

Soft or Hard Hearts

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Date: 15 September 2024

- [0 : 01] We're going to begin our worship this evening by singing to God's praise in Psalm 96a. Sing Psalm's version, page 1 to 6 of the psalm books.
- We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 10. Psalm 96a, the tune is Bloxam. We sing from the beginning, Sing a new song to the Lord, sing praises to his name and his salvation day by day, let all the earth proclaim.
- We sing from verse 1 to verse 10 to God's praise. We stand to sing. Oh, sing a new song to the Lord, sing praises to his name and his salvation day by day, let all the earth proclaim.
- His glory and his mighty deeds to every land declare.
- How great and awesome is the Lord, with him no cross compare.
- [1 : 36] For other gods are wood and stone, the Lord made heaven's height.
- All power and majesty are his, he dwells in glorious light.
- All nations to the Lord, ascribe the glory that is due.
- Glory and strength ascribe to God, and praise his name on you.
- Enter his words with joy, and bring an offering with you.
- [2 : 56] Worship the Lord in holy faith. All earth before them bow.
- Tell everyone, the Lord is king, established is the earth.
- And cannot move. The Lord will judge the people's sin is true.
- Amen. Let's come to God in prayer. Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, our Father in heaven, as we gather to unite our hearts and praise this evening hour, we thank you for the blessings of this day.
- We thank you for your mercies in it. Lord, we thank you for the joy that we have in worshiping you.
- [4 : 18] And even for the song, the psalm that we've sung, it reminds us that you give us a new song to praise you, to praise your name. And we thank you that it's a song of salvation, for you are the one alone who is able to save.
- And we thank you for your ongoing work of salvation to your people. That you are a God who continues to remember us and to help us in all our different needs.
- That you are a God who reigns over the world and calls the people of this world to come and offer up glory and praise to you. Tell every nation, tell every land, the Lord is king, the psalmist says.
- And we thank you that your word goes out with power in so many different ways and places. We thank you for all your people who serve you in proclaiming the gospel, in proclaiming it far and wide to people of every tribe and tongue.

We thank you for all the gifts that you have given down through the generations to your people. For as we hold your word in our hands this evening, as we have the holy scriptures before us, we realize that it is through your great works of providence and through your will and your gifts given to many down through the generations to translate and to print and to make your word in a form that is so unchanging and unchangeable.

[5 : 47] And we thank you that your word is passed down and that it's translated into so many different languages. Even throughout the world today, when we hear the numbers of languages and forms that your word is translated into, we marvel.

We marvel that there are so many and we marvel that you are a God who remembers each one and longs for all to come to know you. And so we pray for your power and your glory to be seen throughout our world and throughout our nations, that we would remind ourselves, as your word does so often, that when we feel a sense of despair and dejection in the day in which we live, that there is nothing new under the sun.

There have been times, even as we see in your word, that high points when your people have been blessed so richly and praised you so lovingly and so loudly.

And yet there are other times when your people have turned away, when they've turned to their own hearts and to their own ways and forgotten God. And the warnings are there before us so often.

And we know today, Lord, that we live in a day when many do forget you, where many choose to have nothing to do with you and even to reject you in vehement ways.

[7 : 05] Not just to reject, but to persecute those who believe and to seek to destroy the Christian faith and the Christian church. But we do thank you that you are God and Lord, head of the church, that you have established and that nothing can overcome.

We thank you that even, as the word says, the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And so we thank you that in this day in which we live, we have these assurances, these promises, and these things that we can take as confidence and hope that you are building your church upon the rock that is Jesus Christ.

Christ. And we thank you that the gospel is founded in him, that in him there is good news, in him there is the one who gives that assurance of forgiveness for sin as we put our trust in him, that he is the one who gives the hope of eternal life, that he is the one who spoke to disciples long ago, reminding them that he is the way, the truth, and the life, that there is no way to the Father but by him.

And so we thank you that that is still true to this day. And may we know you leading us in our worship this evening, leading us into your truth, leading us into your word, and helping us to hear what you have to say to us, helping us to be established and grounded in your word and in your truth in a way that it doesn't just impact us for a moment here, but that it will go with us into the rest of the week ahead.

