

What Does the Lord Require?

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[0:00] We can turn back together to our reading in Deuteronomy chapter 10. We're going to look at the last part of the chapter, verse 12, down to the end. Deuteronomy chapter 10, verse 12, where it asks the question there, 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, and so on.

What's your favorite book of the Bible? I don't know, maybe you have one, maybe you have many different books of the Bible that you like turning to, depending what kind of situation you're in in life or just what's on your mind.

There can be many different places that we turn. It might be going into the Old Testament, you enjoy reading some of the narratives there about events that took place a long time ago.

It might be to the book of Psalms or Proverbs, where there's much wisdom given to us, much kind of direction. It might be the prophets that you enjoy, where you see God speaking through them, warning people and telling them of events that are to come.

Perhaps you go into the New Testament, you enjoy the Gospels and how they speak to us of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and how he came and what he did.

[1:32] We read accounts, events that happened. We read great depths of understanding of who God is and who Jesus is. You see the book of Acts, and you enjoy that accounts of the Gospel spreading through many different people to many different places.

And then you read the letters of Paul and others writing to churches that have been established. Or you come into the book of Revelation, and you begin to wonder about what is ahead.

What is the book of Revelation talking about? There's so many different parts of Scripture. There's such a variety to us. There's such a wealth of learning in it.

And we can go to different parts, depending what's going on in our minds. But where does Deuteronomy feature in that variety of what you read? How often do you turn to the book of Deuteronomy and think, I want to go into Deuteronomy?

It's such an encouraging book. It's maybe not one that comes to mind immediately. And yet, when we go into it, as you read through it, there's so much to take from it.

[2:36] When we maybe think to ourselves, as many people do, I'm going to read the Bible from the beginning to the end. I mentioned this before, how often people can start reading in Genesis.

And we were in Leviticus a few weeks ago now. And very often, that's where people get bogged down, where people kind of come to a shuddering halt. It gets into us talking about things maybe we don't understand, we find difficult to read.

And sadly, many people can come to a conclusion of their reading from beginning to end in Leviticus. And you don't get as far as Deuteronomy. You miss out on what Deuteronomy speaks about because it's got a wealth of things to say to us.

Such an important book as we see it in the Old Testament. But its importance is also seen in how often it's mentioned in the New Testament as well. Gordon Wenham, a writer, a theologian, describes it in this way.

He says it's the linchpin of the Old Testament. It's what holds everything else together. So it's an important book. And it's seen how important it is and how often it's quoted in the New Testament.

[3:48] You might be surprised that along with Genesis, Psalms, and Isaiah, it's the most quoted book in the New Testament. So why is it so important?

What's its significance? And has its significance waned, if you like? Is it less important today? It was written many thousands of years ago.

And yet the truths that we find in it for the there and then, as Moses is leading a people into the promised land, are very much truths that we need for the here and now as well.

They speak very much into our day. And it was written at the time when Moses had led the children of Israel out of their captivity in Egypt, led them through the wilderness and leading them to the border of the promised land.

And here he is, if you like, renewing the covenant with his people. God reminding them of the promises that he has given to them. And here in chapter 10, if you just look back into chapter 9, you see it's just after the incident with the golden calf, where the people of God had got tired of Moses being away from them.

[5:02] Where is he? Why isn't he coming back? And then saying, he's not coming back. And they said, let us make a golden calf to worship in place of God. And this is what they did.

And Moses, when he came down, he smashed the tablets of the Ten Commandments. That's why we read in chapter 10, these new tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments were being given. This was the incident around this time, around these events that we're reading of in chapter 10. And it kind of makes it even more remarkable just how God speaks to them in chapter 10, the kind of mercy that he shows to them.

And Moses is preaching here about their need for an allegiance to God. That as they go into the promised land, a land filled with many different temptations, and especially the choices of what God to worship, because the place would be full of idols and false gods that they could choose to worship.

Moses is saying, if you want to know blessing and favor from God, you are to worship him alone. You are to worship God alone.

[6:16] And there is a relevance for ourselves today. Because we read here about the temptations that these men, women, boys and girls were going to face in all the variety, all the choices that they would have going into the promised land.

So many things taking them away from God. So many false gods that would be around saying, this is who you need to worship. This is what you need to do.

When Moses is saying, no, if you want to know blessing and favor, you must worship God and him alone. And so as we see here in chapter 10, what we see is a God who shows real compassion, real grace, real mercy towards these people, despite their sin, and calls them to worship him alone. And that's the wonder of what it says to us as well today. That if we want to know blessing and favor from God, we must put our trust in him as Lord and God of all.

