

(Through the Bible) Deuteronomy 21-25

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores the laws and principles in Deuteronomy 21-25, highlighting the significance of Christ's redemption from the curse of the law and the importance of following God's original ideal for marriage and relationships.

Duration: 47:41

Scripture: Deuteronomy 23:18-23, Deuteronomy 24:19-21, Deuteronomy 25:1-4, Deuteronomy 28:12

Topics: "Biblical Justice", "Moral Law"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses various regulations and laws found in the Bible, specifically in the book of Deuteronomy. These regulations cover topics such as welfare programs for the poor, settling disputes between individuals, punishment for wickedness, and guidelines for marriage. The speaker emphasizes the importance of justice tempered with mercy and highlights the significance of certain numbers, such as 40 and 39, in relation to judgment. The sermon also touches on the consequences of adultery and rape, as well as the procedures for handling unexplained deaths and taking captive women as wives.

Transcript

Now in the 21st chapter, if you find a dead body out in the field and you don't know the circumstances of the death, here's a man, he's dead in the field, then they are to measure from that dead body to the closest cities, and you're to bring the elders of the city out, and they are to sacrifice a bullock, and they are to each one swear that they don't know how this person died, and thus the cities would be cleared from this person who had been slain and whose body left there in the field. And so it was sort of an inquest kind of a thing for the dead, and in order that there might be sort of the innocency from... Now, if you go to war against your enemies and you happen to see a beautiful woman among the captives, and you want her for your wife, you may take her for your wife, but first of all she has to shave her head and to pair her nails, and then for 30 days she is to put off her robes of captivity, and after 30 days you may take her as your wife. But when you've taken her for your wife, then you find out you don't like her, then you can't sell her.

Now, in those days, of course, they had slaves and they sold people, and the captives were usually sold as slaves. But the fact that you've taken her for your wife, you can put her away, you don't have to stay with her, but you can't sell her as a slave. You can't make merchandise and money off of her.

Now, the man has two wives, and he loves one and hates the other. If the one that he hates has his firstborn son, and the one he loves has the secondborn son, you can't reverse the inheritance. You can't give the second son, who was from the wife that you loved, the first inheritance.

You can't reverse the inheritances on these sons. It doesn't matter if you didn't care for her so much. You've got to give the firstborn son the first inheritance.

Now, of course, in those days, stubborn and rebellious kids got into real trouble. Because if you've had a child that's stubborn and rebellious, you've spanked him, done everything you can to correct him, he doesn't behave, then you bring him before the elders and say, I have a stubborn and rebellious kid here, I've done everything I can to correct him, he's incorrigible, I can't handle him. Then they would stone him to death.

So, you'd say, my son is stubborn, he's rebellious, he'll not obey, he's a glutton, he's a drunkard. So the penalty was being stoned. Now, if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day.

For he that is hanged on a tree is accursed of God. Let the Lamb be not defiled, which the Lord God gives you for an inheritance. Now, this, of course, becomes interesting to us.

Any man who was hung on a tree was cursed of God. Paul tells us that Christ became a curse for us. Because it is written, cursed is he who hangs upon a tree.

Paul was referring to this particular verse here in Deuteronomy. But showing that Christ became the curse for us, in that he took our sins upon himself when he was hung there upon the tree, he took the curse of God. He bore the curse of God against sin.

When Adam sinned, Adam's sin brought the curse of God upon man, upon woman, and upon the earth itself. God said to Adam that he would be cursed, that the earth would no longer just bring forth for him, but actually with the sweat of his brow would he earn his bread. And the earth would bring forth thorns and briars and thistles.

Harvesting your crops is not going to be easy. You're going to have to do it now with the sweat of your brow. Up until then, the earth was just producing.

Now you just go out and get whatever you want. You just enjoy it. But now the curse brought the thorns, the briars, the thistles, and it brought the hard labor for men to eke out a living from the ground.

To the woman, the curse in childbearing, the labor pains and all. To the ground, the curse of bringing forth the thorns and the thistles. And thus there was sort of a threefold curse upon man, upon the woman, upon the earth itself.

And of course the fourth, upon the serpent. It shall go in the dust of the earth on its belly and so forth. Now, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

Being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs upon the tree. So you see, the law actually cursed me. Man, if I was living under this thing, I'd be stoned to death.