That the word that we hear will be a word that we are able to share and lean on and rely upon in all the days of this week ahead, God willing. That it will be your truth that shapes us, that gives us discernment, that gives us willingness, that gives us boldness and courage, that gives us all that we need to live in this world and to be the light of the gospel among the people around us.

[9 : 06] And so we ask, O Lord, that you will unite our hearts and praise and worship this evening and unite our hearts in all that we seek to do in your name. As we especially pray for the week ahead, we think of that meeting on Wednesday evening, a congregational meeting, and we just commit it to you for your unifying presence as we read in the bulletin for that to be in our midst in these days.

That you would unite our hearts together in praise and worship and prayer to you as the one that we depend on for all things. And we pray, Lord, for that spirit of oneness, spirit of encouragement, spirit to look to you that we might know you're leading and your guidance in all of these things as we appoint a vacancy committee, as we seek to invite preachers to come and minister here, as we seek to call a minister, God willing, in the not-too-distant future.

We do pray, Lord, that your will be done and that you would give us your wisdom and your help in it. And we thank you that we have so many people here who you use for your glory, that the work goes on day by day and week by week.

Among our young people, we thank you for our Sunday school and creche and tweenies and Bible class. We thank you for the youth fellowship. We thank you for the explorers. We thank you for the toddler group.

Thank you for all these ways of coming alongside people, especially our young people, teaching them, helping them along the way, guiding them in your truth and in your word to walk closely with you.

[10 : 45] We do pray, Lord, that our young people, that they would seek you in the days of their youth. They seek you while you are to be found. Seek you while their hearts are close to you and tender to you.

Because we know, Lord, we live in a world filled with so many distractions, so many things that will lead us away from you. And so we pray that you will guard them and guard us all, guard us in our hearts and minds that we might know your peace with us.

We pray, too, for the Fridays at the Free and the over 55s. We thank you for that meeting last Friday and, God willing, the meeting of the Fridays at the Free this coming week.

We thank you for all the encouragements it gives and gathering in fellowship together and gathering to encourage one another and to come alongside each other in different ways. We do pray your blessing upon all that we do to come alongside in these times.

Above all, we pray, Lord, to see people coming, to be under the gospel, to be curious, to be asking questions, to be exploring the Word and seeing what it says to them.

[11 : 54] And we thank you for the Thursday evening meetings of the big questions. We pray, Lord, that we will be encouraged to invite people to come along ourselves, even to come and hear and share and experience together the riches of your truth, the riches of your Word, and to be built up in the faith through it.

So, Lord, may you hear our prayers for all of these things. We ask, O Lord, too, for your blessing on the wider church. We thank you for those who you have called into ministry and those who are training in it.

We think tonight of Scott and Fiona as they have gone from us to the congregation of North Harris. We pray for them as they settle into a new home in Scalpy and a new congregation in Tarbert and a new school for the girls, for Katie Bell and Lily May.

We pray that you will help them and be with them, that you will help them to find people around them who will encourage them and draw alongside them and help them along the way. And we do pray that you will continue to bless Scott and his training and all others who have started back in the seminary in these past weeks.

O Lord, we pray for those who go on in their studies and those who are just beginning. We pray to see your hand upon them for good and for your blessing over the seminary and upon all the leaders there, the lecturers and the staff and all who are involved in the training process.

[13 : 21] Lord, may they know your rich hand upon them. May they know your goodness to them. We pray for our nation and our world and our leaders and all that we see around us when there are so many challenges since we hear seemingly every day of those who are seeking to find peace and only finding trouble and we hear of immigrants crossing the channel and so many lives being lost and maybe turmoil being experienced by those who are trying to get across or escaping and fleeing so many different places.

Lord, there are so many of these crises all around us. There are troubles every way we look and Lord, we just pray have mercy, have mercy upon us. Remember us, Lord.

Come in your power. Come in a day of your power into our midst that your gospel would flourish, that your glory would be seen to all ends of the earth.

How we need you, Lord, and how we plead with you to come. So Lord, hear our prayers. Continue with us in all our needs personally here and collectively as a people in our homes and our families.

