

The Danger of Forgetting God

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the danger of forgetting God, especially in times of prosperity, and the importance of faith in our lives.

Duration: 25:03

Topics: "Forgetting God"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith warns the people about the danger of forgetting God in prosperous times. He emphasizes the importance of keeping God's commandments and not turning away from Him. He reminds the people of their past failures when they forgot God and disobeyed Him, resulting in their destruction. Pastor Chuck also highlights the significance of staying focused on God and not letting material prosperity distract them from their relationship with Him.

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 hold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life and make you whole
Welcome to The Word for Today, a broadcast ministry 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 danger of forgetting God in prosperous times, as we pick up in Deuteronomy, chapter 8, verse 11.

And now, with today's lesson, here is Pastor Chuck Smith. Now beware, beware, that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you to do. Beware.

Warning, again, this is the very area where they failed. They did forget God. They did begin to disobey God.

The very thing that He warned them against is the very thing of which they were guilty. Lest, when you have eaten, and these are the things that can cause forgetfulness, a full stomach, you're eating in a full, and you have built beautiful houses, and you're dwelling in them, in times of prosperity. We don't have to pray, give us this day our daily bread.

We don't have to look to God for the daily manna. Our barns are full. There's a dangerous time.

Really, one of the most dangerous times in your life is not when you're going through a severe trial, but when everything is going great, and you're really blessed greatly. That is the time of great danger. Because that is the time when a person is prone to forget God.

To become involved in the material things. God has blessed me material. I have so many things now.

Got a beautiful house, and now I want to fix up the house, and I want to redecorate the house, and I want to do this, and that, and the other. And we get so involved in the material things that we begin to neglect our walk, and our fellowship, and our relationship with God. Beware that you not forget God.

When you've come into the prosperity, you're eaten in full, you've built yourself beautiful houses. And when your herds and your flocks are multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, the time of material prosperity is a time of great danger, because it can, if you're not careful, take your heart and your mind away from the Lord. So you've got to watch it.

You've got to be careful. When your heart is lifted up and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who led you through that great and awesome wilderness, in which there were fiery serpents and scorpions, the thirsty land where there was no water, who brought water for you out of the rock of Flint, who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you to do you good in the end. The whole purpose is that in the end, God might work in you, having dealt with those issues of your heart, having cleared up this area of the inner man.

Now God can really do you good. But beware that you don't say in your heart, my power and the might of my hand have gained me all this wealth. That you begin to attribute the success to yourself, to your own power, to your own abilities, to your own capacities.

God wants to work in your life, but when He works in your life, He wants the glory for the work. God doesn't want you taking credit for the work that He has done. When the Midianites had come into the land of Israel, and they had oppressed them, they were stealing their crops.

As soon as they would thresh their wheat, the Midianites would move in and take their wheat from them. They were in the land, covering the land like grasshoppers, 135,000 of them. And Gideon, who was threshing wheat in his father's threshing floor, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, Gideon, the almighty man of Valor, go in this your might and deliver the children of Israel from the hand of the Midianites.

And Gideon said, check your orders, fellow. You've got the wrong address. I'm nobody.

My family is nothing. We're an insignificant family. I'm a nobody.

Surely God isn't calling me. You've made a mistake. And Gideon was assured by the angel that God had called him and was wanting him to deliver the people and told him to make a call among the Israelites to gather an army to go against the Midianites that God might deliver them into the hand of Israel.

And so Gideon said, I want proof on this, man. I just don't want to do it without. I really know.

And you know the fleece that he put out and that whole thing. So he called an army, said, come on, we need some volunteers to drive these Midianites out. 135,000 of them and 20,000 men volunteered, 22,000

volunteered.

And the Lord spoke to Gideon and said, Gideon, you've got too many men. I know the hearts of these people. If I would deliver the Midianites into the hands of the 22,000, they would boast and they'd tell how tough they were and all that they had done.

So you go out and tell all those guys, if any of you are afraid to fight, you go on home. So Gideon went out and he said, okay, troops, line up. Any of you guys are afraid to go out and fight against these Midianites and you can go home? Well, who wouldn't be afraid of those odds? You've got 135,000 Midianites out there, well-armed, and you've got 20,000 guys here with shovels and spears and pitchforks, you know.

12,000 of them were afraid. He lost over half of his army. Now he's got 10,000 men and the Lord looks at the whole scene and he said, Gideon, you've got too many men.

