

A Faithful Father

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[0:00] This morning, if you have your Bibles, I'd encourage you to turn to the Old Testament, to the book of Deuteronomy. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and then Deuteronomy. And I always encourage you to bring your Bibles and follow along.

There are always, there's a whole rack of Bibles as you come in. If you forgot your Bible, grab one. If you don't have one, take it, keep it, give it away. I don't care what you do with it. Use it. That's God's Word and we need to be in it.

So Deuteronomy chapter 7 is where we're going to be this morning. Deuteronomy chapter 7, and we're going to share the first nine verses this morning. And I'm going to ask if you found that.

I know you just sat down, but I'm going to ask if you'd stand as we read God's Word this morning. Deuteronomy chapter 7, beginning in the first verse, and this is what God's Word shares.

When the Lord your God shall bring you into the land where you go to possess it, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you.

[1:10] And when the Lord your God shall deliver them before you, you shall smite them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them.

Neither shall you make marriage with them. Your daughter you shall not give to his son, nor his daughter shall you take to your son. For they will turn away your son from following me, that they may serve other gods.

So will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus shall you deal with them. You shall destroy their altars and break down their images and cut down their groves and burn their graven images with fire.

For you are a holy people to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people to Him, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because you are more in number than any people, for you are the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your fathers, has the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

[2:23] Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, which keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keeps His commandments to a thousand generations.

Let's pray together this morning. Lord God, again, we thank You for Your Word. Lord, and Lord, I just pray this morning that for the next few moments that You would help us to focus on You and on Your Word, not on the thoughts of the day, the activities of the day, the lunch that we're going to have, what we have going on this week.

Lord, help us to set all those things aside. And Lord, help us just right now to focus on You and our relationship with You and what Your message is for us this morning.

Lord, remind us that it's not for the person next to us, for our spouse, for our children, for our parents, but it is for us, each one. Thank You for Your presence in this place, Lord, and that we can be Your people.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. And all God's people said, amen. You can be seated this morning. This morning, one of the things that was laid on my heart, and one of the things I want us to think for a little bit about this morning is, who are you as a believer?

[3:37] If you have put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ, if you're a believer, if you are a Christian, if you are a disciple, a follower of Christ, who are you really?

What is your identity, and what is my identity? And one of the things that I think that we need to understand is, one of the principal ways we need to think of ourselves is, we are a child of God, a son of God, or a daughter of God.

That makes us pretty special, doesn't it? Not special like, oh, look at me, but special that God loves us, and that we become His children. And you know I share this quite often, because to be honest, we all have our little pet peeves, right?

You have any pet peeves, things that just bother you that maybe don't bother other people? You know, one of the things that bothers me is when we talk about everyone being a child of God, everyone on the earth being a child of God.

Do you know that's not true? We're not. It says the children of God, His children, are ones that follow Him, ones that have accepted Jesus Christ. We become a child of God.

[4:49] We are not automatically, when we're born, a child of God. We are a creation of God. God, everyone we see on the earth is a creation of God, but we become a child of God through our faith in Jesus Christ.

And we need to recognize that. That's who we are as a believer, a son or a daughter of God. And that is an important thing, isn't it? You know, all down through history, doesn't matter what country, what nation, it's always been an important thing, who you are a son of or who you are a daughter of. You know, you can read in the Bible, and it often, it'll list the name, and then it says, so and so, the son of. And then it lists their father.

Have you ever noticed that? Have you? Even in Sunday school this morning, they were reading in Joshua. And several times it says, Joshua, the son of, those of you that are in Sunday school, who's his father?

Nun. N-U-N, not N-O-N-E. N-U-N was his father. It would say, Joshua, the son of Nun. And that was important to recognize who your father was.

[5:58] And you know what? That's been important all through history. All across the world, different nations, different nationalities, it's been an important thing. And I didn't realize this, but I got to doing a little looking.

You know, we look at last names, and we all have a last name, right? Those that may have some, like, Scottish descendants, if the name is, like, Mick something, or Mac something, M-A-C or M-C, like McDougal or McMonigal, there's all kinds.

McDonald's, I guess that's another. Thinking food already. But do you know what that Mick means? It's the son of.

That's the, the Mick part means the son of. If you were in, and I wrote some of these down, Irish. You ever hear, like, the O something, like O'Leary or O whatever?