You know our needs as we were thinking this morning and we thank you for the great comfort that you are able to give. So comfort all who need you in so many different ways. Hear our prayers.

[14 : 41] Continue with us now and help us to sing to your glory. Lift up our voices to you in praise and to have ears to hear your word. May we know your spirit upon us leading us in all of these things.

We ask all looking to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, looking for forgiveness in him that we might know his blessing in each of our lives. We ask it in his precious name and for his glory.

Amen. We'll continue to worship God and sing to his praise. This time in Psalm 20 in the Scottish Psalter, page 224.

Psalm 20 on page 224.

We're going to sing from verse 3 down to the end of the psalm. The tune is Walsall. Let him remember all thy gifts, accept thy sacrifice, grant thee thy heart's wish and fulfill thy thoughts and counsel wise.

[15 : 46] In thy salvation we will joy in our God's name we will display our banners and the Lord the prayers all fulfill. We'll sing from verse 3 down to the end of the psalm.

Psalm 20 to God's praise. Amen. Let him remember all thy gifts, accept thy sacrifice, grant thee grant thee thy heart's wish and fulfill thy thoughts and counsel wise.

In thy salvation we will joy in our God's name in our God's name we will display our banners and the Lord thy prayers all fulfill.

God's name now know thy God his King that save me from his holy heaven will hear him with the saving strength by his own right hand him in chariots some put confidence some horses trust upon but we remember well the name of our

Lord God alone we rise and upright stand when we are bowed down and fall deliver Lord and let the King us hear when we do all we can turn to read God's word together now in Deuteronomy chapter 10 so in the Old Testament the book of Deuteronomy chapter 10 you'll find it around page 185 of the church bibles and we're going to read the whole of this chapter

[19 : 15] Deuteronomy chapter 10 from verse 1 at that time the Lord said to me cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first and come up to me on the mountain and make an ark of wood and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets that you broke and you shall put them in the ark so I made an ark of a wood and went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand and he wrote on the tablets in the same writing as before the ten commandments that the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly and the Lord gave them to me then I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets in the ark that I to

Moserah then Aaron died and there he was buried and his son Eliasur ministered as a priest in his place from there they journeyed to Godoga and from Godoga to Jothbatha the land with brooks of water at that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord to stand before the Lord to minister to him and to bless in his name to this day therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers the Lord is his inheritance as the Lord your God said to him I myself stayed on the mountain as at the first time for forty days and forty nights and the Lord listened to me that time also the Lord was unwilling to destroy you and the Lord said to me arise go on your journey at the head of the people so they may go in and possess the land which

I swore to their fathers to give them now Israel what does the Lord your God require of you but to fear the Lord your God to walk in all his ways to love him to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord which I am commanding you today for your good behold to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens the earth with all that is in it yet the Lord set his heart and love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them you above all peoples as you are this day circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no longer stubborn for the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords the great the mighty and the awesome

God who is not partial and takes no bribe he executes justice for the fatherless and the widow and loves the sojourner giving him food and clothing love the sojourner therefore for you are sojourners in the land of Egypt you shall fear the Lord your God you shall serve him and hold fast to him and by his name you shall swear he is your praise he is your God who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven and so on and may God bless that reading from his word before we come back to look at some of this passage we'll sing again to God's praise in Psalm 32 Psalm 32 in the Scottish Psalter page 244 we'll sing verse 7 down to the end of the psalm

Psalm 32 at verse 7 the tune is Bedford thou art my hiding place thou shalt from trouble keep me free thou with songs of deliverance about shall compass me I will instruct thee and they teach the way that thou shalt go and with mine eye upon thee set I will direction show we'll sing verse 7 down to the end of the psalm to God's praise the heart my hiding place thou shalt from trouble keep me free I with songs of deliverance abide shall compass me I will instruct thee and thee teach the way that thou shalt go and with mine eye upon thee said

[24 : 53] I said I will direction show then be not like the horse or mule which do not understand whose mouth God they life and ■■■■■ of t jeep from real japan■ get to the John In the Lord, mercy shall compass Christ.

