

Hearing Gods Grace- Gods Amazing Mercy

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[0 : 0 0] to 21, which is on page 188. The Golden Calf. Remember this and never forget how you provoked the Lord your God to anger in the desert.

From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here, you have been rebellious against the Lord. At Horeb you aroused the Lord's wrath so that he was angry enough to destroy you. When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the Lord had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

I ate no bread and drank no water. The Lord gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments the Lord proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of the assembly.

At the end of the forty days and the forty nights, the Lord gave me the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant. Then the Lord told me, Go down from here at once, because your people, whom you brought out of Egypt, have become corrupt.

They have turned away quickly from what I commanded them and have made a caste idol for themselves. And the Lord said to me, I have seen this people, and they are stiff-necked people indeed.

[1 : 1 3] Let me alone so that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven, and I will make you into a nation stronger and more numerous than they. So I turned and went down from the mountain while it was ablaze with fire, and the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands.

When I looked, I saw that you had sinned against the Lord your God. You had made for yourselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way that the Lord had commanded you.

So I took the two tablets and threw them out of my hands, breaking them to pieces before your eyes. Then once again I fell prostrate before the Lord for forty days and forty nights.

I ate no bread and drank no water because of all the sin you had committed, doing what was evil in the Lord's sight and so provoking him to anger. I fear the anger and wrath of the Lord, for he was angry enough to destroy you, but again the Lord listened to me.

And the Lord was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him, but at that time I prayed for Aaron too. Also I took that sinful thing of yours, the calf you had made, and burned it in the fire.

[2 : 2 3] Then I crushed it and ground it to powder as fine as dust and threw the dust into a stream that flowed down the mountain. Thanks, Justy.

And if you jump over to Deuteronomy chapter 10, verse 1, and we'll continue reading there.

Deuteronomy 10, verse 1. At that time the Lord said to me, Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones and come up to me on the mountain.

Also make a wooden chest. I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Then you were to put them in the chest. So I made the ark out of acacia wood and chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones, went up onto the mountain with the two tablets in my hands.

The Lord wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you from the mountain, out of the fire on the day of the assembly. And the Lord gave them to me.

Then I came back down the mountain and put the tablets in the ark I had made, as the Lord commanded me, and they are there now. Well, please keep your Bibles open.

[3 : 3 7] Deuteronomy chapter 9 and 10, as we continue on in our studies in this fabulous book, the big title we've given it is Hearing God's Grace, and that's what we're going to do now.

So let's talk to God, pray us for his help, and then we'll look at his word together. Our Father God, we thank you so much for your word to us.

Thank you for the privilege of having many copies, multiple copies of your word that we own. But yet we know that without your Spirit speaking to us through them, they remain lifeless.

And so we pray that by the Spirit of God, you would speak life, that you would change us, transform us, and showing us more of who you are, your amazing character.

and how when we take that in to our own lives, how it changes us. So we ask for your help now this morning, in Jesus' name.

[5 : 04] Amen. Well, Deuteronomy, as we have been saying, is a collection of talks.

It's a series of sermons that Moses gives to God's people just before they go into the Promised Land. So in chapter 9, verse 1, we read this, this little phrase, Hear, O Israel.

It marks or signifies the beginning of a new talk that Moses gives to the people. And in this talk that we're going to look at this morning, he tells the people two things.

So very simple for us this morning, just two things we're going to get. How they're going to get into the land, and how they're going to stay in the land.

Two things, how they get in, and how they're going to stay in. Now let's remember, 40 years ago, they tried to enter the land, but they failed miserably.

[6 : 11] Now, 40 years later, they're back in exactly the same place again. So what's going to be different? Well, this is what Moses' talk is all about.

And he'll tell them that it's only because of God's mercy that they're going to get into the land. And it's only because of God's amazing mercy that they will get to stay in the land.

Now, when we look at a book like this, we might just think, well, that's kind of 4,000 odd years ago.

That's history. What's that got to do with me?

Well, as we read this story, let's remember that this is also our story. Because the way in which God works here is also the way in which God works with us today.

The message is actually the same. Because God is the one who brings us in to a relationship with him. Into, if you like, the ultimate promised land.

[7 : 14] Life in all its fullness. And it is God who will keep us in that relationship with him.

Experiencing life in all of its fullness.

So, first, how God brings us in. Our warrior. Look at chapter 9, verse 1. Hear, O Israel, you are now about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you with large cities that have walls up to the sky.