The law condemned me to die. But Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law because he became a curse for me. He bore the curse for me.

Because it's written, Cursed is everyone that hangs upon the tree. By his being crucified upon the cross, there he bore God's curse. Actually, it is interesting that when the Roman soldiers made a crown for him, what kind of a crown did they make? A crown of thorns.

And where did the thorns come from? They came from the curse. So the crown that he bore upon his brow was really the sign of the curse of God against the earth because of sin. Really, the crown of thorns was a very fitting crown because he came to bear God's curse against your sin.

And then hanged upon the tree, redeeming you from the curse of the law. Now in chapter 22, in those days, they punished people for non-involvement. If you saw your brother's ox or his sheep going astray, and you just sort of try to ignore it, you don't go out and get it and so forth, then you're at fault.

You shall in any case bring them again to your brother. And if your brother is not near to you, and you know him not, then thou shalt bring him into your own house, and you shall keep them until your brother seeks after them, and thou shalt restore them again. And like manners shalt thou do with his ass, and with his raiment, and all that is lost of thy brother's, which he has lost and now has found, you are to do likewise.

You may not hide it for yourself. In other words, if you find something that is lost, you are to seek to restore it to its proper ownership. You're not to try to hide it for yourself.

Now if you see your brother's ass or ox fall down by the way, and you hide yourself from them, and not turn to help and to lift them again, then you're at fault. Then a woman is not to wear man's apparel, nor is a man to put on a woman's garment. For to do that is an abomination unto the Lord.

Now, actually we are, you know, living in a weird age, where men are dissatisfied with being men, and are having operations to become women. And we have other men who aren't satisfied as being men, and are wearing dresses and makeup and that kind of junk. And sometimes I wish I were living under the Old Testament.

These things are an abomination unto God. Now, they say, Oh, but what about a woman wearing, you know, a pantsuit or something? Well, let me tell you something. I never wear one of those pantsuits that the women wear.

I don't consider that men's apparel at all. But the whole idea behind it is that of lesbianism or homosexuality, where you are affecting to be one of the opposite sex, or seeking to be one of the opposite sex. And that's what is actually being, you know, what is coming down on here.

Women who are trying to be men, and men who are trying to be women. Now, it is interesting. If you see a bird's nest, and the bird is sitting on its eggs or whatever, you're not to really disturb it.

If there are little young birds, if you want to take the little young birds, you're not to take the mother too. But you're not to disturb a mother bird sitting on its nest, unless the birds are big enough to make it on their own. You want those little birds, that's fine, but you can't take the mother with them.

Got to leave her go free. When you build a new house, and you're putting on the roof, you've got to put supports around, so no one falls off the roof and gets hurt while they're working on your house. If you're sowing the vineyards, you're not to sow with diverse seeds.

You're not to plow with an ox and an ass together. You're not to wear a garment with different sorts of materials, wool and linen together. You are to make these blue fringes on the quarters of your garments.

And now, the law of marriage. If any man takes a wife and goes in unto her and hates her, and gives occasion of speech against her, brings an evil name upon her, and says, I took this woman as my wife, but she wasn't a virgin. And you make these kinds of accusations against her.

Then her parents are to bring forth her tokens of virginity. Now, in those days, when you had your marriage ceremony, and you went in for the neutral rites, actually, you would take a cloth and hand it back out to your parents, proving that you were a virgin. And they would save that.

And then if the guy you married turned out to be a dirty dog, and he says, oh, she wasn't a virgin when I married her, that kind of stuff, started spreading evil stories, your parents would bring out the tokens of your virginity, lay them out before the elders, and you'd be found to be a dirty dog liar. And the fellow would have to pay your dad a hundred shekels of silver, because he had brought an evil name upon a virgin in Israel. But if you couldn't prove your virginity, then you'd be in trouble.

You'd be put to death. Pretty heavy duty. And then the adultery of a man can be found lying with a woman married to a husband.

They'll both of them be put to death. If a damsel that is a virgin is betrothed to a husband, that is, engaged, and a man find her in the city and lies with her, then they're both to be put to death. That is, if he rapes her in the city, she's to be put to death because she should have screamed.