That we can only love him because he first loved us. And that's what he shows in this passage. Many of God's people have spoken about how God has blessed them as they have been faithful to him in many difficult and different situations.

[7:38] Take, for example, a man called George Muller. He lived in the 1800s, 1805 to 1898. And you may have heard many accounts of George Muller.

He built orphanages down in England. And many, many children passed through these orphanages. Many were helped, given food, given a place to sleep, a place to rest, but also given and shown the love of Jesus Christ.

And he did this without a personal salary. It wasn't like he was being paid directly for doing this. And he relied on God to supply money and to supply food.

And there's remarkable accounts of how they prayed when there was nothing and God provided. And he was a man of faith.

And God rewarded that faith. And he had a motto on his desk. He had a motto that he looked at for many, many years, over many years of wondering where things would come from, wondering how they were going to go on.

[8:49] This motto brought comfort and strength in times of need. And the motto was this. It matters to him about you.

It matters to him about you. Just a few words. And it was based on 1 Peter 5, verse 7, where it says that, Cast your cares upon the Lord, for he cares for you.

So he had this motto, it matters to him, to God, about you. That he knew that God was with him. And he saw this in many different ways.

And he testified of this over many, many years. Over all his life, he testified to the goodness of God. And that's the kind of testimony that Moses is wanting, the people of God then to have, and for

ourselves to have.

That here is a God that we can rely upon. A God who we matter to. It matters to him about you.

[9:54] That is a wonderful way of looking at life. It matters to him about you. But that love of God then leads us to ask, well, how do we give back to him?

What do we show to him? And as we take up our reading here in verse 12 of chapter 10, Moses is really showing, this is just how much you matter to him.

And there's three things we want to take from this passage. The first thing is that there's a requirement put before the people. Then there's a reminder given to them about who God is.

And then there's a response called for. There's a requirement, there's a reminder, and there's a response called for. And so the reminder that we see is in verse 12.

And now, Israel, what does the Lord require of you? There's a question. And this question comes just after they've been reminded about how God has been almost kept from pouring out his wrath upon them.

[11:08] In verse 10 and 11, it says, I myself stayed in the mountain that first time for 40 days and 40 nights. And the Lord listened to me that time also.

The Lord was unwilling to destroy you. He could have. That's the reality of what sin brings. It can bring devastation.

It can bring destruction upon us. The wages of sin is death. And so it's in light of this, the Lord was unwilling to destroy you. And then it goes on in verse 11.

And the Lord said to me, Arise, go on your journey at the head of the people so that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. So you see, this comes in the midst of mercy.

It comes in the midst of God's grace. God did not destroy them as he could have. And then it comes into verse 12. And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you?

[12:12] So there's a challenge. God loves you, but what does that mean in terms of how you view God? And then it gives us an answer as to what the Lord requires of you.

But to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve him, to keep his word. There's a summary of these things there.

What does the Lord require? To fear the Lord, walk in his ways, love him, serve him, and keep his word. And that's not just for their day. There's a great reminder to us of what the Lord requires of ourselves today.

Fear the Lord. That means a right reverence towards God. Walk in his ways. Love him. Serve him. Keep his word.

Moses was the leader assigned to the people. Then God had chosen him to lead the people out of Egypt into the promised land.

[13:15] And so Moses is one who is, he is almost speaking to himself there, first and foremost.

He's part of this. He was to lead them. Well, he was to live like this as well, to fear the Lord, to walk in his ways, to love him, serve him, and keep his word.

It wasn't just applying to the people. It was applying to himself. And that is the way that we are to live.

That is the way that God is asking of ourselves today as well. From every one of us, this is how we are to live. We are to see the reality of the situation that we are in, where the Lord could destroy us in our sin, but where the Lord is merciful, but the Lord makes demands of us.

And that's to come from the top right down to the bottom. Tomorrow it may be that we have a new prime minister over us as a nation. And you would love it if this is what was being spoken of as a new leader is appointed.

What does the Lord require of you as you become prime minister? To fear the Lord, to walk in his ways, to love him, and serve him, and keep his word, it would be wonderful.

[14:30] And we pray that a day would come when that would be so. But it's required of all leaders, of all with responsibility. There's a man called Max Dupree.

He was an American businessman and a Christian as well. He died in 2017, I think it was, but he wrote many books, and especially about what it meant to be.

He said, a good leader. And he said this, the first responsibility of a leader is to define reality.

Leaders need to have a good picture of what is really going on around them.

And they need to help others take an honest look at this reality. That is what's required of a leader, he was saying, to know the reality of what's going on around and to look at this reality.