Do you know what that O means? It means the son of. If you were in, I got more, an easy ending in Spanish, like Rodriguez.

[7:03] That es means the son of. Rodrigo is for Rodriguez. That's what it means, the son of. If you were in Scandinavian countries, there's names like Eric's son.

Son is at the end. What do you think that means? Son of. In Iceland where we were at, they also have one for daughter. If you're a daughter of, it's daughter, D-O-T-T-I-R, is the end of the name. That means you're the daughter of. Why do you think all that happened? To recognize who you were the son or the daughter of, because that is an important thing.

So when we start thinking about ourselves as believers and as Christians, is it important who we're the son or the daughter of? Yes. We're the son or the daughter of God.

Isn't that kind of a good thing? We are a child of God. And in these scriptures, God is speaking to His people.

[8:04] And He's speaking through Moses. But there are some messages God has here for His sons and His daughters, for His children. And you know, these, we think of the Israelites, they were God's chosen people.

But then when Christ came, and it changed things, that when we accept Christ, we become God's chosen people. So these scriptures are not just for the Israelites. They're also, the truth that's in here is also for us.

And God had a message for them. And you know, the first verse, it talks about the future. He was telling them, when you go into the promised land, when you defeat all these evil people, actually, they were evil people.

They practiced child sacrifice and all kinds of other things. But it's all the ites in the first verse. The Hivites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, all the ites that are there.

He says, after you go in and defeat them, look in verse two, God begins to tell them what He expects of His children. And when the Lord your God has delivered them before you, you shall smite them and utterly destroy them, make no covenant with them and show nor show mercy to them.

[9:10] Neither shall you make marriages with them. Your daughter shall not give to his son, nor his daughter shall you take to your son. What was He telling them there? Stay away from them.

Why? I mean, normally we think, well, staying away from somebody, that's not very polite, is it? That's not very nice. So is God telling him here, don't be nice? No, He's saying, I love you and there's something I'm concerned about.

I don't want you to mix with these evil people. And then He gives a reason. Look at what He says in verse four. For they will turn away your son from following me that they may serve other gods.

God is saying, I'm concerned about the biggest priority in your life, which is what? Following me. That needs to be our first and greatest priority.

And God was saying, if you start mixing with all these people that serve all these other gods, what is eventually going to happen? You're going to start serving all these other gods. And God was saying, I don't want that for you.

[10:17] As my children, as your father, a father should want what's best for their children, shouldn't he? And God is saying, I want what's best for you. That means I want you to be set apart.

I want you to be different than the rest of the world. I don't want you just to mix in and become just the same as them. I have a better plan for you than that.

Because you're my children and I want what's best for you. Is that still true for you and I today?

Okay. So God, is He telling us, don't go talk to other people.

Don't mix with them because you might become like them. Is that what God is telling us? What is He telling us? Stay away from evil. I mean, there are verses in the New Testament that talk about this as well, aren't there?

What does it say in Romans 12? Verse 2. Does anybody know that verse? Be not conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.

[11:25] Don't be conformed to the world. What does that mean? Don't just become like the rest of the world. God's saying, I have something special for you.

I want you to be different than the rest of the world. So how do we accomplish that? How do we stay different than the rest of the world? Does that mean we have to isolate ourselves and never interact with the rest of the world?

You know, it was interesting to me. And I told you when we were on our celebrating our anniversary, the trip that we went on, wherever you go, God can speak to you.

Do you believe that? And there were several times on our trip I told Tammy, wow, that's really, we'd see something, that really has gotten me to think about something that's in God's Word. And I can't help but share it.

And one of the things was, I told you that when we were in Iceland, it's an island about the size of the state of Ohio, but they have a lot of sheep. We saw some pictures of the sheep. They have a lot of horses and they have some cows, not as many cows.

[12:26] But do you know what's interesting about the sheep and the horses and the cows? They look different than our sheep and our horses and our cows. You can look at them and you think, that doesn't look like a sheep I've ever seen before.

I mean, they still have the same basic form, but they're different. Do you know why that is?

Temperature? Climate? They're not American?

Those aren't American sheep over there. They are foreign sheep. It's true. Genetics? You know, it was fascinating to me because they began to tell us, and we read a little bit about them too, their sheep, their horses, their cows, there's a reason that they look different.

