who will now lead Israel.

Moses lived to be 120 years old.

He spent 40 years in Egypt in slavery.

He spent 40 years in exile on Midian.

And he spent 40 years leading Israel.

And though his time has ended, the work of the Lord goes on.

My dad had a friend who had worked at a palace nearly 30 years.

One day, he did something really dumb and was fired.

He told my dad that the most amazing thing about that day was when the management escorted him outside.

He said he listened real hard, but the plant never shut down.

He always thought that he was the one who kept it running but now he walked outside and realized that work would still go on without him.

And God will continue His work beyond Moses.

He has already selected Joshua as a successor, and the nation will prepare to enter the Promised Land.

But let me say this about Moses.

He preached up to the very end of his life.

He obeyed the Lord to the very end.

Though he knew he would never step foot and experience the Promised Land, it did not make him bitter.

He served to the very end.

Great testimony.

The song that he wrote in chapters 32-33 is marvelous song of how God worked and will work in the world.

He then blesses the tribes of Israel in chapter 33, before dying in chapter 34.

With that, an important segment of the history of Israel comes to a close and another segment opens as they prepare to enter the land.