

LOVING AS WE ARE LOVED / Sunday School- June 24, 2012

Unifying Topic: THE HEART OF THE LAW

Lesson Text

I. God's Chosen People (Deuteronomy 10:12-22)

II. The Office Of Judge (Deuteronomy 16:18-20)

The Main Thought: And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and this statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?. (Deuteronomy 10:12-13, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People respond in various ways to being loved. How should someone respond when he or she is the recipient of love? As recipients of God's love, we are expected to be fair, act justly, and love others.

Lesson Aim: To help the students have a greater appreciation for God's love and to have them learn how to show that love toward others.

Life Aim: To help adults not only to know justice but to model it in their loving response to others, especially those who are rejected.

10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,
10:13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?
10:14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.
10:15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.
10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.
10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:
10:18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.
10:19 Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.
10:20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.
10: 21 He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.
10:22 Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

16:18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.
16:19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.
16:20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

HISTORY:

Deuteronomy is an oration by Moses wherein he describes, explains, and seeks to reinforce the most essential contents of the covenant revelation, including its laws, so that the people might understand the spiritual principles of the Law for their well-being. The people who listened to this sermon were not present when the first law was given. Their fathers had died in the wilderness because of unbelief.

Chapter 10:1-11 Moses reminded the Israelites of God's great mercy to them. The Lord acting on Moses' request not to destroy the people, rewrote the Ten Commandments (v.v.1-5). When Moses broke the Commandments after Israel had made a golden calf that symbolically broke their covenant relationship. He now shapes two slabs of stone similar to the first ones; God engraves them with the same words that were on the first ones (vv.2-4). Moses then puts them in the Ark which symbolically shows that Israel accepts their part of the covenant and will obey the commandments.

The people of Israel went from the wells of the Jaakasnites to Moserah (Israelite Campground). It was here that Aaron died and was buried. His son Eleazar succeeded him as priest (v.6). From there they went to Gudgodah (Israelite camp in the wilderness, near Ezion Geber), and then to Jotbathah (another Campground in the wilderness),

a land that had many streams of water (v.7). That is when God set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the Ark of the Covenant, to be on duty in the presence of God, to serve Him, and to bless in His name (v.8). That is why the Levites don't have a piece of inherited land as their kinsmen do (v.9). This reference to the appointment of the tribe of Levi for priestly service carries with it a spiritual responsibility. The Levites were not allowed to own property (18:1-2). They were to be sustained by the gifts that the people brought to the place of worship. They were to carry the Ark upon their shoulders whenever the Israelites moved from place to place. The tablets of the Law were still in the Ark about 500 years later when Solomon put it in his new temple. When Moses was on the Mount the second time, he stayed there as he did the first time (forty days and forty nights) as the Lord spoke to him. God did not destroy Moses or the people because of Moses intercession for the people (v.10). Now God commands Moses to "*arise and go on the journey.*" He was to go ahead of the people until they enter the Promised Land which God swore to give them.

LESSON:

Deuteronomy 10:12-22 God's Chosen People

10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, — What God requires is to:

- fear the Lord.
- walk in all His ways.
- love Him.
- serve the Lord with all their heart and soul.

God would not tolerate self-righteousness. It boiled down to the commands of fear, love, and obedience. Fear is the first command and begins with man's knowledge of his unholiness in the presence of a righteous God. Biblical love is built on grace; and only when a man realizes that he is a sinner, can he love God because of redemption. God must be first in the heart, soul, and mind to make the final step to obedience.

10:13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

What God requires is to:

- keeps His commandments.

These commands would be for our good. They are hard for the natural man to fulfill because his heart is deceitful and rebellious. To keep these commandments first means to know that they're for our good and that God commands it.

10:14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.

All belong to God—heaven and earth. ¹The first (heaven) means the atmosphere, the second is the planetary system, and the third is the region of the blessed. ²Everything that exists belongs to God, He has the right to keep everything for Himself, but He chooses to share with human beings.

10:15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

³Though heaven and earth belong to God, He set His focus and attention on Israel beginning with their fathers. Being chosen - having the special attention of God focused upon you - is a place of great privilege, but also a place of great responsibility. Israel had a special responsibility to obedience.

10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart,—What God requires is to:

- circumcise yourself.
- don't be stiffnecked.

To continue to accomplish all that God calls them to do, He commands them to "*circumcise the foreskin of their heart.*" Every Jew understood the circumcision of the flesh; all males among Israel had to be circumcised eight days after they were born. It was the outward sign of the Abrahamic covenant and the basis of becoming a Jew. Now God speaks of spiritual matters. They were told to become Jews of the heart; ⁴the cutting away of the worldliness from their hearts was the true circumcision. The condition of the heart is more important to God than the condition of their flesh. Without circumcision of heart, true fear of God and true love of God are both impossible.