I know the hearts of these people. If I would deliver the Midianites into the hands of the 10,000, they'd go around boasting on how tough they are and they'd brag of what they had done. Taken down to the stream at En-Hirad and let them drink the water.

And you watch as they drink. And if they get down and put their face in the water, send them home. But if they'll take the water and cup it in their hands and laugh it as a dog, then those are the men I want and with those I will deliver the Midianites.

Gideon took them down to the little stream that comes out of the spring of En-Hirad and he watched the fellows drink and 9,700 of them got down on their knees and put their face in the water and 300 guys picked it up and laughed and God said, take the 300 and with these I will deliver the Midianites into your hand. 300 against 135,000, are you kidding? But you see, God knows the tendency in man's heart to boast, to glory in himself. And God wants the glory for the work.

God wants to work in you. God wants to work in your life. But he's got to take care of these issues first.

These issues that you don't even know are there. So he brings you into places of testing to reveal what is in your heart in order that he might deal with it. The whole end of the purposes of God is the blessing that he wants to bestow upon you.

And so we find that God with Israel is wanting to bless them. He wants to bring them into the land, but don't forget that it was God who did it. Don't say in your heart, well, our power and our might, strength of our hand, we've gained this wealth.

You shall remember that the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant. It's not that you're shrewd. It's not that you're smart.

It's not that you're above anybody else. God has blessed you. It is God that has given you the capacities.

It is God who has given you the talents. It is God who has given you these things by which you've been blessed. It isn't you.

It isn't yourself. It is God's work in you, and you're to remember that. Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the Lord your God, if by any means you could actually turn your heart away, forget him, and you follow other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.

As the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God. So, hey, here it is. He lays it out straight.

I testify, I bear record today, mark it down, and it was marked down. If you forget God and serve these other gods, you're going to perish. And hey, it came to pass.

It was true. Just as he said, it happened. And just as it says it will happen to you.

If you forsake Jesus Christ, if you turn away from him, you will lose those blessings of God and the consciousness of the presence of God in your life. You'll go out and destroy yourself. You will surely perish.

Don't forget God. Don't turn your back on him. Keep pressing on towards the mark for the prize of the high calling.

Now, Moses calls attention to the people because you're going to move on in and you're going to take the land. And God is going to go before you. And you're going to conquer over the land.

So, hear, O Israel, you are to cross over the Jordan today and go in to dispossess the nations that are greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, a people great and tall, the descendants of the giants, whom you know and of whom you have heard it said, who can stand before the descendants of Anak, who was a giant. Now, this is the second time they've come to this place of the border of the promised land. The first time when they came to Kadesh Barnea, fear gripped their hearts.

They looked at the size of the enemy and they forgot God. They got their eyes on their enemy and their eyes off of the Lord. And as a result of the fear in their hearts, they were discouraged.

They said, we can't go in. We can't take the land. And they turned away.

And thus the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness until that generation died. Now they've made the circuit. They've come full circle.

They're back again at the border of the land. Back to where they once were 40 years earlier to the place of entering in and starting to take the land that God had promised to give to their fathers and God had promised to give to them. Moses, you can feel it in his heart.

He knows that they've got to keep their eyes on the Lord because if they get their eyes upon the enemy, again, fear. And with the fear, the lack of faith and he knows that they would never survive another 40 years outside the land. This would be it.

So he is really seeking to bolster them. He's seeking to build up their faith. He's seeking to put their eyes upon the Lord and fix themselves upon the Lord who is going to help them and deliver the land to them.

So yes, there are going to be giants. There are going to be fortified cities. It's going to look tough.

But understand. Today that the Lord your God is He who goes before you as a consuming fire. Now, don't get your eyes on the enemy, on the big cities, on the tall people and all.

Get your eyes on God because He's going to go before you. Oh, what a secret this is for life. How often we get so absorbed with our problems.

We're so overwhelmed by the immensity of the problem that we're facing. It seems that there is no solution. There's no way out.

And we are prone to despair because we've got our eyes on the problem. And Moses is seeking to fix their eyes on the Lord. Now, remember.

You're ready to go in. And it's God who's going to go before you as a consuming fire. And He will destroy them and bring them down before you so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly as the Lord has said to you.

So that encouragement. Now, get your eyes on the Lord. He's going to go before you.

He's going to destroy them. He's going to drive them out. He's going to give you the victory.