The people are strong and tall. Anarchites. Well, when you hear the word Anarchites, you are meant to cower and hide under your chair. Well, they were like giants.

These were people who won every battle. Maybe it's perhaps how Ireland are feeling this afternoon. You know what have been heard about them.

Who can stand up against the Anarchites? Forty years ago, they faced them and they ran away from them terrified and frightened. Now they have to face them again on the battlefield.

[8 : 26] And paddy power is not giving them great odds. Everyone knows you don't take on the Anarchites. You'll get destroyed, kicked off the park.

You might as well throw in your weapons now and try and work out some kind of deal. But, look at verse 3. Be assured today that the Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire.

He will destroy them. He will subdue them before you. And you will quickly drive them out and annihilate them quickly as the Lord has promised you.

God is going to fight for you. God is the warrior who is going to take you and bring you into the promised land.

I'm sure we've all seen on the news recently those fires that were raging across Australia. Nothing and no one has been able to stop them.

[9 : 42] They're too powerful. They're too great. Nothing can quench them. Well, God is pictured here in verse 3 as a mighty warrior, one who is like a devouring fire.

Nothing and no one can stop the awesome power of God. And the message is simply this that left to ourselves and the people left to themselves are never going to get in.

They're going to be broken and defeated. But God is the one who goes ahead of us clearing the way making this path so that they will be able to cross over and enter into the promised land.

Now let's be clear on why God will fight for them. Look at verse 4. After the Lord your God has driven them out before you do not say to yourself the Lord well he brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.

You know what? God has given this land to us because of how great we are. God is doing all of these things for us as a reward because well we've just been so good.

[11 : 01] God is fighting for us because well quite frankly we deserve it. I mean look at us look how great we are compared to those other lot. Wow God would do anything for us.

Look at the rest of verse 4. No it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive out before you.

It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of the land but on account of the wickedness of these nations.

It's not your goodness that's going to get you in. It's the nation's sin that God must deal with that will enable you to go in. You see we have this problem of thinking that God works on the basis of our performance and it goes something like this if I do something for God God is going to do something for me.

And it's like we aim to build up these credits and we have this special account with God it's called the special favour account and we build up credits that we put into it and we kind of do good things and we help people and we give our money to charity we kind of sponsor somebody in compassion and we go to church and we do this and we do that and well we're kind of generally good clean people and then when we've built up enough credits and we want something or we need something well we kind of cash in our credits and we pray a prayer to God and we say Lord I need and well just look at my life because I have done this for you do this for me I've earned it I deserve it no that's wrong look at verse 6 understand then that it is not because of your righteousness that the

[13 : 15] Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess for you are a stiff necked people you're actually no better than the nations that have been here before you you're just as wicked and as sinful as they are the only reason that God is going to fight for you is because of his mercy and the only way that you're going to get into the promised land is because of his amazing grace you see it's all about what God has done for you not about what we can do for him it's all because of his amazing mercy so God is the one who will bring us in because he is our warrior well second how God keeps us in the mediator remember God has entered into a special relationship with his people and that special relationship was called the covenant we come across it a lot in the old testament and a covenant simply means a contract between

God and his people it's a binding agreement that would keep them together and enable them to stay in the land and at the heart of this agreement was what we call the ten commandments which is something that Moses here recalls in chapter nine verse seven following where he goes up onto the mountain to receive the ten commandments on the stone tablets we pick it up in verse nine Moses says when I went up onto the mountain to receive the tablets of stone the tablets of the covenant this disagreement that the Lord had made with you I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights I ate no bread and drank no water and the Lord gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God on them were all the commandments the Lord proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire agreement or the covenant was really quite simple and basic anybody in kindergarten would get it and it went simply like this listen guys you obey the laws you keep these laws that

I am giving you and it's going to go well for you you you'll get the land you'll stay in the land you're going to be blessed you're going to have peace prosperity your borders are going to be protected you're not going to suffer you're going to have everything that you need it's going to be a good life obey these laws and you're going to stay here but you know what if you disobey these laws if you get these commandments wrong if you turn away from me I'm going to destroy you I will do to you what I have done to the other nations you'll be taken out of the land quite simple obey goes well disobey trouble and here Moses is reminding them of this covenant this pact this agreement that they had made but he shows them how they failed and how God is going to keep them in look at verse 12 so Moses had gone up to the mountain to get the tablets and now he's on his way back down again verse 12 then the

