

# Hearing God's Grace: Future Grace

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[ 0 : 0 0 ] at Titus. We're going to go from the old to the new. So in preparation, you might want to read through Titus during the week. But Deuteronomy 31, and Kirsty is going to come and read verse 9.

It's page 210 in the Church Bible, starting on verse 14.

The Lord said to Moses, Now the day of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, where I will commission him. So Moses and Joshua came and presented themselves at the tent of meeting. Then the Lord appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the cloud stood over the entrance to the tent. And the Lord said to Moses, You are going to rest with your fathers, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them. I will hide my faith from them and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties will come upon them.

And on that day they will ask, Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us? And I will certainly hide my faith on that day because of all their wickedness and turning to other gods. Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and make them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised an oath to their forefathers, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant. And when many disasters and difficulties come upon them, this song will testify against them because it will not be forgotten by their descendants. I know what they are disposed to do even before I bring them into the land I promised them an oath. So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites. The Lord gave this command to Joshua, son of Nun, be strong and courageous for you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them on oath, and I myself will be with you.

After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord. Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God. There it will remain as a witness against you. For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the Lord while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die? Assemble before me all the elders of your tribes and all your officials so that I can speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to testify against them. For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt and to turn from the way I have commanded you. In days to come disaster will fall upon you because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord and provoke him to anger by what your hands have made.

[ 3 : 2 4 ] I haven't got any notes but there's pens there if anybody would like a pen. We're going to be looking at Deuteronomy 31 through to the very end 30 to 34. Not looking at everything but taking one particular theme which I think is central to these few chapters. That theme is a difficult one. It's not easy.

I struggled with it myself in preparing and thought how can I really be saying this because it's not nice to hear. But I trust that by the end we will be hugely encouraged. So let's pray and ask for God's help in this.

Our Father God we come to you as the living God who speaks his words so clearly to us.

And we ask that you would give us open hearts and open minds to hear and to take on board what you are saying to us.

And that as we listen we would be people who are driven with arms open wide running to the Lord Jesus our Savior.

[ 5 : 24 ]    pour out your spirit upon us generously. Speak to us as you did to the people then. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Well we have not traveled very far. In fact we are in exactly the same place as we were back in chapter one. God's people are still waiting to cross the river Jordan into the promised land.

However, as we've been waiting to cross Moses through a series of sermons has reminded God's people of God's persistent grace and goodness.

Despite their rebellious past and their disobedient lives God will not give up on his people. His chosen people who are his treasured possession.

He has rescued them from slavery. He's given them a brand new beginning. He has given them his word. He has shown them how they're going to live in the new land so that they can live in a right relationship with him.

[ 6 : 39 ]    Now as we get to the end of Deuteronomy the long wait is finally over. But before they cross into the promised land the land of peace, prosperity and protection Moses has one final sermon.

And this sermon is both shocking and surprising. But through it all we will see that God's grace is not just a past experience that we always look back to but it is also a future experience that we can enjoy.

First of all the shock our failure is predicted. Look at verse 16 of chapter 31 verse 16 of chapter 31 And the Lord said to Moses you're going to rest with your fathers.

In other words, you're going to die. And these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They are going to give their love, their devotion to other things and other people.

They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. Verse 18 And I will certainly hide my face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods.

[ 8 : 10 ]    Now what an encouraging sermon to end with. Listen up everybody I've some great news for you you're all going to fail.

For the last 30 chapters Moses has been rehearsing God's goodness to them. He's told them about the beautiful land that they're going to enter. He's told them about God's good law that he's provided.

But the reality is while God is persistently gracious his people are consistently rebellious. And this isn't a warning to say I'm telling you this so that you won't do it.

He's telling them as a reminder of this is what you're like. And to make sure that they never forget what they are like he writes a song for them to learn.

Look at verse 19 Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and make them sing it so that they may be a witness for me against them.

[ 9 : 14 ]    When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey the land I promise on oath to their forefathers and when they eat their fill and thrive they will turn to other gods and worship them rejecting me and breaking my covenant.

So he had to prepare a song and write a song and that song has been recorded for us in chapter 32. Have a look at it there.

Here's the song that he taught to them that they all had to learn off. It starts off quite well. We actually sang a part of it earlier on in verse 3 of chapter 32.

I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh praise the greatness of our God. He is the rock. His works are perfect. All his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong.

Upright and just is he. Well that's as good as the song really gets. Because then he begins to describe what they're like in the song.

[ 10 : 15 ] Look at verse 15. Jeshurun which is another name for Israel. It means somebody who's upright. A righteous person.

Well what did they do? Verse 15. They grew fat and kicked. Filled with food. He became heavy and sleek. They had enjoyed God's amazing generosity and graciousness.

But look at their response. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the rock his saviour. They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols.