...and be no more stiffnecked. Moses urged the people to stop doing what comes naturally (being stubborn) and start making an effort to clean up their sinful hearts. If our hearts are right with God, if the vertical relationship

¹ <http://bible.cc/deuteronomy/10-14.htm>

² <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Bible.show/sVerseID/5201/eVerseID/5201>

³ http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7483&commInfo=31&topic=Deuteronomy

⁴ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/deuteronomy/12.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

between us and God has been made right—then our horizontal relationships with other people can be made right too. When your heart has been cleansed and you have been reconciled to God, it will be natural for you to love others.

10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: Why does God require so much?

- He's Lord.
- He's God of gods.
- He's Lord of lords.
- He's a great, mighty, and terrible.

Moses said that Jehovah is God of gods and Lord of lords. He is distinguishing the true God from all of the local gods because the nations around them worship false gods. Then Moses went a step further, calling God a God of terror. Fear God, he told the people, because only then can you learn about His mercy. God is a God of terror in that He has such awesome power and justice that people cannot stand before Him without His mercy. Although our sins deserve severe judgment, God has chosen to show love and mercy to all who seek Him. He shows no partiality and takes no bribes.

10:18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.

Why does God require so much? • He is the one who execute judgment. • He the giver of food and raiment.

God cares for the stranger in giving food and clothing just as He gives justice to the fatherless and the widow.

10:19 Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. What God requires is to: • love the stranger.

Therefore, God instructs Israel to do the same by looking after them. Israel knew what it was to be a stranger in a strange land; so they were to reciprocate with strangers and even at the command of the Lord— love the stranger. By showing genuine love we may bring those who are not yet Christians to Christ. We must remember that it took the love of another to lead us to Him.

10:20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

What God requires is to: • fear the Lord . • serve the Lord. • cleave to the Lord. • swear by His name.

To fear God is to honor and reverence Him. If we don't fear God we would do anything we chose to do. When you fear God, you won't bow to another god. The Lord God will always be in you and with you. Service is not to be considered as a job, it's more of an honor when we can hear and do what God is calling for. Our service not only helps us as individuals but it's to also help others. We are not to deviate from what we've learned but we are to put what we've learned into progress. The word cleave denotes clinging to or being faithful, also to hold fast. When we cleave to the Lord we are not to be divided in loving God, but place ourselves completely in Him. That means we are committed to do His will; committed to affirm the truth of God's name.

10: 21 He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.

Why does God require so much? • He is praise worthy. • He's the God that's done great and terrible things for us.

"He is thy praise" literally means, *"He is the song of praise"*, an exhortation to strong expressions of praise because the Lord gives songs in the heart. The people of Israel had seen what God can do but to a new generation that had not seen but were told of His exploits could not question but only believe. God has done so much we haven't even seen, but history leads us to praise God for His miraculous deliverance in our times of need and for His faithful fulfillment of His promises.

10:22 Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Moses ⁵reminds them not only of what they had heard with their ears, and which their fathers had told them of, but of what they had seen with their eyes, and which they must tell their children of. ⁶When the brothers of Joseph found him in Egypt, they brought Jacob and his family into Egypt. Jacob brought 70 people into Egypt and his descendents came out just over 400 years later with close to 3,000,000 people. God had fulfilled His promise to Abraham, to make his descendents as the stars of heaven for multitude. They were truly chosen of God.

⁵ <http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/deuteronomy/mh/deuteronomy10.htm>

⁶ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/deuteronomy/12.html>

Deuteronomy 16:18-20 The Office Of Judge

Synopsis of Deut. 16:1-17: Abib is the first month of the Hebrew year which means green ears. It is very similar in time to our April; the first month of the year came in the spring, when the land turned green. This is a repetition of the laws concerning the three yearly feasts; in particular, that of the Passover (vv.1-8); that of Pentecost (vv.9-12); that of tabernacles (vv.13-15); and the general law concerning the people's attendance on them (vv.16, 17).

⁷Three Mandatory Celebrations Deut. 16:1-17

This section of Scripture is detailed in Leviticus 23 where all the feast and celebrations are defined. But these three feasts/celebrations are a mandatory call for corporate worship according to verses 16-17.

Moses begins at the beginning of Israel's year, the month of Abib/Nissan. Passover is to be celebrated on the 14th day. Following Passover is the Feast of Unleavened Bread (*same as the Feast of Passover*) for 7 more days. Passover commemorates Israel's redemption out of Egypt. They had left quickly so all their bread was unleavened so it would not spoil. The Passover sacrifice foretells of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for all our sin and the redemption of all who place their faith in Him just as Israel placed their faith on the blood sprinkled on their door frame to prevent death of their firstborn. The unleavened bread, upon Christ's death, is analogous to Christ's body broken for us but it did not decay [spoil] (vv.1-8).

