

The Blessings of Obedience Part 1

by Chuck Smith

God's blessings and privileges are conditional upon our obedience to His commandments.

Duration: 25:05

Scripture: Deuteronomy 7, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:24-27, James 1:22, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith teaches about the blessings of obedience as he continues his verse-by-verse study through the book of Deuteronomy. He emphasizes the importance of not just hearing the word of God, but also putting it into practice. Pastor Chuck discusses the consequences of disobedience and the need for judgment in society. He also highlights the significance of Israel being chosen by God as a special treasure and relates it to the church being God's chosen generation. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience and the blessings that come from following God's commands.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life and make you whole
Welcome to the Word for Today. Featuring the Bible teaching of Pastor Chuck Smith, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently leading us on a verse-by-verse study through the entire Bible.

And on today's edition of the Word for Today, we'll be looking at the blessings of obedience. As we pick up in Deuteronomy, chapter 7, verse 1. And now, with today's lesson, here's Pastor Chuck Smith. Again, the background for this book.

Moses is about to turn the leadership over to Joshua. He has brought them as far as God is going to allow him to take them. He cannot lead them into the promised land.

And so, Moses, knowing that he is soon going to pass the torch on to Joshua, and he's going to be with his people, gathered together with his people. He is instructing them now. Really, the final words of instruction by Moses to these people that he has led for these 40 years.

Chapter 7, he's instructing them as to when they come into the land and they possess the land that God has promised them. When the Lord God brings you into the land which you go to possess. And he's cast out the many nations before you, seven nations who are here listed.

Nations that were greater and mightier than you. Now, the Lord doesn't just cast out one nation greater than them. There are seven nations that are inhabiting the land that are greater and mightier than they are.

And yet, God is going to give them the possession of this land and is going to drive out all seven of these nations. And when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them, nor shall you make marriages with them.

You shall not give your daughter to their son nor take their daughter for your son, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods. So the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus shall you deal with them.

You shall destroy their altars, break down their sacred pillars, cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure above the peoples on the face of the earth. Now, there are some who would take this passage of Scripture that God is giving to Moses to give to the people of Israel as prohibitions against mixed marriages.

And yet nothing is further from the truth. It isn't the mixture of nationalities that God is concerned with here. It's the admixture of religious backgrounds.

We are all one. God has created us one. And we are all a part of the Homo sapiens.

And we need to realize that God has created us all one and there is no superior race or inferior race. There are those people who trust in God and who serve and worship God and there are those people who worship idols. In the New Testament we have the same kind of a prohibition when we are told that you are not to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever.

And that basically is what the prohibition is here. You have God's people, the godly race from which He is intending to bring the Messiah. And He doesn't want them mixing with these other races where they are going not because of the sin of an admixture of a race but of the fact that they would have the tendency to lead God's people into the worship of their false gods and turn them away from the true and the living God.

And that's basically what the prohibition is here. God commands that they are to utterly wipe them out. They are not to make any covenant with them.

They are to destroy them. They are to destroy all of their religious relics and idols and images. They are to make a clean sweep of the land as far as the religious articles are concerned.

Wipe them out completely. Now, looking back from this vantage point, having now the whole history before us, the whole history of the nation of Israel, we see where their failure to obey this command of God ultimately caused them the loss of the land. For in time to come, because they did not utterly destroy their idols and break down the images and so forth, in time to come, the children of Israel began to go whoring after the gods of the Canaanites.

And they turned from the true and the living God. And whenever they did, you find that God's judgment came upon them and the nation was weakened. And then there would be the time of spiritual revival.

They would return to the Lord, but never a complete, complete eradication of those false gods. And thus they were a snare to the children of Israel and ultimately cost them the land itself. And as you get into the prophets and you read how the people of God had turned away from God and were following after idols and images, you realize that God's warning, again, was not in vain.

There was a reason why God commanded these things and their failure to obey ultimately in their loss of the privileges, and that is always so. Our failure to completely obey the Lord ultimately eventuates in our loss of blessing and the privileges that are ours as children of God. The Lord your God, He said, has chosen you as a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

Now, Peter takes this same concept and applies it now to the church. We are God's chosen generation. We are His special treasure among all nations that we should bring forth unto Him praises and glory to His name.