And that's because they do not allow their sheep and their horses and their cows to mix with any other sheep, horses, or cows. They do not allow any other sheep, horses, or cows to come on to their island.

And they haven't for about a thousand years. If a sheep or a horse or a cow leaves the island for any reason, to be bred or to be in a show or whatever, do you know what happens?

[13:38] That animal can never go back. Once it leaves, it's done. And it can't come back. You cannot import any sheep.

You cannot import any cows. You cannot import any horses. And so they keep what's there different. And these are the sheep and horses and cows that were originally brought there by the Vikings like a thousand years ago.

And their desire is to keep them genetically set apart and different so they don't just become like every other sheep and cow and a horse. To me, that was just interesting, but it really got me to think about what God is talking about in His Word.

Now, that's an island, so it's pretty easy for them to stay set apart with their livestock. Are we an island? Can we just remove ourselves and say, all right, I'm not talking.

I'm going to stay in this little corner right over here. Everybody, you stay back from me and I don't want your influence in my life. Can we really do that? Can we hide?

[14:39] What if I stepped way down there and got in a corner? Can we hide from the world? Is that what God wants? I mean, God says we're to take our candle and put it on a candlestick so the rest of the world can see our light.

You can't do that when you're hiding, can you? So what does it really mean to be set apart? How do we accomplish that? What do you think? I'm asking. How do we accomplish that?

Show everybody else the light of the world. Stay in God's Word. Live it out. What's that?

Spread God's Word. You know, it is... And I think this is an important thing because it is easy for us to become like the rest of the world. It is something that happens gradually. It's something that can start to creep in that we really need to be aware of.

We live in the world. We have all kinds of influences in our life, don't we? Right? Wouldn't you agree with that? Are all those influences we have, are they all good? Do the influences in your life always lead you to be closer to the Lord?

[15:45] Or do some of those influences try to pull you away? You know, the wonderful thing about being a Christian is, yes, God has given us this, His Word. That when we get in His Word, when we study it, when we read it, we can strive to make sure our lives reflect this.

That is how we stay separate. That is how we stay not conformed to the world. And we let the Holy Spirit work in us and bring out the good traits that God wants to see.

And the other thing is, those influences over time can have an impact on us, right? But you know what? When we say, Lord, I'm sorry. We talked about saying, I'm sorry already, right?

When we say, Lord, I'm sorry. I see that I've started to fall into this and become like the rest of the world. I'm sorry. Please forgive me for that. What happens when we do that? The forgiveness of your sins.

God forgives us for that. And guess what? It's like we're fresh all over again, isn't it? It's like we're a new creation all over again. God continues to renew us.

[16:48] We can't stay clean and separate from the world without it influencing us, but God can continue to renew us from inside. So we continue to be the people that God wants us to be.

So we are God's children. We are called to be different. And then I like as you get into verse 6, because this tells us even more who we are.

Look in verse 6. For you are... Is there any question in that? Does it say you might be? No. It says you are a... Holy people.

What does it mean to be a holy people? Again, that's the being separated. You are made holy. And that's not by what we do. It's not our own actions that make us holy.

It's God forgiving us. That makes us holy in God's eyes. For you are a holy people to the Lord, the Lord your God. So we are holy. We are chosen.

[17:48] Isn't it great to be chosen? I like being chosen, don't you? I mean, way back on the playground, picking sides for teams, right? Red Rover or whatever you played on the playground when you were a kid.

And they're picking teams. Don't you like to be chosen? Do you ever like to be the last one that's chosen that nobody really wants? And you say, that was you, Jerry? We've probably all been there at one time or another.

But it says here, God's chosen us. God selected us. He created us and then He says He chose us. Now, when you're chosen, you have to agree and you have to walk over to that side, don't you?

You have to agree to be on that team. God has chosen us, but then we have to accept that. But it

says He's chosen us.

And why has He chosen us? If you're on the playground and you're chosen first, why are you usually chosen first? Probably because you're the best at whatever game you're playing, right? [18:46] Isn't that usually why you're chosen first? Is that why God chooses us? Because we're the best at it? It's interesting to me in verse 7 what He tells them.

It says, The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people. God's saying, I didn't choose you because you were a powerful group of people. I didn't choose you because you were the most intelligent. I didn't choose you because you were the wisest, the strongest, the most able. I didn't choose you for any of those reasons. Why does it say God chose us?

