Do Not Forget the Lord

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[0:00] Greetings to you from Oosberg Christian Forum Church. Oosberg is in Sheboygan County, about 45 minutes straight north of Milwaukee. You can be assured that we are in prayer for you as you discern the future, and as we pray that God may lead the proper shepherd to this congregation.

Before we begin, can we open with a word of prayer? Heavenly God, help us to hear your holy word with open hearts, so that we may truly understand, and understanding that we may believe, and believing that we may follow in all faithfulness and obedience, seeking your honor and glory in all that we do through Jesus our Lord.
Amen. So today, we're going to focus on Deuteronomy 8, and this is entitled, Do Not Forget the Lord.
And this is an exhortation. I'm not a pastor. I'm not going back to the original Hebrew, but I am referring to a book from Dr. Walter Kaiser, a seminary professor who's actually from Sheboygan County.
Prior to the legislature, I spent my career in banking, and it's been said that looking at someone's checkbook or credit card statement is the best way to figure out, to measure one's goals and priorities.
[1:53] Many people do not like to talk about money, for they feel that the subject is very personal, and it should not be discussed in public.

But our Lord must have thought differently about that. According to John MacArthur, a noted American pastor and author, who I believe just recently passed away about 10 days ago.
According to Pastor MacArthur, 16 of Christ's 38 parables speak about how people should handle earthly treasure.
In fact, our Lord taught more about stewardship, one out of every 10 verses in the Gospels. More about stewardship than about heaven and hell combined.
The entire Bible contains more than 2,000 references to wealth and prosperity, twice as many as the total references to faith and prayer.
[3:04] What we do with the things that God has given us is very important to Him. If wealth and possessions come from God, then why are some cultures so wealthy and others so poor?

Has God forgotten some and blessed others? Even more challenging, what is the believer's responsibility in a world that has so much poverty and so much hunger?
Does God favor one economic system of production over another? Does God favor capitalism over socialism or a government-guided market over a free market?
Is the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel a true biblical teaching? Or is it a Western gospel that's devoid of any biblical backing?
The Eighth Commandment says, do not steal. But that introduces a whole subject of related topics, including the accumulation of wealth, one's earning power, one's spending habits, one's inheriting wealth and property, and all the use of our possessions.
[4:27] No book in the Old Testament deals more with the curse and the blessings of wealth, affluence, and possessions than the book of Deuteronomy.

So our key text is verse 17, where we read, Beware lest you say in your heart, my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.
You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth. So let's turn then to Deuteronomy 8.
We're going to read the entire chapter of Deuteronomy 8. The whole commandment that I command to you today, you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give you to your fathers.

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And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you in these 40 years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.
[5:36] And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these 40 years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you.
So you shall keep the commands of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him.
For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, the land of brooks, of water, of fountains and springs, and flowing out in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you dig copper, and you shall eat and be full and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you.
Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command to you today, lest when you have eaten and are full and built good houses and live in them.
And when your flocks and herds multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart will be lifted up and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground, where there was no water who brought you water out of a flinty rock, who led you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know that he might humble you and test you to do you good in the end.
[7:33] And again, our key verse, verse 17, beware lest you say in your heart, my power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth.

You shall remember the Lord your God for it is he who gives you the power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers this day.
And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you will surely perish like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you.
So you shall perish because you did not obey the voice of the Lord. So what is the source of all wealth?
God then is the creator and the proprietor of everything in heaven and in earth. In Psalm 24, verse one, we read the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.
[8:39] Moreover, God claims that all the silver is mine and the gold is mine. We read that in Haggai two, verse eight. Therefore, it is not the material goods and things in and of themselves that are ungodly or strictly of this age.

Everything that God made in the created realm, he pronounced good as he created it. We read that in Genesis one. But possessions and wealth and goods bring with them responsibilities.
We must use all we are given in a manner fitting of our role as God's stewards. For what we have is to be shared with the Lord and with others.
It is all on loan from the Lord to be used for his glory. So what are the dangers in trusting in wealth?
The Old Testament prophet Amos prophesied against the people of Israel for selling the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals.
We read that in Amos two, verse six. In addition, the nation of Israel trampled on the poor and forced them to give gifts of wheat while building stone mansions and planting lush vineyards.
[10:00] We read of that in Amos five, verse 11. Therefore, the spoiled wives of the robber barons were haughty, walking with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, tripping along with mincing steps with ornaments jingling on their ankles.

We read of that in Isaiah three, verse 16. All wealth comes with mixed blessings. For some rich persons may be wise in their own eyes.
We read about that in Proverbs 28, which can lead to the fall that we read about in Proverbs 18.
The abundance of a rich man's possessions permits him no sleep.

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We read about that in Ecclesiastes five, verse 12. And in place of wealth, one ought to consider that a good name is more desirable than great riches, as we read in Proverbs 22, verse one.
Many famous people have borne witness to the fact that wealth is not all what it's cracked up to be. John D. Rockefeller is said to have stated, I have made millions, but they have brought me no happiness.
[11:13] It's been reported that Henry Ford was disappointed over the loss of any free time when he said, I was happier doing mechanics work. Happiness and ease of mind do not come from possessions and wealth in and of itself.