The second mandatory feast is the Feast of Weeks (*same as the Feast of Pentecost*) where they are to bring an offering to the Lord in proportion to His blessings upon them. This began 7 weeks after the first-fruits were brought before the Lord on the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is the third day after Passover so the First Fruits foretell of Christ's resurrection from death. The Feast of Weeks begins on the 50th day after First Fruits and foretells the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. They were to give a freewill offering of what they had (vv.9-12). The third feast is the Feast of Tabernacles, a feast of great joy commemorating God's faithfulness in providing for them during their Exodus and in the Promised Land. This Feast lasted 7 days in the fall, the 15th-21st days of the month of Tishri. All the years harvest has been gathered in at this point. It foretells of God's provision for His people while awaiting the return of our Messiah, Jesus Christ (vv.13-15).

Every male was obligated to attend these three feasts at God's chosen place every year. Presumably females were free to journey but it was obligatory only for males. The Passover was best attended. Tabernacles had the second highest attendance record, and Pentecost had the fewest number of attendees. Apparently, some Jews of the Old Testament did not take the command to assemble themselves any more seriously than some Christians do in this dispensation.

⁸For the purpose of settling the disputes of the people, Moses had already provided them with judges at Sinai, and had given the judges themselves the necessary instructions for the fulfillment of their duties (Exodus 18). This arrangement might suffice as long as the people were united in one camp and had Moses for a leader, who could lay before God any difficult cases that were brought to him, and give an absolute decision with divine authority. But for future times, when Israel would no longer possess a prophet and mediator like Moses, and after the conquest of Canaan would live scattered about in the towns and villages of the whole land, certain modifications and supplementary additions were necessary to adapt this judicial constitution to the altered circumstances of the people.

16:18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Moses had just finished reminding Israel of their religious obligations; he now gives them rules for civil order.

- First, he commands the appointment of judges and other officials in every town.
- Second, he establishes a higher judicial court for more difficult cases.
- Third, he establishes the foundation for the future selection of a king.

Just as Israel was to manifest their spiritual character in their worship of God, so they were also to manifest their holiness by proper civil relationships. Apparently, the leaders were appointed by their age, wisdom, and leadership

⁷ <http://greenleycommentary.wordpress.com/2009/09/17/deuteronomy/>

⁸ <http://bible.cc/deuteronomy/16-18.htm>

within the community. Instead of a courthouse like we might have today, there would be a plaza right at the gate of the city and there the cases would be tried. ⁹In every town which contained above an hundred and twenty families, there was a court of twenty three judges; in the smaller towns, a court of three judges. ¹⁰These judges and officers are to decide in civil matters. They must be chosen carefully, and must judge justly among the people. On spiritual matters, the priests and the high priest would decide.

16:19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. We're still talking about judges and officials. The word "wrest" means "pervert" or "deflect." To "not respect persons" literally means "do not...show partiality." They must judge with no outside persuasion. They must be of high character, so they cannot be bribed. A gift or a bribe would blind the eyes of the wise and pervert the words of the righteous. They must not give advantage to anyone, because of their station in life. They must judge righteously, because they have a judge in heaven that will judge them someday. Justice derives from the character of God. They are greatly honored to be made judges. With greatness, goes great responsibility.

16:20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. "That which is altogether just" means "righteousness"; nothing but righteousness in all causes and times, and to all persons equally. ¹⁰God wants His people to live righteous lives. They are to live by the law He gave them. If they are to be His then they must be honest and just in all they do. There had to be a civil organizational structure; a just way to follow, live, and inherit the land God had given.

SUMMARY:

Here is a summary of what God required of Israel. (1.) Fear God. (2.) Walk in all His ways. (3.) Love and serve Him with heart and soul. (4.) Obey Him because it's beneficial to them (10:12-13). They are to dedicate their lives as He has always done. Everything belongs to God and being chosen by God, He required circumcision, the cutting away of the worldliness from their hearts (10:14-16). Moses further explains God's character (10:17-18). God still required them to love the stranger because they had been strangers; fear, serve, cleave to the Lord and swear by His name. Doing so will cause the praise He is worthy of. Their eyes have seen the great things He has done and now they were an innumerable host (10:19-22).

Moses advises Israel to continue the practice of appointing judges and officials in every town to handle grievances and accusations among the people. They are to be fair, impartial, and just. They must not take bribes and/or pervert justice (16:18-20).

APPLICATION: God always showed His love toward Israel. What stands out is doing what God requires. Fear God, love Him, and obey Him will lead to loving others.

⁹ <http://www.christnotes.org/commentary.php?com=wes&b=5&c=16>

¹⁰ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/deuteronomy/18.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>