You, the church of Jesus Christ, have now moved into this place of privilege and blessing that once belonged to Israel. Verse 7, The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people for you were the least of all peoples. It's not because there was a great number that God chose them.

They were small, probably only three million at this time. It's interesting how that we are always looking for reasons why God might show His grace to us. Looking at ourselves and thinking, well, it must be something that I have and something special that God sees in me and, you know, I must have something.

And we're always looking for a cause within ourselves that God should choose us and call us and bless us. But the grace of God is His unmerited favor, which means I don't deserve it. There is nothing in me that calls forth something from God that is particularly attractive to God.

There's always the mystery of why God chose us. And so it isn't because you're great in number. It's not something that you are or you have done.

But verse 8, it's because the Lord loves you and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage and from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. It's just because the Lord loves you. That's excuse and reason enough for Him.

I love you. I think one of the most difficult things that I've had to learn in my Christian walk is to accept grace gracefully. I'm a klutz when it comes to receiving the grace of God.

I just have a hard time gracefully receiving grace. I'm always just doing klutzy things when God just shows His love and grace to me. Like, you know, saying, well, now, God, I'll show you that that was right.

You made a good move there, Lord, because I'll just prove to you now that I'll be worthy of this. And really it isn't because I was worthy or He knew that I would respond. He just loves me.

And He does it just because He loves you. And He wants to bless you just because He loves you. Not because you're anything special, not because you've done anything special or will do anything special.

Just because you're you, He loves you. And that to me is great. To know that God loves me just as I am.

Faulty? Yes. But He still loves me. And so, it's just because the Lord loves you.

Therefore, know that the Lord your God, He is God and He is a faithful God who keeps the covenant and mercy for a thousand generations to those who love Him and keep His commandments. So, love Him and keep His commandments. Now, Jesus said that the two are definitely related.

And he that loveth me shall be loved to my Father and we will come and manifest ourselves to them. If you love me, Jesus said, keep my commandments. So, he that saith he loveth me and keepeth not my sayings.

He that saith he loveth God, hateth his brothers a liar. Let's not love in word but in deeds and in truth. So, my love for God is really proved by my obedience to God and to His commandments.

And so, if I will love God and keep His commandments, His mercy shall be extended unto me and to a thousand generations. Oh, how merciful is God. He keeps His covenant and mercy for a thousand generations.

And yet, He repays those who hate Him to their face to destroy them. He will not be slack or He will not give any slack to those who hate Him. He will repay Him to His face.

Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I command you today to observe them. You shall keep them, you must keep them because in that you are proving your love to God and in the keeping of that covenant and His commandments, God's mercy will be extended to the nation for a thousand generations. Then it shall come to pass because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them that the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant of the mercy which He swore to your fathers and He will love you and bless you and multiply you.

The three things, love, bless, and multiply. He will also bless the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your land, your grain, your new wine, your oil, the increase of your cattle, your offspring, your flock. You shall be blessed above all the peoples.

There won't be a male or female barren among you, among your livestock and the Lord will take away from you all sickness and will not afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known but will lay them on all those who hate you. Now this is really the covenant that God is making with the people. A conditional covenant.

They are to love God and they are to keep His statutes and do them. If they will, then God said I will love you, I'll bless you, I'll multiply you, I'll prosper you and none of the diseases that came upon the Egyptians will come upon you. Now as we read this covenant that God made, as we read the statutes, we realize that many of these statutes that God established with the nation, many of the dietary laws are really good health laws.

God gave them good practices of sanitation. God gave them good practices of eating. And there are sanitation laws and health laws that if one would follow, your chances of getting some of these diseases would be diminished tremendously.

The sanitation codes, there was a lot of laws concerning cleanliness. The washing of yourself after touching certain objects, make sure you wash yourself. And that was important.

We know the importance of washing. Filth breeds dirt and filth breeds germs. And so it's important to be clean.