Even though the prosperity gospel of some religious teachers is still going strong in many parts of the world and on television screens in America, its teaching is not scriptural at all.
It cannot be shown from the Bible that God wants his followers to be rich, to have expensive automobiles, or to own expensive homes or yachts and gorgeous wardrobes. Despite the popularity of this teaching, it celebrates greed and it forces a view of God that makes him a little more than one who constantly doles out material goods to his people.
So how is wealth expanded? It's true that God is the source of all and any wealth and possessions that exist in the world around us.
For he is the one who supplies two accompanying factors. He supplies the resources that are used in making the wealth and he grants the efficiency with which wealth is organized.
[12:35] Some argue that wealth's resources are what but a natural endowments of some humans, such as the giftedness of people who create wealth.

They're intellectual know-how that works on wealth, the plants and utilities that form new products. But on the contrary, even these are given to mortals as trusts from God.
But what about wealth and economics? Some people advocate that simple lifestyle frequently assume that or declare that those who amass wealth do so at the expense of others.
In their view, all evidence of wealth is the result of oppression or the exercise of power in some cruel way or another. But some defenders of the free market economies argue that these critics are playing a zero-sum game in which assumes that if one side wins, the other side loses as in a baseball game.
But the flaw in this type of argument is that it's possible to have both sides win in the kinds of economic exchanges that are positive some.
[13:52] In voluntary exchanges, both parties end up in better economic shape than when they began. In the last century, machines and basic ingenuity have dramatically increased productivity.

For example, a giant combine can now sweep hundreds of acres of wheat or corn or oats or rice and can produce more than hundreds of farmers who previously used slow methods of plowing with horses and crushing grain in one place with an immovable machine.
Because this change has come, then the question is, how should society distribute wealth? One answer is the free market approach, wherein there's a minimum of interference from the state or the government and individuals are on their own to design better ways of doing old tasks.
It was Adam Smith who lived from 1723 to 1790 who was a Scottish economist who made famous the metaphor that there is an invisible hand that guides society's use of wealth as each person makes his own decision on how to produce something better than what has been produced before with greater profit.
This approach is basically individualistic, even though the government watches for fairness and honesty in its practices. In contrast to the free market system, others contend of a guided market approach in which planners guide the economy through certain desirable goals, through the use of taxes or tariffs or subsidies or some sort of monetary policies.
[15:32] Private interests left to the laissez-faire or hands-off approach of the free markets, these advocates argue, will never achieve certain social goals such as building a highway system or the interstate system or making sure public values such as legislation are enacted against polluters, industrial polluters.

Some central government controls are needed, claim the guided market economists. Others argue that some type of middle of the road theory is needed between the hands-off and the government guided model.
So, what about morality and the market system? The best conclusion seems to be it's impossible to erase or to reduce or to eliminate poverty by slicing the economic pie into small enough pieces so

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that everyone in the world gets an equal portion of the pie.
There's just not enough pie to go around. There's just a lot of money in the world that has been ignored, but history seems to demonstrate the best way to benefit the poor is by increasing productivity of the market system. You've all heard the saying, give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.
Up to this point, the free market approach has done more to provide for the masses around the globe than any other market system. Though the market invariably will have competitors, those who best cooperate tend to succeed in the marketplace better than others.
[17:10] Did not Jesus teach in Luke 16, verse 9, that his people should use their resources wisely, just as the unjust steward?

And did not the Lord commend the rich farmer in Luke 12, 16 for being a successful businessman, even while he criticized him for his self-centered materialism?
So then, what does the scripture teach on these issues? What about the cautions of the use and the love of money? There's a strong possibility that some will come to love money more than they love God.
Job 31, 24 says, If I put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, you are my security. If I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune of my hands has gained.
Then these also would be sins that I would be judged for. I would have been unfaithful to God on high. Or what about Proverbs 11, where we read, Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.
[18:22] Or what about 1 Timothy, where we read, Command those who are rich in the present world not to be arrogant or to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides with us with everything we need for our enjoyment.

Command them to be good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. This, in turn, could lead some to some false sense of security, which is self-deceiving.
Because what we read in Matthew 13, we read, The one who received the seed that fell upon the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.
This could lead further to building our lives on an unstable foundation. We read in Proverbs 23, Do not wear yourself out to get rich.
Have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone. For surely, they will sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.
[19:36] The focus only on making money is to be bent on making money in any way possible. The appetite almost becomes insatiable. Some never seem to have enough.

Often, this leads to flaunting it before others and developing a stingy attitude toward the needs of the poor and the work of God. The cure for those and other ills is found in the scripture, but especially in the great teaching of Deuteronomy 8.
But what's our application? How do we apply this? Remember that everything and anything comes, remember where it comes from. First of all, we do not secure our own well-being by our own strength.
We read that in verse 2 of today. And you shall remember that the whole way the Lord your God has led you these 40 years, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.
But two, we must not forget God when we are full and when we have plenty. We read about that in verse 11 today. Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and statutes, which I command to you today.
[20:53] And thirdly, we must not forget God, the giver of all that we have. We read about that in verse 17 today. Beware lest you say in your heart, my power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth.

And finally, fourthly, we must not forget the priorities in place of God. Conclusion, the end. The most precious possession that any people ever had was not life or goods or abundance.
It was the gift of the word of God. It is from this word that folks really live. We don't live by our own wits, our degrees, our grandchildren, or our abilities.
In Deuteronomy 8, verse 3, we read, And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man

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does not live by bread alone, but lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Amen. Let's close in prayer. Almighty and loving God, we bless you for the gift of your word. [22:16] We pray now for the grace to believe what we've heard and to live in ways that honor you above all. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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