

Do Not Forget the Lord October 14, 2018

Deuteronomy 8:11-18

11 Take care that you do not forget the LORD your God, by failing to keep the commandments, ordinances, and statutes, which I am commanding you today. 12 When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, 13 and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, 14 then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, 15 who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, 16 and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. 17 Do not say to yourself, "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth." 18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

The Scripture for today is from Deuteronomy. The book of Deuteronomy retells stories of Israel's past which is important for their identity. Of significance is the story of the manna being supplied by God. It reminds them of the scarcity of food which made them totally dependent on God. It is after they were humbled that they were able to enter into the promised Land. Remembering these stories shapes their world view. They remember who they are, where they came from, and most importantly, they remember God's provisional care. Remembering their past allows them to identify, know, and understand it is God who has provided care for them throughout their history.

Today's Scripture starts off with a very important lesson. Do not forget the Lord by failing to keep the Lord's commandments. Then it goes into the most likely scenario that would cause people to forget the Lord - the temptation of prosperity. Today's Scripture provides instruction for when people are most likely to lapse. It is during times of prosperity that more and more people forget the Lord. I think it is important to understand that what the Scripture addresses is not just a matter of forgetfulness. Like, "oh no, I forgot to do something, I'm so sorry, I forgot, I'll try to do better." No, forgetting the Lord is a matter of apathy; it is failure, disobedience, transgression, and sin. Forgetting the Lord is failing to obey the commandments of God for whatever reason a person may have. It is failing to live by every word of the Lord. As a pastor I hear all of the excuses. But that is exactly what they are – excuses. There is no excuse for neglecting the Lord, rejecting the Lord, or failing to do what the Lord commands.

The Scripture addresses times of prosperity as being when you have plenty of food, live in fine houses, and have wealth. I want to make sure we understand that prosperity is not the problem. The actual problem is what people do during times of prosperity. It is then that people are more likely to fall into temptation because when people are prosperous they attribute their success to the self and end up exalting the self. But it is God that made the resources. It is God that deserves the glory. It is God that you are not to forget. It is God that deserves to be thanked. The Bible does not deny the goodness of material things; the Bible promotes appreciation of the blessings. The abundance of bread, wine, herds, flocks, silver, gold, and land are not evil. We need food but we need more. The most famous verse of Deuteronomy is Deuteronomy 8:3 which is quoted by Jesus. "One does not live by bread alone." This particular verse comes right before today's Scripture. The entire community must diligently observe the commandment to remember

the 40 years because it is a very important lesson on humility. God humbled the people in order to test their hearts. God let them be hungry and then fed them in order to make them understand that one does not live by bread alone but by every word of the Lord. We are to live by every word of the Lord. This means you cannot pick and choose which Scripture to live by.

Do not forget the Lord has a particular meaning. Recently I was in a conversation with a person that has been absent from the life of the church. As we were saying goodbye I said “don’t forget where we are.” This portrayed a certain meaning. It was a friendly, lighthearted way of saying, “you have been absent, come back.” Without being pushy or critical, it was a reminder. Well, today’s Scripture also portrays a certain meaning but it is not light hearted. Do not forget the Lord by failing to keep the Lord’s commandments is a serious call of commitment. The call is one of devotion. The commandment is to live a life of obedience to every word of God.

Today’s Scripture applies to modern day America. Contemporary society has the same problems and challenges as in Bible. I see it as one of the biggest problems we face today. The lesson is very significant because this is going on in our society today. People forget the Lord due to prosperity. The lapsed today are lapsed due to several causes that compound together. The cycle of prosperity once again causes people to forget the Lord. Jesus described it best with the Parable of the Sower. The seeds that fell in the thorns failed to grow because the deceitfulness of wealth choked out the word.

Never forget it is the Lord that provides your means to prosperity. It is a divine gift that needs to be acknowledge. What we have received is multiplied tremendously! Be a Witness. Be a Servant. Be a Missionary. Find ways to repay the Lord for your success. Take the initiative. Find ways to do the Lord’s ministry where you are now. Live by every word of God.