But if she is raped out into the field, then only he is put to death because she perhaps screamed, but nobody could hear her. And thus, you're to put the evil away. Now, if you raped a girl and she's a virgin and she's not brought by her parents to someone else, then you're to take her as your wife to pay her father fifty shekels of silver.

In chapter 23, we find those that were restricted from coming into the temple. Eulogues were forbidden in the temple. An Ammonite or a Moabite was forbidden to the tenth generation for their failure to help the children of Israel during their wilderness experiences and because they hired Balaam to curse them.

And you're not to seek their peace or prosperity. However, an Edomite, being the descendants of Esau, and the Egyptians, because you were a stranger in their land, they may be brought into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation. Now, there are certain rules of cleanliness and sanitation that are given to them here that are very practical, and I don't need to read them or rehearse them for you.

And in verse 15, Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master to you. There shall be no whores of the daughters of Israel nor a Sodomite among the sons of Israel. Now, you're not to bring the hire of a whore or the price of a dog into the house of the Lord for any vow that you want to make unto God, for these are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.

You're not to lend upon usury to your brother, that is, of money or vituals or of anything that is lent upon usury. To a stranger you may lend with usury, but unto your brother you shall not lend with usury. That the

Lord thy God may bless thee in all that you set your hand to do in the land wherever you go.

And when you vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it, for the Lord will surely require it. And if you do not pay your vow, it will be a sin to you. That which has gone out of your lips, you shall keep and perform it, the freewill offering, according as you have vowed to the Lord, and you've promised with your mouth.

Now, when you come into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat all of the grapes you want, but you're not to put any in a container to carry out of the vineyard. In other words, you go into a field, you're allowed to eat all the grapes that you can hold while you're in the field, but you can't carry them out of the field except in your stomach. And when you come into the standing corn of your neighbor, you may pluck the ears with thine hand, but thou shalt not move a sickle to your neighbor's.

In other words, what you can carry out with your hand, but you're not to take a sickle to a standing corn. Now, if a man has taken a wife and married her, and it comes to pass that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement and give it unto her hand and send her out of his house. So, the law of divorce.

Now, what does constitute an uncleanness? A man marries a woman and finds an uncleanness. Now, some say, well, he discovers she's not a virgin. No, that's not it.

Because that has already been dealt with in the previous laws. If he says she's not a virgin and they can't prove her virginity, she is to be put to death. So, it isn't that he marries her and then finds out the uncleanness is that she's not a virgin.

That was the big argument among the Jews. What constituted uncleanness? And one school of the rabbis said, well, if she wasn't a virgin, but that could not be so because God has already dealt with that under other laws. So, it left open what constituted uncleanness and that is an open issue.

Now, surely they became extremely liberal in their interpretation of it. One school of the rabbis, they taught that if she doesn't fix your eggs to suit you for breakfast, that's an uncleanness and you can give her a writing of divorcement. And, of course, in those days divorces were quite easy.

All you do is write out, I divorce you and you hand it to her and she's had it. Now, Jesus was challenged on this very issue. And really the challenge was what constitutes uncleanness.

They came to Jesus one day with a trap question and it was a definite trap question. They said to Jesus, can a man put away his wife for any cause? Now, here under the Mosaic Law, if he finds an uncleanness in her, he can give her a bill of divorcement. Now, they knew that Jesus was teaching a more strict code.

So, they came to him with this trick trap question, can a man put away his wife for any cause? And Jesus said, if a man puts away his wife and marries another except it be for fornication, he causes her to commit adultery and whoso marries her commits adultery. Aha! He's fallen right into their trap. That's just what they were hoping he would answer.

So, they came right back at him and they said, how is it then that Moses said, let him give her a writing of a bill of divorcement? They figured they'd trapped him. We've got you now. Because it is acknowledged that God gave the law to Moses.

No challenge, no question about that. It was a well-established fact that the law came by God to Moses. So, Jesus is actually now in conflict with what God declared.

For God said unto Moses, let him give her a writing of a bill of divorcement and the law of divorce was established by God through Moses and it's there within their law. And for Jesus to come down in such a strict way puts him now at variance against God exactly what they were hoping to do. But Jesus went on to say, in the beginning it was not so.