Well, Moses was aware of the reality of the situation. He was aware of what was going on around and what was going on ahead of them as they were going into the promised land.

[15 : 34] He was aware that they could be so easily led astray. The reality of idols, the reality of temptations, the reality of people being led away from God.

He was aware of the reality of all of these things. But he was also aware of the reality of what God could do. He was aware of the reality of who God is.

And you just have to turn back another, to chapter 8, verse 11. And there you see, as he was speaking to the people before they go into the promised land, what does it say?

In chapter 8, verse 11, 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.

This is the word of God through Moses. Take care lest you forget the Lord your God. Because that's how easily it happens. That's how quickly it happens.

[16 : 34] And you see it does as you go on. But God is giving a requirement to them here. And what is required is not to follow Moses.

Good, I lead it as Moses was. But it's to follow God. To follow him. To fear God. To love God. To walk in his ways. To serve him.

And to keep his word. And what does he require of us today? Exactly the same thing. To be aware of the reality in which we live.

A fallen world. A sinful world. But to be aware too of the reality of a great and an awesome God. A God who is far more powerful than we are.

And so there's a requirement first. The second thing we see here is a reminder. And what a powerful reminder it is for us as well.

[17 : 35] In verse 14 and 15. Behold to the Lord your God belong heaven and heaven of heavens. The earth and 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.

Moses here reminds the people of who God is. And he does it in two ways. The first thing is you see the enormity of God.

The awesomeness of God. Behold the Lord your God. To the Lord your God belong heaven and heaven of heavens. The earth and all that is in it.

Everything. Everything. The world. And all of the creation that we see around us belongs to God. Just like Psalm 96. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised because he made the heavens and earth.

[18 : 41] This is the reality of God. This is the reality of God to Moses that he is showing to the people then that he is showing to us today. To God belong all of these things.

The heavens declare the glory of God. We see it all around us. His creation and the wonder of it. So God is an awesome a powerful God a creator God as we see in verse 14.

But then you go into verse 15. Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them. You above all peoples as you are this day.

It's amazing that you think as you are this day. How were they in that day? They had just come from a place where they had made the golden calf.

They just come from a place where they had been disobedient to God where they had turned their back on God and made their own God to worship. Yet God says yet the Lord has set his love on your fathers and upon you despite how you are.

[19 : 59] It's amazing. It's a powerful it's a wonderful reminder with such care and attention God has given to us to you and to me.

the people are called there to follow and worship God not just because he rescued them out of Egypt not just because of the wonders that they were seeing around them not out of a sense of guilt although many would say that that is how Christians come to worship the Lord Jesus it's out of a sense of guilt that's not how we come to worship God it isn't either because God commands as if we've got no choice in the matter God doesn't just dictate to us no instead the Lord is powerful the Lord is loving the Lord is gracious towards us and when we see the love of God when we realize the grace of God as the people here have seen it making the golden calf and yet in verse 10 it says

the Lord was unwilling to destroy you they see the love of God and it is that love of God that surely moves them to see their need of him and surely it is that love of God that moves us to see how much we need

God as well that despite our sin that despite all that we do that is wrong that despite our turning our back on him almost again and again and again that yet he has shown great love towards us because he is a covenant God a covenant is a promise a promise from God and it is that covenant love that God shows again and again and again throughout his word the steadfast love of God as the psalmist so often says that unchanging love of God despite our changeableness in this world so that as it says there in verse 15 you above all peoples even as you are this day even as you are this day even as you are even as I am this day sinners falling short of the glory of God again and again and yet we have this powerful reminder of his great love and where do we see this love where do we see this grace shown to us well it says there the Lord was unwilling to destroy them well where do we see it is when we go forward into the New Testament when we go forward and see it in the person of Jesus Christ that God desired that none be lost and how would this be how could this be but that God sent his own son to die for our sin why because he loved us for God so loved the world that he gave his son a remarkable truth and although he's speaking here to the children of Israel as we go forward into the New Testament we are reminded that through faith we are part of these people too 1st Peter chapter 2 speaks about it but 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 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 who is that for it is for all who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ he has shown his love to us through Jesus Christ Stuart Townend in his great hymn said 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 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 we are reminded so often about the love of God a wonderful love a love like no other we don't deserve it but in mercy he shows it he is the maker of the heaven of heavens the heaven and heaven of heavens the earth and all that is in it he is a powerful he is an awesome

God yet the Lord has set his heart on love on his people it's a wonderful reminder we are reminded of God and his love but the third thing that we see here is that this calls for a response this calls for a response and we see this in verse 16 through to verse 22 it demands a response we think again of covenant here covenant this bond between God and his people we are reminded of how God always keeps his side and how we so often fail and yet it's an unchanging love despite our disobedience but it calls for a response and that response is seen in verse 16 circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no longer stubborn for the