They sacrificed to demons which are not gods. Gods they had not known. Gods that recently appeared. Gods your fathers did not fear. You deserted the rock who fathered you.

You forgot the God who gave you birth. Well welcome to our Sunday morning celebration. This morning we're going to start with one of our favourites.

[ 11 : 21 ] Number 365 in the church praise book. We are going to fail. Let's sing together as we remind ourselves of how rebellious and how sinful we are.

Let's join in together shall we? Starting at verse 15. He abandoned the God who made him Not very tuneful but I think you get the point.

Somehow I don't think you'll find that kind of song or any other song like it in a praise book. Who needs to be reminded of their capacity to fail?

It's not a very popular idea. It's not very good for our self-esteem is it to be told that you always fail? After all we know what we're like don't we?

We don't need anybody to tell us what our hearts are really like. Do we? Well reality bites.

[ 12 : 25 ] As we have said before this is not just their story of a people long ago this is also our story. This is what we are like.

This is the heart that God sees within each one of us and rather than run away from this awkward and difficult truth we need to face up to the reality of this truth.

Go back to chapter 31 verse 21. Verse 21. Look at the middle of verse 21.

This is what God says I know what they are disposed to do even before I bring them into the promised land.

I know exactly what they're going to do. And it's no different for us. God knows we're sitting here in a worship service and he knows exactly that come Tuesday I would have said something I ought not to have said.

[ 13 : 38 ] He knows that by Sunday night this very night I will have been thinking something I shouldn't have been thinking. And let's remember this is not referring to irreligious people who have never given God a second thought he's writing about God's people God's specially chosen people who have experienced his grace day after day and this is what he says about them in verse 27 chapter 31 for I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are.

If you have been rebellious against the Lord while I am still alive and while I'm with you how much more will you rebel after I die says Moses. God knows what we are like and God predicts that we will fail and fall time and time again.

well I said it was hard and it is difficult and because we don't like to admit failure I think we sometimes live pretending that we are not as bad as what we actually are.

We try and cover up what our heart is really like. It's a little bit like plastic surgery. You know the 40 year old who gets pumped squeezed and lifted and struts about like a Hollywood film star.

It's a fake. It's a fraud. They're afraid to smile in case their face cracks and what's worse everybody else goes along with it and says oh don't they look so beautiful.

[ 15 : 29 ] But it's all plastic. It's not real. So let me ask ourselves this searching question. Do we live with a plastic spirituality?

Have we just somehow altered the outside? Pumped ourselves up with this religious exterior and we strut about and we come along to meetings and go to other people as if everything's fine.

I don't struggle. I don't have any issues with sin in my life. everything is fine. The worst thing that we can do is pretend.

If God predicts our failure why should we even try and hide it? It seems the best thing we can do is face up to the reality of who we really are.

look at chapter 32 verse 44 Moses came with Joshua son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people and when Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel he said to them take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law.

[ 17 : 10 ] So parents our children have not been born into this world basically good. Our children are basically bad and the song was there to remind them but of course it's not just little people we're just bigger children aren't we?

We get it wrong just as much. Verse 47 they are not just idle words just kind of things written just for well for whatever reason these words are not just idle words for you they are your life.

You see it was actually good for them to sing about what they were like it was good to reflect and see what their life was like because it's only when we see what we are truly like that we do fail on a continual basis it's only then that we will actually see our desperate need of God's grace our God's grace to us today and God's grace every day to come well that's the shock our failure is predicted but then second the surprise our salvation is provided failure there's going to be but don't worry Moses is going to come to the rescue he always has or will he look at verse 48 of chapter 32 on that same day the

Lord told Moses go up into the Abraham range to Mount Nebo to Moab across from Jericho and view Canaan the land I'm giving the Israelites at their own possession so climb up that mountain and look at the land the people are going to get there on the mountain that you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people how could that happen Moses was their great leader it was through Moses that God had rescued them from Egypt it was through Moses that God had spoken to them it was Moses who mediated on their behalf rescuing them from certain destruction it was Moses who prayed for the people and brought about blessing instead of curse it was always Moses who got them out of trouble time and time again Moses always came to the rescue so now can we begin to see the seriousness of their situation

Moses has just given them this long big song predicting their failure which they're to sing to their children and everybody's to remember what failures they all are and then on the other hand he just tells them I'm going to die so who's going to stand in for them now who's going to pray for them when they fail who's going to mediate for them when God responds to their disobedience and that's the reality of what we're faced with by the end of the book that's how the whole sermon finishes the last part chapter 34 is all about how Moses died and we don't even know where he's buried but he's dead he's gone you're going to fail and your great rescuing prophet is dead so who is going to come to their rescue well here is the amazing surprise even with the knowledge of future failure