Now, the law was added later on. The law came many years later. In the beginning, God now goes back to Adam and Eve.

Jesus now goes back to God's perfect initial plan for family relationships, for husband-wife relationships. It was originally God's divine intent that you have a once-for-life marriage relationship. In the beginning, God made them male and female and for this cause shall a man leave his mother and father and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

Therefore, that which God has joined together, let no man put asunder. And that is God's divine ideal for every couple. But, Jesus said, because of the hardness of your hearts, Moses said, let him give her a writing of a bill of divorcement.

Now, Jesus is not going back to the law. He's going back before the law. He's going back to God's divine intent for man and for husband and wife relationships.

But because man's heart was hard and he could not come up to God's divine ordinance and will, God then, under the law, gave the law of divorce that a man, finding an uncleanness in his wife, could put her away. Now, I believe that some marriages are a mistake from the beginning. They should never have been.

Young people, so often getting married, have a totally wrong concept of marriage. I'm tired of living at home. I don't want to take orders from my parents anymore.

I'm going to escape. I'm going to get married. I want my freedom.

And you say, well, when are you going to get married? Oh, we're getting married the first. The first what? The first chance I get. You know, they're just out to get married.

So that, many times, they do not use good sense or good judgment in their choice of a marriage partner. Because he was good looking and was a tackle on the football team, played first string and all, oh, you know, I'm in love. But the guy's as mean and rough in the home as he is out on the football field.

He has no love, no care, no tenderness. The marriage was a mistake from the beginning. He uses his wife as a punching bag.

He gets rid of all of his aggressions on her, and the poor little thing is beat up, terrified. Now, does God say, well, young lady, you made a mistake. You made your bed.

You live in it. You're just going to have to settle down to the fact that you're going to be his punching bag and you're going to live the rest of your life in terror of this brute. I don't believe so.

I don't believe that God requires that. I don't believe that God ever intended that marriage be an experience where you live in constant terror. I don't think that that was God's intention for marriage ever.

In fact, God said to the husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. But there are some people whose hearts are hardened against God's divine ideal. Whose hearts are hardened against God and thus they make very poor marriage partners.

And God knowing that people could not achieve, that is, all people could not achieve his divine ideal, then created the alternate out by the law of divorcement that he gave to Moses. But know that that isn't God's best for a person's life. The best and first ideal of God for a person is one marriage for life.

Now, those that have made mistakes or can't live with that, God has developed the alternate. Let him give her a writing of a bill of divorcement. Now, it is obvious that this would come early.

If he marries her and finds an uncleanness in her, in other words, just as soon as you're married, you realize, hey, this was a mistake. Then you're allowed to put her away with a writing of divorcement. Now, if then she would go out and marry another man, and the other man that she married in time would die, and you think, well, she wasn't too bad.

Maybe I'll take her back. No, you can't do that. You've already put her away once.

Unless you're not to take her back again as your wife, this would be an abomination unto the Lord. And so, interesting law of divorce that is here under the law that God did give in certain conditions, and Jesus declared, the law was given for the hardness of the hearts of the people. Because man could not come up to God's divine ideal.

How much better if we come up to God's divine ideal? But if you can't handle that, then God has made the out through divorce. Now, when a man has taken a new wife, he doesn't have to go to war or charge with any business for a whole year. He can just stay home and cheer his wife.

With some wives, it wouldn't be much cheer after a few months. You're not to take the nether or the upper millstone as a pledge. Now, the reason why you weren't to take a millstone as a pledge is because people, actually, that was their livelihood.

You use your millstone to grind your meat, your wheat and all. If you don't have your millstone, man, you're out of bread, you know. So, you weren't allowed to take these as a pledge for a debt.

If a man was found stealing or kidnapping any of the children to make merchandise of them, he was to be put to death. Kidnappers, capital punishment. Then, watch out for the plague of leprosy.

Let the priest follow Moses' instructions on that. Remember what the Lord did to Miriam. That is by her coming against Moses.

So, honor the leadership. And then, further laws concerning the pledges that you could take and the pledges that you weren't to take. You weren't to take a man's blanket as a pledge because at night, if he got cold and said, Oh God, I'm cold, and start praying to God, God would hold it against you because you had his blanket.