[26:06] Lord your God is God of God and Lord of Lords the great the mighty and awesome God that is who he is circumcised therefore the foreskin of your heart what kind of response is this he's talking to them here and saying do not be so stubborn do not be so stiff necked any longer instead circumcise the foreskin of your heart now when you're reading through the Old Testament you see that circumcision was to be administered to young boys it was their sign of belonging to God it was an outward sign to circumcise the foreskin was an outward sign but here God is saying circumcise the heart and so how could they possibly do this it wasn't to be done in a physical way but it's saying it's not just to be outwardly that they shall change the change is to be inward the change is to be within your heart because we can so often be stubborn what does it mean to be stubborn

I'm sure I don't have to explain it to you I'm stubborn for many of you are stubborn we have it by nature in our stubbornness there's an unwillingness to do things any way but the way that we want thinking that we know better and that was certainly the case with the Lord's people in Moses' day it was with Moses himself you see it in his own experiences in life but God is calling them here no longer to be stubborn like this but instead to open your hearts not just to have an outward sign that people might say you belong to God but so that that is seen from the very core of your being which is what the heart is that the transformation comes from the inside out so it was to be a complete transformation and this transformation is what would lead them then to walk in the ways of God to fear the Lord to walk in his ways to love him to serve him and to keep his commands because an outward sign only doesn't do that and we see that ourselves today when we think of our own signs of what it means to be a believer in the

New Testament baptism and the Lord's supper these are things that we can be partakers of we can be baptized in the church we can even come and sit at the Lord's table it can be seen by others but it's no guarantee that we are transformed and especially transformed inwardly because if it's just an outward sign it almost doesn't mean anything and so God is here saying this transformation must come from within and you must allow God to be the one who changes you from within because you cannot we cannot change ourselves and so what God is saying here is in order to live right with me in order to serve me right in order to love me in order to keep my commands circumcise the foreskin of your heart be no longer stubborn don't feel you know best yourself don't feel you can find your own way in this you need

God we need God every one of us we are stubborn in so many different ways we show it so often but if we want to know the love of God if we want to love God as we should then our hearts need to change our hearts need to be open to him a stubborn heart here and as we see it throughout scripture is often described as the horse with a bit in its mouth and when the horse refuses to turn but you have to let God take the reins let God take command and only then are we guided in the right direction and so we see here the wonder of who God is we see the requirements that he gives in light of his mercy unwilling to destroy you even though he could but then that demands a requirement to love the Lord to walk in his ways to serve him to obey his word it brings us to a reminder that he is a great

God and yet he still loves us but then it asks well what is to be our response our response is not to be stubborn of ourselves but to open our hearts to him that he might come in and dwell in our hearts and as he does he directs us in every step that we take the people of God here in Deuteronomy were going into the promised land to know God's blessing they had to be obedient to him the same is true for ourselves today we may not go into the promised land as it's seen here but to go into eternity to know his blessings in life we are to be obedient to him so what does the Lord require of you does he require you to fear him more to walk more closely with him to love him to serve him to obey his word to realise the awesome power he has to see the love that he has shown and to open your heart to receive by his grace that love and love him with all your heart let us pray

[32 : 29] Lord our gracious God we thank you for the great concern you have for us the mercy that you show to us we are a people who just like the people we've been reading off could so easily have been destroyed by you but we thank you that you spared us by your grace and by your mercy and teach us Lord your ways teach us to love you teach us to serve you teach us to obey your commands and to see the wonder of all that you do for us and to have our hearts opened by your spirit to receive all of these things for we ask it in your mercy and grace to us we ask it in Jesus name amen we're going to sing in conclusion to God's praise in Psalm 119 and sing Psalms version Psalm 119 page 165 and sing the section verse 129 to 136 a

Psalm that throughout the Psalm it shows us how the word of God directs us we sing here in verse 129 to 136 your statutes Lord are wonderful so I obey them from my heart your words as they uphold give light and truth to simple minds impart we'll sing this section these four verses the tune as Walton we stand to sing to God's praise song to hear such its Lord a wonderful so I obey them from my heart give words as they unfold give light and truth to sing lives in heart with open light like pant and year to know the lost that you proclaim show me!

the to those who love and praise your name I read my footsteps in the word let sing not glory this way the man's oppression said they pray that here commands I may obey!

upon your seven shine your face teach me the statutes you have made my eyes shed strings of bitter tears because your love is not obey after the benediction I'll go to the door to my right we'll close with the benediction 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