Lord told me go down from here at once because your people whom you bought out of Egypt have become corrupt they have turned away quickly from what I commanded them and have made a cast idol for themselves and we know an idol doesn't have to be a particular stone or carved out

image an idol is anything that we put in place of God anything that's more important to you than God is an idol he says you put these things before me verse 13 and the Lord said to me I have seen this people and they are a stiff necked people let me alone so that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven and I will make you that's Moses into a nation stronger and more numerous than they look if I have to destroy them I will do it but I will build up another people who will take their place that's not a problem for me says God so

I turned and went down the mountain while it was ablaze with fire and the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands when I looked I saw that you had sinned against the Lord your God and how you had made for yourselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf you turned aside quickly from the way that the Lord had commanded you now look at verse 17 so I took the two tablets and threw them right before all the people gathered there these tablets just smashed and Moses smashing them on the rocks was a sign that this agreement this special relationship between God and the people was over it had been broken in fact if we've listened carefully to what we've just read we will have seen that they broke the contract even before they even managed to set foot in the land so if they can't keep it before they get in what hope have they got of keeping it if they do get in but look what happens go over to chapter 10 verse 1 so so far we see they've just been smashed a sign that their relationship has just been broken but look how

[19:21] God responds chapter 10 verse 1 at that time the Lord said to me Moses chisel out two stone tablets just like the first ones and come up to me on the mountain and also make a wooden chest also known as the ark I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke then you are to put them into the chest verse 5 then I came back down the mountain and I put the tablets in the ark that's the wooden chest I had made as the Lord commanded me and they are there now now why put the agreement why put these commandments these stone tablets into a wooden box what's the point of doing that well if they're put into this sealed wooden box they're protected they can't be broken you see as far as

God is concerned this is a permanent agreement that he makes with his people when God says I want you to put the tablets of the covenant this agreement this relationship that we've got worked out together he says when I say to you put them into the ark or into the box he's saying you may break it but I am going to be the one who keeps it it's God's way of saying to the people I am committed to you I am faithful to you I am loyal to you you might give up on me you might put God substitutes in my place you might say that your family or your work is more important to me than anything else but you know what you are always going to be number one I will never ever give up on you chapter 10 verse 10 now I stayed on the mountain 40 days and nights as I did the first time and the Lord listened to me at this time also it was not his will to destroy you go the Lord said to me and lead the people on their way so that they may enter and possess the land that I swore to their fathers to give them God is saying I'm not only going to get you in but I'm going to keep you in now that's incredible but let's try and make the connection here because what has happened for God to change his mind because they broke the agreement in chapter 9 verse 14 he says I'm going to destroy them I'm going to blot out their name from under heaven because they broke the agreement the contract but then he says in chapter 10 verse 11 he says well it's not my will to destroy you I'm not going to do that so what's happened for God to change his mind well the answer comes in the middle and it explains in a deeper way why

God is going to keep them and the answer is this Moses prays for the people he acts as a mediator between God and the people he intercedes for them so look at chapter 9 verse 26 here we have Moses' prayer verse 26 of chapter 9 verse 29 13 they their are those is not asking God to do something that is against his character. He is pleading, he is pleading with God to act because of his character, because of his commitment and loyalty to his people.

He's saying to them, these are your people. They belong to you. They're your treasured possession, your inheritance. So how could you turn your back on them? How could you leave them? How could you destroy them? Verse 27 of chapter 9, remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Overlook the stubbornness of this people. Overlook their wickedness and their sin. He's not saying to God, could you just look the other way a minute while they're committing sin? Just don't look for a minute and it'll be over. He's not going to like, forget about it or let's just pretend that it never happened. That's not what overlook means here. He's asking God, do not treat them as they deserve to be treated. They deserve to be destroyed and let go. But because of your character, because of who you are, because of your promises and your commitment, because

they're your people, forgive them. Be merciful to them. You see, the only way they're going to stay in the land is through a mediator. One who is going to stand in for them and pray for them and intercede for them.

[25 : 23] You see, it's all about who God is and not who we are. It's not about our character, but God's character.

So God is the one who will keep us in. Now, as we've said, this is not just history. This is our story too.

Because we're also people who need a warrior, who's going to bring us into that relationship with God. We also need a warrior who's going to clear the path so that we might have life in all its fullness and enter into the promised land, the ultimate land of new creation.