So, you're in trouble with God because this guy's complaining to God and you're the fault, is he? So, you don't want to do anything that would cause the fellow to complain to God about his situation because then

God comes to you for it. And so, if you hire a man, you're to pay him at the end of the day lest he is hungry and say, Oh God, I'm so hungry and he didn't pay me today, you know, and oh, I'm hungry. And then God comes to you because you're the fault of this guy bothering God.

And so, you're not to put the fathers to death for the sins of the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the sins of their fathers. Every man was to be put to death for his own sin. You're not to pervert the judgment of a stranger or the fatherless or take a widow's raiment as pledge.

God watches out for the strangers, for the fatherless, for the downcast, for the outcast, and so forth. God has a special tender care for them. Now, when you cut down the harvest in your field, if you remember, Oh, I left a sheaf out in the field.

Don't go back and get it. You just leave that for the poor. They can come in behind you and get it.

When you go through and pick your olives, you only pick the olive tree once. Those olives that are still green and not ready to be picked, you just leave them on the tree and then the poor people can come into your grove and they can pick the olives that you leave. When you go through and pick the grapes in your vineyard, you're to not pick them all, leave the green ones, those that aren't completely ripe, but you can't go back and pick your vineyard the second time.

You have one shot through to get your harvest. Whatever's left, you just leave it on the vines for the poor people. So, really, it was an excellent welfare program.

The poor could always go out into the fields and gather up whatever was left there in the fields. Now, I've noticed up here a lot of times when they're harvesting the cabbage and all, actually they leave as much in the field as what they pick almost. And how wonderful it would be if after they'd gone through, rather than plowing under the cabbage, the poor people could just come in and help themselves to the cabbage or the celery or the lettuce or these various fields that are planted up here.

Much better than plowing it under. It would be to just say, alright, you know, it's there, help yourself, and let people just come in and help themselves to it. That was what they did in those days.

You could shake your olive tree once and whatever shook down the first shaking you could have, but then you had to leave the rest of it and the poor could move in and thus the poor could actually, you know, gather enough to get along themselves. And so it was an excellent welfare program for the poor. You shall leave it, you're not to glean, for it will be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

Now in chapter 25, he continues these interesting kind of regulations. If two men have a controversy between themselves, then they come to the judges and let the judges justify the righteous and condemn the wicked. And if it comes to pass that the wicked man is worthy to be beaten, then you are to lay upon him not more than forty stripes.

Forty stripes was the limit. Now forty is the number of judgment, and they weren't to lay upon them more than forty stripes. Usually they would lay upon them thirty-nine, because you couldn't exceed forty and so you want to have mercy tempered with your justice so the sentence was so often thirty-nine stripes.

And that was the sentence that was laid upon Jesus, thirty-nine stripes. Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he is treading out the corn. As long as the ox is working, treading out the corn, then he gets to eat all the corn he wants.

Don't put a muzzle on him, let him eat. If your brethren are dwelling together, one of them dies and he has no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry outside of the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in unto her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her, and the first child that she bears shall be named after the brother that is dead, that his name not be put out of Israel.

So it was a neat little provision so your name wouldn't die in Israel, you married a gal, and you died, then your brother would have to marry her. And the first son would be named after you so that your name would go on in Israel. Now, if your brother didn't want to marry her, he said, man, she's a dog, look at all the problems she gave to my brother, I don't want that woman.

Then he could come before the elders of the city and he could say, I don't want to marry her. So he would have to take off his shoe and hand it to her, and then she in turn would spit in his face. Verse 9, I'm not joshing you, it's here.

Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders and loose his shoe from off his foot and spit in his face, and shall say to him, so shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house, and his name shall be called in Israel the house of him that hath his shoe loosed. So you became sort of a villain kind of a guy in Israel after that. You were the dirty guy who wouldn't, you know, fulfill a thing of raising up your brother's name or keeping alive your brother's name.

You would be called the man from, or the house from whom the shoe was loosed. And quite a title that you would have to bear. Now in verse 11, if men are striving together and the wives intervene and so forth, then it all depends on how they intervene.

They can be in big trouble. You're not to have in your bag different weights, great and small. Now this is a common practice.