Ye righteous in the Lord be done, in him do ye rejoice.

O ye that have my loving heart, for joy lift up your voice.

We can turn back together to our reading in Deuteronomy chapter 10. We can look at verse 12 to verse 16 in particular together this evening.

Deuteronomy chapter 10 at verse 12. And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? But to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good.

[27 : 10] Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the Lord set his heart and love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no longer stubborn, for the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords.

And so on. I hope you all make it a priority at some point in the day. I hope you start the day and end the day looking at the word of God, making it a priority to read your Bibles.

But how do you read it? What approach do you take to it? Are you one who just maybe sticks in the same kind of area? Or do you like to read through it in a more ordinary manner?

Or maybe trying to start from the beginning and just read your way through it? We can all have different ways of approaching how we read the word of God. Bishop J.C. Ryle, a bishop in England many years ago and a writer of many books, many books I'm sure that many of you are familiar with.

[28 : 24] Most homes will have his book on holiness or other ones like that. Well, he once said that we must read our Bibles like men digging for hidden treasure. That is how we are to approach reading our Bibles as men, women, boys and girls digging for hidden treasure.

With that sense of anticipation, that sense of longing that we're going to find something of riches in this word of God. We've thought about it as we've been looking at Habakkuk, digging for nuggets of gold in Habakkuk.

How in the midst of so many things that just leave people in dismay and disarray, there are these nuggets, these precious nuggets of gold that give us a sense of encouragement.

And God willing, we'll come back to Habakkuk next Sunday morning, all being well. But when we come to read the word of God, we might be maybe more inclined to read the New Testament, to go into the Gospels or the letters of Paul.

Or maybe if we go into the Old Testament, we stick to maybe passages that we've been familiar with from a very young age. The stories like David and Goliath or Daniel and the Lion's Den or all these kinds of accounts that we read of, we maybe become more selective.

[29 : 43] Who has in their favorite books the book of Deuteronomy? Is it a book that you keep going back to as a book that you think there's so much nuggets of gold in here that I just long to go back to it and read it again and again?

It's not always a book maybe that stands out in our list of favorites. And yet, as you go through the book of Deuteronomy, you find it's such an important book.

An important book in the sense of the Old Testament, but also as you go into the New Testament. What it's speaking about is so important, not just for Moses and his day, but for ourselves today.

There's so much we can learn from this book. There's so much we see that has such great significance for us. There's one commentator, one writer, one theologian called Gordon Wenham.

And he speaks of the significance of the book of Deuteronomy in this way. He calls it the linchpin of the Old Testament. So the linchpin is something that hinges things together.

[30 : 49] Like a trailer has a linchpin that connects it to whatever's towing it. So you've got this linchpin that makes sure that everything else is secure. And he describes the book of Deuteronomy in that way.

It's like a linchpin that keeps things secure. So what's come before it and what comes after it is held secure by what we read in the book of Deuteronomy.

So why is it so important? Why is it a book that we should be so interested in? When you think about how often it's quoted in the New Testament, you maybe think, where do I see it quoted?

Well, alongside Genesis, Psalms, and the book of Isaiah, it is the most quoted book in the New Testament. So again, that highlights for us that there is significance in this book of Deuteronomy.

We're not putting it above other books, but we're just seeing that it's not a book we should ignore. It's not a book we should think of just easily passing by it because you find so much riches in it.

[31 : 56] And it's important hasn't waned. It's still important for us today, just as much as it was, as Moses was with the children of Israel here, about to enter into the promised land.

They were on the border. They were on the cusp of going into the promised land. The Lord had brought them through the Exodus. He had brought them out of Egypt through so many trials.

And here they were about to go into the promised land. And what you find with the book of Deuteronomy is it begins and it ends with a reminder of God's covenant.

That's God's relationship with his people. That God has promised many things to his people. If you look in chapter 4, verse 31, there it said, So there's that promise at the start.

And then if you jump forward to chapter 29, and just even looking at the heading of that chapter, it's the covenant renewed in Moab.