It's important to eat right. And so God said if you keep these laws... Now there is an interesting book, Dr. Maxwell, it's called None of These Diseases. And he takes the mosaic code, the dietary and the sanitation codes and shows how efficient they are in our modern days in the preventing of disease.

So this goes along. God said if you obey and do and keep my commandments, then none of these diseases that came on the Egyptians will come upon you. God is interested in your physical well-being.

God wants you to be healthy. God wants you to be strong. He's interested in your physical well-being.

And again, the commandment, you shall destroy all the people whom the Lord your God delivers over to you. Your eyes shall have no pity on them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you. If you say in your heart, these nations are greater than I, how can I dispossess them? You shall not be afraid of them.

Now again, these orders to destroy, people have problems with them. Somehow we have a rather weakened concept of God. In our concepts of God, we have a difficulty believing in a God who is stern enough to judge the guilty.

We think that somehow God can overlook the sin of man and that somehow God will let a person off the hook. And we have a hard time even conceiving of that eternal punishment that God has ordered for the ungodly and the unrighteous. And thus we have a difficulty in this concept of God ordering them to utterly destroy.

In so doing, God was using Israel as His instrument of judgment against these nations that had turned their hearts so totally against Him and had gone into such vile practices in rebellion against God that they were going to destroy themselves. But God is using now His people to be His instrument of judgment. Now God destroyed the whole world at the time of Noah with the exception of Noah and his immediate family.

God brought judgment on the whole world. People have a hard time with God having judgment on the whole world, but He did. Now God is bringing judgment on these nations.

Rather than sending a flood, He is sending the nation of Israel to go in there as His instruments of judgment to bring His righteous judgment against these sinful people. God wiped out the whole cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The whole cities were wiped out.

And God brings His judgment upon cities, upon nations. And He will bring it again upon the world. And now these are just the instruments of God's judgment upon these seven nations that were in the land that were overripe for the judgment of God.

And so they are to be God's instruments of judgment and that's why the judgment is to be complete and without pity God had pronounced the sentence these are not worthy to continue to exist upon the earth. They are to be wiped out. Now, we have a problem today in our society because of the leniency of our

courts.

Because so many people who should have been judged according to the law were not judged according to the law. And so many people that should be behind bars are not behind bars and thus it makes it dangerous for all of us who seek to live a peaceable righteous life. You never know when your home is going to be invaded and assaulted.

And thus you have to take protective measures because of the laxity of judgment. There's always a breakdown in the society when there is a laxity of judgment. Now, God ordered the judgment upon these people.

He wanted the sentence of judgment to be carried out. Israel was to be the instrument of God's judgment and they were to be destroyed. We'll return with more insightful lessons from our verse-by-verse study through the book of Deuteronomy in our next lesson as Pastor Chuck Smith continues to teach on the blessings of obedience.

And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now, I'd like to remind you that if you missed any part of today's message or perhaps you'd like to order a copy for that special friend or loved one, you can do so by simply contacting one of our customer service representatives and they'd be more than happy to assist you with the ordering details. Simply call 1-800-272-WORD and phone orders can be taken Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time.

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And now, on behalf of the Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support. And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck Smith continues his verse-by-verse study through the book of Deuteronomy. That's right here, on the next edition of The Word for Today.

And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck Smith. May we now be doers of the Word and not hearers only because that's self-deception. You've got to put it into practice for it to have any value in your life.

Let the Spirit of God now minister to you its truth as He brings to your remembrance those things that we have studied and He enriches you in your walk and in your faith and in your life in Christ. May the Lord be with you and bless you. Give you a good week.

In Jesus' name. Kids, I've got some exciting news. Pastor Chuck has written a book just for you.

It's called, The Story of Noah. Just listen. Noah guided two of each species of animals into the ark and he probably carried baby dinosaurs onto the boat because grown dinosaurs would have been too big.

It's so much fun to read along with Pastor Chuck and learn about God's Word. And as a gift, each book contains an audio CD of Pastor Chuck actually reading The Story of Noah so your kids can read along. Order your copy.

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