

Keeping Our Hearts Close

Deuteronomy 6:4-26

Pastor Josh Fegles

Making God's Word a Matter of the Heart

Last week, we came to an understanding of our inability to please God through our own efforts and good morals and that points us to our need for Jesus. This is an important backdrop to the topic we focus on today which is giving priority to God's Word in our lives. Up to this point, we've been looking to the Scriptures and finding out that all of His Words and His Commands are really about matters of the heart—namely His heart for us and His desire for a people that have a heart for Him. It leads us to reason that a focus on being people of His Word must come from that very motivation—a motivation of the heart. Being a people of His Word isn't something we *'do'* and then check off our list of tasks for the day. It is something we *'are'* and something we *'live'*.

After God tells Israel that He wants them to love Him with all their heart, soul and strength (Deuteronomy 6:4-5), He continues by saying to His people that they should have His commands on their hearts and impress them on their children's hearts. He wants them to see the connection between loving Him and loving His Word. He wants them to love His word and internalize it. But then He expects them to not only think about it, but to talk about it and to live it out in such a way that they can successfully impress God's Word on the next generation of Israelites. If the Word of God is central to all the people, it will unite them in purpose and identity, truly making them a community in which God can be lifted up and glorified on the earth. As a result of having His Word hidden in their hearts, He knows it will keep them close to Him and prevent them from missing out on the blessings that He intends for them.

Remembering Him in the midst of His Blessings

As His people continued to talk about Him and vocalized His Word and His works, they reminded themselves of who He was and what He had done for them in the past, giving Him credit for what He was doing in the present. He warned them not to forget Him when they found themselves in the middle of all His blessings, but to remember where they came from and that without Him they would have none of those good things. His reminder to us is that He is to be our main focus and that He still wants our hearts. The blessings He gives us are from His Father's heart toward us, His children. His Word reminds us in the midst of life's blessings, He's the source.

Right Living Before His Eyes

When we are a people of His Word, we don't have to wonder if we're missing out on life by following after Him because we are reminded of how faithful and loving a God He is. He knew that His people were going into a land that was full of idols and other ways of life and that it would be tempting for them to want to experience alternative lifestyles, but that is what He saved them from when He rescued them from Egypt. With His word on their hearts and impressed on their children's hearts, they wouldn't need to test Him by living contrary to what was good and right. God's Words and Commands told them what boundaries to live within in order to maintain the loving relationship that He had saved them for. You can see His heart for His people when He reminds them that if they follow His Word and His ways "it will go well with them."

Leaving the Legacy of a Changed Life

A people who have been on the receiving end of a giving, loving God and who have accepted His commands and held them in their hearts, are going to be a people different than the rest of the world. God knew that as new generations were birthed and older generations passed on, the only thing that would keep the reality of His great redemption of Israel alive would be if it lived on in the hearts of the people. The kind of stories that when heard can seem too good to be true, too great to believe can only find their validity when coming from the heart of a changed life. If your son asks you the meaning of your faith, of God's Word and His ways and all you can give Him are dead rules and pages in a book, the faith will never be passed on to future generations. But, if when you are asked you come alive because He truly is alive and living in you, then that's another story all together. That's something that is believable. That's something of a legacy that God gives each of us to pass on to the next generation. The greatest thing we can ever contribute in this life, is to be a person who has known and loved the God who loved us and known and loved His words to us, in such a way that others can see Him in us and come to love Him and be loved by Him as well.

Questions for Further Reflection & Discussion

People of His Word

Moses instructed the Israelites to place God's commandments at the very center of their lives (6-9). "Impress them...talk about them...tie them as symbols...write them..." What applications might the Lord be asking you to make in your life and in your home from this passage?

People who remember

It's natural to turn to God when we are in crisis, when we have "no where else to turn". But, what about those times when all is well? Are you less apt to remember the Lord when life is full of blessing and comfort? Explore this in your own life. Why did Moses warn the people not to forget the Lord in verses 10-12? What are ways you can remind yourself and remember the blessings of the Lord this week?

UPCOMING

WEDNESDAY 02/28

Israel Perspective
7pm, RWLG

SATURDAY 03/03

Church Work Day
8am RWLG, RWGT

SUNDAY 03/04

All Church Service
10am, Lakeridge HS

MONDAY 03/05

Women's Bible Study in
Daniel, 7pm, RWCC.
Contact Joan Lowe for
Info 697.4676

FRIDAY 03/09

High School Game Night
7pm, Mt. Park Church

SUNDAY 03/11

SHAPE Revisited
4pm, RWCC

FRIDAY 03/16

Friday Night Fellowship
4th & 5th Grade Bowling
7pm, RSVP to Lindsie

SUNDAY 03/11

Ministry Prayer Time
8am, RWLG