[33 : 12] You go through that chapter and it's a reminder of God's covenant that he made with Moses and with his people. So you find the whole book has at its bookends, if you like, the covenant.

The reminder of God's promise to his people. And so Moses is here preaching to the people. He's reminding them as they're about to enter the promised land that their allegiance is to be to God.

Because they are going into a land that is full of so many other gods. False gods, idols, temptations that they will be drawn away from worshipping God and their allegiance going somewhere else.

What was the danger that they faced? The danger was that they would forget the Lord their God. And that's the serious nature of this book.

That's what you see as the bookends with God showing his remembrance of his people and his covenant love to them. Within and in between that, there is this danger of the people forgetting God.

[34 : 26] And you say, well, they wouldn't. Surely they wouldn't forget God. After all he's done for them. After all he's done in taking them out of Egypt, through the wilderness, all these years, and now on the border of the promised land, and taking them into a land that's described as flowing with milk and honey, riches and everything that they need.

Surely they wouldn't forget the Lord. The warning rings in their ears in chapter 8, verse 11, 14, and 19.

There you see the warning go out so powerfully, where Moses says, Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes which I command you today.

It's this warning ringing in their ears. And yet, as are we. And we say to ourselves, well, we wouldn't forget the Lord.

We wouldn't forget his goodness to us. We wouldn't forget the blessings of a Christian upbringing, a Christian home. We wouldn't forget what he's saying to us through his word. We would.

[35 : 39] And we do. That is the sad nature of who we are. How quickly we forget the Lord. Even as we go into this week ahead, we might have that warning ringing in our ears.

Do not forget the Lord. Maybe on Monday it's loud and clear. On Tuesday it's just a little bit quieter. By Wednesday we've just taken up by the rest of the ways of the world.

We forget about the Lord. But as we come into chapter 10, what we want to see together this evening, as we look at this section, verse 12 to verse 16, 17 there, what we are reminded of is an insight of God's love to us.

And it comes about in this situation where, as we read at the beginning of chapter 10, the Lord is still remembering his people.

He gives the Ten Commandments to them, despite, as you see in chapter 9, the golden calf when they'd just turned their back on God so quickly, that he still remembers them.

[36 : 46] And in verse, excuse me, in verse 10 and verse 11 there, you find that he's talking there about still remembering and interceding for his people.

Moses has prayed with God and the Lord listened to me, it says in verse 10, and the Lord was unwilling to destroy you. There's that mercy you see there.

He's showing mercy in the midst of their disobedience, in the midst of their forgetfulness. He's still a God who shows mercy. And the Lord longs for his people to come and trust in him.

And that's the call that goes out through this passage to ourselves this evening as well. To remember that God is a God who could destroy us.

He could give us what we deserve, what our sins deserve, is death. But he shows mercy. And he gives time. And he calls to us to come.

[37 : 52] He shows us his great love towards us. Through his son, Christ Jesus. And in that love that he shows towards us, he calls on us to love him because he first loved us.

And so I want us to take these three things from these verses as we look at them together this evening. As Moses is here preaching to the people, as he's ministering to them, he's saying three things to them.

The first is he's giving them what the Lord requires. There's a requirement here. If we want to know the Lord's blessing, there is a requirement. And then secondly, he gives them a reminder.

A reminder of his love. And then the third thing that we see is this calls for a response. So we have a requirement, a reminder, and a response.

And the first thing we see is a reminder. In verse 12 there, having reminded them of how he has interceded and how he has said, the Lord was unwilling to destroy you, he's showing God's love to them, God's mercy to them.

[39 : 12] And as you see God's mercy, does that not demand a response? Well, it does, as you see here.

Because in verse 12, Moses goes on and he says, and now Israel, now you people, what does the Lord, your God, require of you?

In light of his mercy, in light of his sparing you, what does he require of you? And he goes on to give them the answer.

He says, but to fear the Lord, your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today.

there is what the Lord, your God, requires of you. And in many ways, you could look at that list and think, there's an outward side to that list.

[40 : 17] To fear the Lord is to show an honor to God, to recognize who he is, to walk in his ways, to love him, to serve him, to keep his word.