Look in verse 8. It gives you the answer. That's the thing about God's Word. It has a question, then it gives us the answer. But because the Lord loved you.

God chose us not because we're the greatest, not because we're the strongest, not because we're the wisest. He chose us because He loves us. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

[19:52] He chose us because He loves us, just out of His love for us. That's why He chose us. Are you the smartest? Are you the smartest? You ever think you're the smartest?

Are you the strongest? You ever think you're the strongest? I think sometimes in different situations we think we are, or at least we think we're smart enough to do it on our own.

But God didn't choose us because we're the smartest or the strongest. He chose us just because He loves us. He says, you are a child of mine, and I have wonderful plans for you.

That is why God chose us. And you know what? As we think about Father's Day and God being our Father, I think this is the message we need to tell our children. This is the message we need to tell all children.

That God loves them. That God has a plan for them. That God has a desire to choose them. Not because they're the best or the brightest or whatever, but just because God loves them.

[20:52] Don't you think that's a message our world needs to hear? And the other thing that we have to remember, and this is the reason for all these things we've read, comes down to verse 9.

And I want you to look in verse 9. Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, which keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him.

Our God, our Father, is a faithful Father, is a faithful God. What does it mean to be faithful?

He'll do what He says. He'll always be there. He is a God that will not let us down, that will not disappoint us.

You know, as a Father, I have always tried to be a good Father, but I am fully aware that there are times that I have probably failed as a Father.

[21:54] The rest of you Fathers out there, have you ever failed? Have you ever fallen short? Here's the thing. God, our Father, will not fail. God, our Father, will not fall short because He is a faithful God.

He is the definition of faithful. faithful. And I love the end of this verse, verse 9. It says, He keeps His commandments how long?

Thousand generations. You know, a generation, when you look at the definition of a generation, it kind of varies depending on what you look at. Traditionally, a generation has been thought of as 20 years.

Sometimes it's interpreted as 25 years as lifespans increase. But a generation is 20 to 25 years to 30 years at the top. So what is that saying?

How long is our God faithful? 20,000 years? 30,000 years? That's how long our God will be faithful. That's the rest of my life, I'm pretty sure.

[23:00] What it means is God is faithful. Always has been. Always will be. You have a Father. Be grateful for your earthly Father.

They are a blessing. But you have a heavenly Father that will always be there, that will always love you, that always has a desire to choose you.

He has chosen you. It's just whether you continue to respond to Him. He has plans for you. He always wants the best for you. And He will always be faithful.

He will never let you down. Are you grateful for that today? I am grateful that I have a wonderful physical Father.

But I am grateful I have a heavenly Father that loves me the way that God loves me. And I hope we understand that if you're a believer, if you're a follower of Jesus Christ, you share the same Father as I do, that loving, faithful Father.

[24 : 07] This morning, if you're here and you've never accepted Jesus Christ, God is saying, I want to choose you. I want you to follow me. I love you. I've got a plan for you. You just need to follow me.

If you've never accepted Jesus Christ, ask Him into your heart. And when you do that, and He forgives your sins, it says that you get adopted into the family, that you become a child of God, that all those sins are washed away, that you're renewed, that you are made into a new creature, a new person, and given a fresh start.

And at that moment, you gain a father that will always be there. Now, if you accepted Jesus 50 years ago, 60 years ago, 80 years ago, I don't know, remember to be thankful for the Father that He is and for His faithfulness that will always endure.

Be thankful for our Heavenly Father. Let's pray together. Lord God, we just thank You for this day that You've given us. Lord, I pray that You'd help each one of us to remember as believers who we are, and that is that we are a child of God, that we are a son or a daughter of God.

And as we spend our time here on this earth, that we are called to represent Him to the world around us, to show Him, to introduce Him, to be an ambassador for Him. And I pray You'd help us to do that.

[25 : 24] Not just to go along with the world or become more like the world, but to influence the world around us for You. Help us to do that, Lord. Help us to be faithful like You are faithful.

And I know that we'll fall short. And when we do, Lord, forgive us, but help us to continue on. And remind us each and every day that we need to be thankful that we have a loving and a faithful Father who will always be there for us.

Lord, just speak to our hearts and continue to remind us who we are. And it's in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.