You know, they did everything with balances. The only scales they had were balanced scales. But fellows would often have two weights for the balances, one when they were buying and one when they were selling.

Diverse weights. And so here's the national standard of weights and measures that got established in Israel. You're not to have different weights in your bag.

But you're to use the standard weights when you're buying or selling, you know, instead of having the heavier ones when you're selling and the lighter ones when you're buying. Diverse weights are an abomination under the law. There's a proverb to that effect.

And it was something that people were guilty of doing. Thou shalt not have in thine house different measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and a just weight, a perfect and a just measure.

In other words, God wants you to deal honestly in your dealings with each other. No deceit, no cheating of one another. For all of those that do such things are unrighteous and they're an abomination unto the Lord.

Now in verse 17, God goes back and He says, Remember that guy Amalek, what he did unto you. And in time to come, you're not to forget what Amalek did. He was dirty.

What he did is he attacked them from the rear and killed off those people who were lame or sick and not able to keep up with the group, the stragglers. And he was attacking from the rear and wiping out the stragglers. It was a dirty tactic that Amalek did.

And so you're to remember what Amalek did and one day you're going to get revenge and when you do, you're to wipe out Amalek completely. Now the time came when Amalek was to be wiped out in their history and you remember that Samuel ordered Saul to go down and wipe out Amalek utterly. Don't leave anything or anyone alive.

Don't even leave their cattle or their sheep alive. Destroy them utterly. Now as we get into biblical typology, it is interesting because Amalek is a type of the flesh and God's edict for our flesh is wipe it out utterly.

Don't leave any remnants. And any place you leave a remnant in the flesh, you're going to be in trouble. Well Saul went down and he saw that some of the cattle were really healthy and good looking, you know, stock and all.

So he kept those alive, but the sickly ones, man, they just really hacked them to pieces. And the same with the sheep. Some of those good, healthy looking sheep they kept alive, but the sickly ones, man, they just really cut them in pieces.

And he also saved the life of Agag, the king. And so as he was returning from this battle, an aged Samuel came up to meet him. He said unto Samuel, As the Lord liveth, I have done all that God has commanded me.

And Samuel said, If you have done all that God has commanded, how come that I hear the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle? And he said, Oh, he said, We decided there was such nice stock and all, we decided to bring them back so we could use them as sacrifices. We're going to offer these as sacrifices unto God. And there is where Samuel answered, Thou hast done foolishly.

It is better to obey than to sacrifice, and to hearken is better than the fat of rams. In that you have done foolishly and not obeyed the voice of God in utterly wiping them out, God has now rejected you from being king over Israel. Well, now here, back under the law, God had declared that the Amaleks were to be utterly wiped out.

When the time came, Saul failed to do it. Now, do you know who the last Amalek is in the Scripture that is recorded? He comes up in the book of Esther, and his name was Haman. And you remember that he conspired to wipe out all of the Jews.

You see, if you don't obey God and utterly get rid of the flesh, then the flesh is going to rise up and one day seek to destroy you. And so in your typology, that is why God ordered the utter destruction of Amalek. Here under the law, don't forget what Amalek did, and therefore it shall be.

Verse 19, When the Lord thy God has given you rest from all your enemies round about the land, and the Lord God gives you for an inheritance to possess it, you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And don't forget it. But Saul failed in that, and his failure almost cost the Jews their national existence.

Haman had the day set for the extermination of all the Jews. And it was only because God divinely intervened through Esther that the Jews were spared. But interesting story of Amalek, if you want to follow it through in a biblical typology, it's very fascinating indeed.

Shall we stand? May God's hand be upon your lives. In a special way this week, we're entering into the time of frenzy as people are preparing to observe the birthday of our Lord. Or are they? May the Lord keep you from the frenzy of this time of year, from the season.

And may for you it be a time of real reflection upon the Lord, upon what the coming of Christ has meant to you personally, upon the gift that God has given unto you, his only begotten Son, eternal life, his Holy Spirit. And thus may this be a very beautiful, rich time of the year as we remember again how much God cares. For God cares for you.

And God loves you more than you'll ever know. He just wants you to know that love and experience it. And so may this be a week of experiencing God's overflowing love.

Just let it flow. Let it happen. In Jesus' name.

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