And what you see as you go through the scriptures is that for people, God's people down through generations, this can be an outward show. But what he's warning here is it's got to be more than that.

It's got to be more than just an outward show of things. And what he's getting at in this section is the heart. And as we'll see later on, it's the heart that needs to change.

And it's the heart that needs to have been impacted by all of these things. He requires of you to fear the Lord, not just outwardly, but inwardly. He requires of you to love him, not just in an outward showing, but with all your heart inwardly.

And your service must come from that loving him inwardly. Keeping his word must be just not to make people see it, but because you love the Lord with all your heart, you lay up his word in your heart.

[41 : 33] And it's the goal that you're searching for, that you're searching the scriptures to see Lord, what do you want of me? Moses had been assigned as the leader of the people.

And if he was to lead the people well, he was to be one who lived in this way as well. And again, not just outwardly, but with all his heart.

So what Moses is saying here to the people is, don't look at me as your leader. Look to God. fear the Lord.

Don't look to me and love me, Moses is saying. Love God. Don't look to me and serve me. Serve the Lord.

Don't look to me and keep the words that I am giving you. It's the word of God. Keep his word. not doing anything for man, not doing anything for an outward show to anybody else, but doing it for the Lord.

[42 : 41] Because you see what the Lord has done for you. Do you ever ask yourself that question, what does the Lord require of me?

And maybe you've got this list of things that you think, this is what would be good before the Lord for me to do. And you'll do it to suit yourself.

Because if you were to actually do everything that the Lord requires of you, it's a huge challenge. Just think of what he's saying there. Fear the Lord, walk in his ways, love him, serve him, keep his word.

To do that means it's difficult, it's hard. And you might say, oh, this is just too much, I'll just try and do some of it. And once you start to just try and do some of it, then you start to fall away from the rest of it.

And then you just fall back into the old ways. And then you realize you're away from God again. We forget the Lord. And that's the cycle that you see in Deuteronomy as you go on through the word of God.

[43 : 46] It's that constant cycle that you see. Forget one and it leads to forgetting the rest. It leads to forgetting God. So it's to be our priority to do all of these things.

And not just outwardly but inwardly with all our hearts. There's a great example in Scripture for us. If we're looking for an example and I was reading this about David in the Old Testament in the book of Samuel.

There is a man who is described as a man after God's own heart. He was a leader who God chose to lead his people as well.

But what was the qualities that David had? Well you could almost say it was all of these things. He feared the Lord. He walked in his ways. He loved him. He served him. He kept his word.

That was when David was strong. Going back to maybe our favorite passages as we read in Scripture. The ones we're familiar with from a young age. We know David and Goliath and that story of how David conquered this giant Goliath.

[44 : 55] But I was reading about this this week and it said it's easy in the drama of this event that we miss what David was actually doing. How he was fulfilling these requirements. How he didn't listen to advice of those around him of he should do this or he should do that.

That he listened to God. And it was this verse that the writer was focusing on in verse 40 of 1 Samuel chapter 17 where you read that account of David and Goliath.

It says there he chose five smooth stones. And you can easily pass by and think nothing of that. Or maybe as some people have done you're asking questions why five stones?

What did they represent? Why more than one stone? Surely you only needed one to kill Goliath. David was a man of faith.

Did he doubt that God would help him in conquering the giant Goliath? Well the writer pointed out this that later on in 2 Samuel chapter 21 verse 15 to 22 there it mentions giants.

[46 : 08] other giants. And it mentions at least four there by name. So Goliath wasn't the only giant.

So he didn't just choose any stones. He didn't just choose the first ones that he came across. He knew what it was to use a sling. He knew what he needed to make an accurate shot.

And so he did as he had always done. He chose the best. the most suitable. He didn't say the Lord is going to do it for me anyway. I'll just pick up any jagged rocks.

He recognised his own responsibility. And this is a point that the writer was getting at. There was our responsibility and God's divine providence in David's life.

And it was the two going together. It was what the Lord required of David to use his common sense but to trust the Lord.

