

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### “COVENANTAL CHOICE”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: May 5, 2024

SPEAKER: Wil/Brian

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 30:11-20

### Family Dinner Table

*“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”*  
Romans 10:4

In the letter to the Romans, Paul expresses his desire for the Jews to seek salvation through faith in Christ and not through a righteousness based on the law.

In Romans 10:9, Paul points his readers to Deuteronomy 30:11-20 stating, *“But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”* As John Piper explains, *“In other words, this covenant is not too hard, because God sent Christ to secure it absolutely for his people. Both the divine promises of this covenant and the human responses of this covenant are blood-bought, Spirit-wrought, and sure.”*<sup>3</sup>

- What does it mean that Christ is the “end of the law for righteousness” in Romans 10:4?
- Has there ever been a time in your life where you thought right behavior made you acceptable to God? Discuss why you thought that.
- Read Romans 10:9-10. Why is it necessary for one to believe not only with their heart, but confess Christ with their mouth as well? (See also Matthew 10:32 and Luke 12:8.)

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As we conclude our studies in the book of Deuteronomy, what constitutes correct worship and a faithful lifestyle have been made clear by God in his law. Throughout Deuteronomy, Moses has reiterated the need for covenant renewal. Deuteronomy 30 is a summary of that fundamental message to the second generation of Israelites who are on the verge of entering the promised land. At the end of his life, Moses urges God’s people to choose life because *personal, covenantal relationship with God is a gift.*

#### God clearly reveals what he commands—no confusion. (vv. 11-14)

In verses 11-14, Moses emphasizes the clarity of God’s law. It is not too mysterious to comprehend nor is it out of reach. Theologian Peter Craigie contrasts the simplicity and clarity of God’s covenantal obligations with that of the ancient religions: *“The emphasis on the immediacy and the practical nature of the commandment is in striking contrast to Near Eastern literature and religion. The Mesopotamian hero Gilgamesh, following the death of his intimate friend Enkidu, set out on a quest for life, a quest that was in many ways fruitless...In contrast to this heroic yet tragic quest, life was to be found by the Hebrews in the law of the covenant which Moses set before them ‘it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may do it.’”*<sup>1</sup>

- In verses 11-14, where does Moses tell the Israelites to look for the truth they need in order to love and obey God?
- Read Romans 10:6-8. Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 30:12-14. How does Paul apply the Deuteronomy text to salvation and faith?

#### God clearly reveals what is at stake—no deception. (vv. 15-20)

Moses clearly reveals what is at stake for the people of Israel. They have a choice to make, and there will be consequences. The stakes are high. Obedience will lead to life, and idolatry will lead to death. Moses urges them to choose life (v. 19). After Moses’ death, Joshua will again draw a line in the sand and challenge the people of Israel to *“choose this day whom you will serve”* (Joshua 24:15). Being obedient and living in covenant with God means that one will love, listen, and be loyal to him. Biblical scholar Raymond Brown summarizes, *“Loving is the key to living... The LORD is not looking for merely dutiful obedience. He loves them. They must surely be convinced of that by now, and he looks for nothing less in return: ‘I command you today to love the LORD your God.’”*<sup>2</sup>

- In Deuteronomy 30:16, Moses makes it clear that God’s people should walk in obedience and keep God’s commands, decrees, and laws. Read John 15:9-10. What does Jesus have to say about choosing to obey his commands?
- In Eugene Peterson’s book, *The Message*, verse 16 is translated as follows: *“And I command you today: Love God, your God. Walk in his ways. Keep his commandments, regulations, and rules so that you will live, really live, live exuberantly, blessed by God, your God, in the land you are about to enter and possess.”* This translation emphasizes the abundant life that will result from loving God and keeping God’s commandments. How does this apply to your life? What blessings have you experienced from obeying God’s commandments?
- While it is important to follow God’s law, how does God’s Word address the type of legalism where a person obeys the law of God in order to gain salvation? (See Romans 3:28, 4:5; Galatians 2:15-21, 3:10-11; James 2:10)

<sup>1</sup> Craigie, Peter C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. 1976, Grand Rapids, MI. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 365

<sup>2</sup> Brown, Raymond. *The Message of Deuteronomy*. 2022, Westmont, IL. InterVarsity Press. 285

<sup>3</sup> Piper, John. (2018, June 16). *An Impossible Covenant - and How It Becomes a Permanent Joy*. Desiring God. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/an-impossible-covenant>