But, knowing these people, knowing these people, when God has brought you in and given you the victory, destroy the enemies. You're dwelling in the land. Do not think in your heart, after the Lord has cast out the enemy before you, it's because of our righteousness the Lord has brought us in to possess this land.

You know, it's because we're so good that God did this. And He's going to show them now that they're not so good. That they have failed practically every step of the way.

It's not your righteousness. You see, God, as He works in our lives, does not work in our lives because we are righteous. Because we deserve the blessings of God.

But He works in our life through His grace. And those things that God does for us, He does by virtue of His grace. And so, when you've come in and God has destroyed the enemy and you're dwelling there, don't say, well, it's because we're so righteous, God did this for us.

It is because of the wickedness of those people that God drove them out. It is not, verse 5, because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess the land, but because of the wickedness of the people that God drives them out from before you, that He might fulfill His word that He gave to Abraham. Therefore, understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, because you are a stiff-necked people.

So remember, do not forget how that you provoke the Lord your God to wrath and the wilderness. And so, He says you're a stiff-necked people, now He's going to prove it. And He's going to go back through their history for the past 40 years and show them all of their failures.

Show them how if it was not for the mercy and grace of God they would have been wiped out. You're not a righteous people. God isn't blessing you because you're righteous.

He's blessing you because He is graceful and He loves you. So remember and do not forget how you provoke the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness from the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you've come to this place. For 40 years you've been a mess.

You remember it horrible that you provoke the Lord to wrath so that the Lord was angry enough to have destroyed you. When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the Lord made with you, I stayed on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water.

Now this is physically impossible. It is impossible to live more than nine days without bread and water. Without any food or without any water.

Now you can live without food for 40 days. But your body will dehydrate without the moisture, without the water. You say, is Moses lying? No.

God sustained him. I have no problem with that. I believe that he did go 40 days and 40 nights without food or water.

But it was a miracle. It was by the sustenance of God that he did so. The fact that God does something that's impossible doesn't bother me at all.

I would be rather disappointed if He didn't. You see, the God that we serve is able to do anything and thus He actually went 40 days and 40 nights and then He turned right around and did another 40 days and 40 nights. But it was being sustained by God.

You remember when Jesus was going through Samaria and they stopped at the well of Jacob near Shechem and the disciples went into the village of Shechem to buy meat and the lady came and drew water and He said, Hey, give me a drink. And that whole exchange that they had there. When the disciples came back from town, they were surprised that Jesus was talking with her because she was a Samaritan.

And then when the lady went into town, they said, Here, Lord, we brought you some lunch. And He said, No, that's all right. I have meat that you don't know about.

I've been nourished. And they said, Well, did she feed you? He said, No, my meat is to do the will of the Father. And so when walking with God, when in that close fellowship with God, really it is interesting how that the material things are not as important or necessary.

And so Moses went 40 days and 40 nights where he neither ate nor drank. Then the Lord delivered to me, He declares, the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God. And on them were all the words which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

And it came to pass at the end of the 40 days and 40 nights when He had given me the two tables of stone, then the Lord said to me, Arise, go down quickly from here for your people. God won't even own them at this point. Your people, Moses, whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly.

They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them, and they have made themselves a molded image. Now on this table of law, what was the second command? Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image or likeness to bow down to it and worship it. They had already broken.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. They were worshiping this golden calf that Aaron had made. Before he can even come down from the mountain with the tablets, the law of God, they've already violated and broken the law.

So you're not such a righteous people. And it isn't because of your righteousness that God has brought you into this place. 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 provides us with a review of Israel's rebellions.

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

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And be sure to include the call letters of this station with your correspondence. 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. Now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck Smith. May the Lord be with you and give you a beautiful week.

May you enjoy His presence and His fellowship as you walk with Him. Where your heart burns with passion for Him and for the things of the Spirit. May you be enriched in His fullness May the Lord watch over and keep you.

In Jesus' name. Lord, I believe in You I'll always believe in You It is by faith that you've been walking into one level of spiritual maturity to another. Faith is the key to a successful Christian life.

That is why the Word of God tells us, without faith, it's impossible to please God. It was faith that led Abraham into the land of promise. It was faith that led the children of Israel through the Red Sea.

It was faith that enabled Peter to step out of the boat and to walk on water. The question is, what might faith do in you? To order a copy of Pastor Chuck's new book, Faith, or to preview a chapter for free online, visit thewordfortoday.org or call 800-272-9673. This program has been sponsored by The Word for Today in Costa Mesa, California.

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