[47 : 16] And as Moses is writing to the people here as he is teaching them and as he is teaching us he's teaching us these two things as well. Yes we can trust God but it's not a case of well God's going to do it anyway.

It's not that kind of trust. There's our responsibility too and that's the responsibility here. What does the Lord require of you the same as of David to fear the Lord your God to walk in his ways to love him and serve him and trust his word.

That is what required of us. The Lord gives us instruction for a reason. He gives us commands for a reason. In verse 13 he says here it's for your good.

All of these things are for your good. In chapter 4, 5, 6 and 12 he's giving instructions there in these chapters with the phrase that it may go well with you.

It's the phrase that keeps coming up. So we have requirements in life. They are for our good that it may go well with you. The question is are we fulfilling them?

[48 : 29] Are we listening to the requirements that the Lord gives? Are we choosing to ignore them and push them away and forgetting the Lord?

We want to do as the Lord requires. We want to love him with all our hearts. And the second thing we see here is a reminder.

A reminder in verse 15. 15. yet it says there the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers.

And what's interesting about this is what comes in verse 14 as well. It says he's commanding these things for your good. behold to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heavens of heavens the earth with all that is in it.

The Lord has it all but yet the Lord set his heart and love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them you above all peoples as you are this day.

[49 : 35] there's a powerful reminder there of the love of God. The power of God is seen in these verses in verse 14.

The Lord your God belong heaven and heaven of heavens the earth and all that is in them. He is a powerful God. He has everything in his hands. As we sang in Psalm 96 great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.

God is an awesome God. But in the midst of this majesty and this power in verse 15 yet the Lord set his heart in love on you your fathers and on you.

So he's asking and there's a challenge there. What does the Lord require of you? How is your heart? Well here's a reminder of God's heart to his people. The Lord has set his heart in love on you.

With such care and attention given to us, how could we forget the Lord? How could we possibly forget the Lord? The Lord who has power over all things yet has set his heart on his people.

[50 : 54] You think of the kind of ways that people can feel there to come and worship God. People are called to follow and worship God.

Sometimes it's out of a sense of guilt. Is that really going to make us worship God? Other times it's almost when you feel that God is dictating to us that we must love him.

Is that how God wants us to worship him? It's like thinking of an arranged marriage where someone doesn't want to go in it but they're terrified and yet they're forced to marry someone they don't love.

But that's not the way God has a relationship with us. Remember the covenant at the beginning and the end how he has not forgotten his people and here in the midst of even their turning away from him with a golden calf in chapter 9 how Moses has come and he's had this promise the Lord is unwilling to destroy you and then you have this in verse 15 yet the Lord set his heart in love on you.

Is there not a reason there to love him? Because he loves us with such a powerful love. We see who he is and we see what he has done for us.

[52 : 22] A love that has remembered us. A remembering love that we see in the cross. A remembering love that does not let us go. A love that as we were looking at this morning a love that comforts us in all our different needs.

And that is a love that he has for his people. And not just the children of Israel here because we become his people. Peter makes that clear in his first letter as he's writing to the people in 1 Peter chapter 2 he says you are a chosen people a royal priesthood a holy nation a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

You are his people when he has done that for you. When he has taken you and called you out of his darkness into his marvelous light. Peter goes on to say once you were not a people but now you are the people of God once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

The mercy of God and the love that he has shown to us through Jesus Christ. What a wonder of that love.

What a power there is in that love. As the hymn writer says, how deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure.

[53 : 58] Why should I gain from his reward? I cannot give an answer, but this I know with all my heart, his wounds have paid my ransom.

How deep the Father's love. And that's the love that we see here in verse 15, that in the midst of their disobedience, in the midst of their turning away, yet the Lord set his heart and love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all people, as you are this day.

As you are this day, even imperfect sinners, yet the Lord has shown his love to you. And is that not how we are ourselves today?

Imperfect sinners, imperfect sinners, in so many ways and yet reminded of the love of God to us in Christ Jesus.

So what does this mean? As Moses is telling the people all of these things, as he's showing them this reminder, as he's telling them these requirements, what does it mean?

[55 : 16] Well, it calls for a response. And that's what we see in verse 16. Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn, for the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God.