[ 21 : 09 ] God meets us day by day with future grace incredible three things to see God's amazing grace meeting us in our failures first of all the presence of God go back to chapter 31 verse 1 then Moses went out and he spoke these words to all Israel I am now 120 years old and I am no longer able to lead you the Lord has said to me you shall not cross the Jordan so we know Moses is going to die so who is going to lead them who's going to go before them well answer verse 3 the Lord your God himself will cross over ahead of you he will destroy these nations before you and you will take possession of their land verse 6 be strong and courageous do not be afraid or terrified because of them for the

Lord your God goes with you he will never leave you nor forsake you does that surprise you it surprises me knowing their failure knowing that they would have this song of failure to sing knowing what their future lives are going to be like God makes this promise that he will never forsake them and he is never going to leave them not only is he going to bring them into the land he promises to fight their battles for them and that he will stay with them through all of their failures Moses of course is going to die but God's presence is going to remain look at verse 8 the Lord himself goes before you and will be with you he will never leave you nor forsake you do not be afraid do not be discouraged now is that not what his people experience on a greater level today is that not what we have today but so much better not only is this promise true for us that

God will never leave us nor forsake us but now by his Holy Spirit the risen Lord Jesus the living Christ has come to live in us despite our continuous failure God doesn't abandon failures like you and me he comes to them he not only intervenes into the world but he actually comes to live in them to change us and to transform us and to deal with our lives so we become more like him God doesn't abandon failures he comes to live in failures second the word of God Moses is going to die but God will continue to speak his word to his people look at verse 9 of chapter 31 so

Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord and to all the elders of Israel down to verse 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose you shall read this law before them in their hearing so although Moses is going to die God has provided a way for them to keep hearing his word it's written down there'll be a place for them to meet and it will be spoken to them so verse 12 assemble the people men women and children and the aliens all the outsiders living in your towns so that they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law so as they come together all God's people they are coming to hear God's word of grace remember

God is not calling perfect people to come to him these are people he know who are going to fail and he provides the means and he says I want you to come together to listen to this word he commands that failures come and listen to his word and is that not what we're doing right now are we not God's people who have been assembled together as we are now to hear the word of grace here we are sat alongside each other perhaps we've come with a kind of pretense and we don't really want people to see inside our hearts and maybe we've even put on a bit of a mask to God but you know what he's calling us he says I want you to gather together as failures people who've messed up time and time again this past week people who are going to mess up next week and we come together to be reminded of

[ 26 : 50 ] God's goodness to us in Christ again and again and again in the words of Hebrews it says let us draw near to God let's come to him with a sincere heart that is with an open one not a pretense one one that's real and honest in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water and let's not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing but let's encourage one another this is a gathering here of people not of plastic spirituality but surely people who can come open and honest with all our failures we shouldn't arrive in here and be shocked that somebody has done something wrong or said something they shouldn't have said we are who we are gathered failures in need of

God's grace he doesn't reject failures he gathers them to meet with him to know his grace that's why I'm here today and I hope it's why you're here so the presence of God the word of God then the third one the savior of God in many ways Moses was seen as their savior their redeemer he's something of a hero through the book of Deuteronomy that's how the book finishes look at chapter 34 verses 10 to 12 the last few verses chapter chapter chapter 34 verse 10 since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses whom the Lord knew face to face who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt to

Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land for no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel that's amazing isn't it a great hero but he's just died he's dead so who's going to take his place well as we were reading in Deuteronomy 31 Joshua was going to come he would take over but the point is here that there's nobody like Moses Joshua would do a good job but there was nobody as great as him as Moses well that is until the final and ultimate prophet would come the Lord Jesus Christ he was known as the prophet and when Jesus came into this world he did many miraculous signs and wonders he healed the sick he calmed the storms he fed the hungry he raised the dead he did many more mighty and miraculous things but his mighty power his greatest awesome deeds were shown supremely through his death and resurrection from the grave because when we look to

Christ to our last ultimate and final prophet we see we see we see Jesus on the cross all of my failures all of our mess and all of our sin past present and future was laid upon Christ treated as that disobedient rebel treated as the one who turned away from God so that by faith we would be treated and treasured as his chosen child and by his resurrection he has defeated our greatest enemy fought the greatest battle of sin and death defeated them and destroyed them once and for all so that we would be welcomed into his eternal promised land heaven itself

God does not abandon failures he comes to save failures like you and me so let me predict something this week this day you're going to fail and I'm going to fail but with our every failure we will be met by amazing grace the presence of God never leaving us with us that word of grace speaking to us reminding us of all that Christ has done and ultimately running to our saviour Jesus Christ future grace will meet us for every failure and when we do fail let's not run into a quarter and hide let's not put on a mask and pretend but let us run to

[ 32 : 25 ] Christ who has his arms open wide to find grace for our every need let's pray together