We also need a mediator who is going to keep us in that relationship with God and never let us go.

Well, in Jesus, we see the true warrior, the mighty warrior, the strong warrior.

But we also have the mediator, the one who prays on our behalf, interceding for us. And in Jesus, the warrior and the mediator come together.

[26 : 41] And we see Jesus as we read on through the Bible, as we see Christ. He's the one who fights the battle for us. The battle that we can never fight.

He fights, well, not the analogites. But he deals with sin. He defeats Satan through his death on the cross.

He clears the way, taking the blame for all of our sin, past, present and future, so that we can enter into a relationship with him and enjoy him and know him.

But Jesus is our mediator. And he continually stands in for us, speaking to the Father in our defence.

It's one thing getting in, but it's another thing staying in. And I want us to get this right because so often it is taught and it is preached. Well, Jesus gets you in, but it's up to you to keep yourself in by your good works.

[27 : 43] Rubbish. Get rid of that thinking. Because every time I mess up and sin, every time we fail and we get it wrong, Jesus is there continually speaking to the Father in our defence, saying, I have paid for their sin on the cross.

I was destroyed for them. Condemned for them. Suffered hell for them. So that they might enjoy life with you today and for all eternity.

Jesus brings us in and Jesus will keep us in. So how does this change us?

Well, three things very simply that we can take away as we apply these two truths of God being our warrior and God being our mediator. The first thing is security.

If Jesus brings us in and Jesus keeps us in, we are forever secure. Nothing and no one can take us out. Not even sin, not even Satan, not even suffering.

[28 : 52] We're safe forever through our faith in Jesus Christ. No longer are we living a life of fear every time we sin thinking, Oh, now I've suddenly come out again.

And I'm out of a relationship with God and now I'm in trouble. No, because of our faith in Christ, we are forever secure in Jesus. Nothing and no one can take us out of the grip of his faithful love.

That's the first thing we can take away. The second thing is this, humility. Because it's all about what Jesus has done for us, none of us here can say, You know what? I deserve it.

Or I earned it. No one here can claim to be better or greater or more superior to anybody else. Nobody can say, I'm more blessed because of what I have done.

Do you remember what we read in chapter 9? Three times it says, it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord is doing this for you. It's not because of your righteousness.

[30 : 01] In other words, it's all because of God's mercy. Which means we become humble people. That means we treat each other with mercy.

We don't hold grudges against each other. We're not unforgiving towards each other. We treat each other as Christ treated us. We become humble servants because of what Christ has done for us.

So first it brings security. Second it brings about a humility. And third, responsibility. Because of what we have experienced through Jesus, it places on us not only a privilege, but an amazing responsibility.

And I want us to take our example from Moses. Because like Moses, we need to pray on behalf of others.

We need to begin to be praying for our friends and our family, people who we know, who have not yet entered in.

[31 : 13] Because who's going to pray for them? Are they going to pray for themselves? We need to intercede. We need to pray on behalf of our friends and our family.

We need to pray for the nations, the unreached nations, the people that we were hearing about as David came on Wednesday night in Thailand, the places of Laos, people who haven't yet heard. Are they going to pray? Today, one of the greatest religious festivals in the world, the Hindu people, the Hindu people, are all going to be crowding down.

Tens of millions, look it up on the internet, tens of millions, walking into the Ganges, because the Ganges is going to clean their sin away. Tens of millions, lost.

Are they going to be praying to God? Who's going to pray for them? To intercede for them? Well, like Moses, we need to pray this prayer. Verse 27, chapter 9.

[32 : 18] Overlook their stubbornness of this people. Overlook their wickedness and their sin. Have mercy.

Have mercy. Have mercy. So we have an amazing responsibility, but that privilege of talking to an awesome God who longs to bring us in, who longs to keep us in, and to save us, and rescue us. We are secure. We are humble servants. And we are people who pray for those who are not yet in. Let's pray now.

Our Father God, we thank you that you are an amazing God. A God of mercy. A God who has not only brought us into a relationship with you, life in all its fullness, experiencing that life today, looking forward to an eternal life with you in heaven.

Not only have you brought us in, but you are the God who will keep us in, not because of our faithfulness, but because of the faithfulness of God to us. Thank you that we are secure in you.

[33 : 52] Teach us humility. And give us a heart. Fill our lives with your spirit that we might pray on behalf of the nations and pray for our friends and family.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, we're going to sing together, which takes up the theme of this...