It calls for a response. As we say with the covenant before us here at the beginning and the end, a covenant agreement is between two parties, between God who has shown his love there in verse 15, who has set his love on his people, his steadfast love.

God has pledged that. It's an unchanging love, but it calls for a response. And the response is to do with the heart.

God has to show an outward show towards God, but it's to show an openness, an open heart towards him, an open heart that will receive the word of God.

Get rid of everything that keeps you from loving God. Stop being like the harsh, stubborn, like we were singing in the psalm there in Psalm 32, verse 9.

[56 : 44] Then be not like the horse or mule which do not understand, whose mouth lest they come near to thee a bridle must command. There's got to be this bridle in his mouth, don't be stubborn like the horse.

And it's saying here as well, and be no longer stubborn. What does it mean to be stubborn? I'm sure many of us could answer that quite easily.

We've all experienced it, either by being the offender or on the receiving end of it. We are stubborn by nature in so many ways because there's an arrogance and stubbornness, an arrogance that you see in the people of God so often here in Deuteronomy, a stubbornness that's led them to make a golden calf, saying Moses, he's not coming back, he's gone.

They didn't trust that he would come back. And so they took matters into their own hands. And that's the stubbornness that plagues our heart to this day. The stubbornness that we know best, that we've got a plan, that we've got a way, that God doesn't know what he's doing.

The stubbornness that just puts God away, that shuns him. So there is a stubbornness that's in us all. But the response that it's calling for is circumcised therefore, the foreskin of your heart.

[58 : 12] What does he mean by that? The male Israelites, they had to be circumcised, to have their foreskin cut off. It was a sign of belonging to God, but it was an outward sign.

But what he's asking for here is an inward sign, that the heart is what needs changing. Not just putting on an outward show, not just putting on a show that they're to please other people around us, but that our heart, our heart is for God, that our heart is open to God.

Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no longer stubborn. The requirements that God asks of you.

Don't think you know better. Don't think you can manage your life in any better way. The love that God has shown for you. Don't think you can ignore it. You ignore it at your peril and say that that love is not real or that God did not do that, that Jesus never rose from the grave.

All of these things, there's a stubbornness. God is not real. Well, God is not dead. God is not to be open to him, not to be stubborn like the horse or the mule, because they don't understand.

[59 : 44] And it's a fool that says in his heart that there is no God, because that heart is hard. But we are not to harden our hearts.

We are not to be stubborn. We are to listen to the word of God. Thankful that he has spoken to us, that the Lord has not destroyed us.

As we saw at the beginning of this section, the Lord was unwilling to destroy. He showed mercy. He has showed mercy to you and to me, that we hear the word of God.

And this word that we have in Deuteronomy, it is a precious word. It is a golden nugget of God to us, that the Lord requires of us to do these things, to see his love, and to respond to it with an open heart, to receive his grace, to trust in him, to walk with him, and to love him, and to serve him with all our heart.

So be not stubborn, but open your heart to the Lord, that he might come in and dwell. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

[61 : 09] we'll conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 95, in the Sing Psalms version, page 1, 2, 6, Psalm 95, the tune is Cyndenio, and we're going to sing from verse 6 to verse 8, these two verses.

Psalm 95, page 1, 2, 6, come, let us bow humbly and worship the Lord. Let us kneel before him, our maker in prayer, for we are his people, and he is our God, his shepherd, and he shepherds and feeds us in his loving care.

Today, if you hear and attend to his voice, don't harden your hearts as you did on the way. In Meribah's desert, you quarreled with me, you tested my patience at Massa that day.

We'll sing these two verses to God's praise. We stand to sing. Come, let us bow humbly and worship the Lord.

Let us kneel before him, our maker in prayer. For we are his people, and he is our God.

[62 : 35] God, he shepherds and feeds us in his loving care. Today, if you hear and attend to his voice, don't harden your hearts as you did on the way.

in Meribah's desert, you quarreled with me, you tested my patience at Massa that day.

I'm going to close with a benediction, and after the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. Now, may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rest upon and abide with you all now and forever more.

Amen. Amen. Let's