

Deuteronomy 11

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[0 : 00] Your request was loaded now Here are some lectures A production of Michael mentre Ask for questions Cuz ■■■ Streets fields This morning, I want to ask you a question.

Why do you think we should obey God? For some of you, you may see God as a harsh taskmaster, a drill sergeant whom we have to obey, or look out, you're going to get it from him.

Harsh repercussions are the consequences of disobedience, and obedience is driven by fear.

Some of you may see that God as an impartial judge.

Obey, and you'll be confirmed and approved of. Disobey, the necessary penalties will be meted out.

There's a sense we get what we deserve, a quid pro quo with God.

Obedience is driven by wanting to be found in the right place in this spectrum. The system of punishments and rewards. And some of you may see God as an understanding God, a grandfatherly kind of God, who is not demanding and does not bring consequences upon us when we disobey.

[1 : 39] The answer to our question, why should we obey God, ultimately is, well, I don't know, it doesn't matter. Certainly not in the details of my everyday life. One of the most important things to see about each of these approaches is that they all view obedience through the lens of consequences.

What will we get if we disobey? What will we get if we obey? Even the third view that says it doesn't matter is driven by the fact that it doesn't matter.

And so our consequences frame and shape the way we think about the question, why should we obey? Today, I want you, I hope, that we will see that obedience to God, according to the scriptures, is in fact something different.

In God's sovereign government of the world, obedience and disobedience do have consequences. But ultimately, a framework of how we are to think about it today is grounded in a completely different framework.

And if you're here this morning and you are exploring Christianity and you're trying to figure out who this God of the Bible is, I hope that you will see, I hope you will see God in a different light.

[3 : 05] And I hope you'll see Christians and what they do in a different light after this message this morning. So we're going to explore this question, why should we obey God?

If you want to grab your Bibles or the ones in the pews in front of you, you can turn with me to Deuteronomy chapter 11. In the Pew Bible, it's page 155. Deuteronomy chapter 11.

As you're turning there, let's remember where we are in this book. Deuteronomy is a book that is laid out as a covenant document that God is reaffirming and restating His covenant with His people, saying this is what it means to be in a relationship with me.

Verses, or chapters 1 through 4, recounted the history of how God had cared for His people up to this point. And then chapters 5 through 11, the section that we're now looking at today, is the statement of the Ten Commandments and these general principles, warnings, commands, about what does it look like to live in this relationship, this covenant relationship with God.

And one of the things that we have seen almost every week in the text, but if not drawn out clearly, is that there is this command over and over again to keep the commandments of the Lord, to obey Him.

[4 : 31] And that's why we want to explore this question this morning. So let's read chapter 11 together, and then I will pray.

Deuteronomy chapter 11. You shall therefore love the Lord your God and keep His charge, His statutes, His rules, and His commandments always. And consider today, since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it, consider the discipline of the Lord your God, His

greatness, His mighty hand, and His outstretched arm, His signs and His deeds that He did in Egypt to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and to all His land.

And what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses, and to their chariots, how He made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord has destroyed them to this day.

And what He did to you in the wilderness until you came to this place, and what He did to Dathan and Abiram and the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben, how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them in the midst of all Israel.

For your eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord that He did. You shall therefore keep the whole commandment that I command you today, that you may be strong and go in and take possession of the land that you are going over to possess, that you may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and to their offspring a land flowing with milk and honey.

[6 : 02] For the land that you are entering to take possession of is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it like a garden of vegetables, but the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys which drinks water by the rain from heaven, a land that the Lord your God cares for.

The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil.

And He will give grass in your fields for your livestock and you shall eat and be full. Take care, lest your heart be deceived and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them.

Then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the land will yield no fruit and you will perish quickly off the good land that the Lord is giving you.

You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets before your eyes. You shall teach them to your children talking of them when you are sitting in your house and when you are walking by the way and when you lie down and when you rise.

[7 : 33] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give them as long as the heavens are above the earth.

For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the Lord your God, walking in all His ways and holding fast to Him, then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you.

Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your territory shall be from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the river, the river Euphrates to the western sea.

No one shall be able to stand against you. The Lord your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you shall tread as He promised you. See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse.

The blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today to go after other gods that you have not known.

[8 : 49] And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.

And they are not, are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road, towards the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah opposite Gilgal beside the Oak of Morah, for you are to cross over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

And when you possess it and live in it, you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the rules that I am setting before you today. Lord, we pray this morning that you would help us.

Lord, for our minds are weak. Lord, our bodies this morning are tired from the heat. Lord, our hearts are so easily wayward, so easily hardened.

God, this morning I pray that you would, by your Spirit, bring your word to us. Lord, speak through me, through your word.

[10:01] Lord, that we might be refreshed in our understanding of what it means to be a people who obey you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Lord, we pray this morning.

As we're looking at this chapter this morning, we're going to ask three questions. The first is, what does it actually look like to obey God? The second is, what significance does God give to our obedience?

And thirdly, how are we to think about and respond to God's call to obedience not as the nation of Israel, but as God's people today after the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

So we're going to explore those three questions this morning. The first one is, what does it look like to obey God? The command or the idea that we are commanded to obey God is central in this chapter.

You see it in verses 1, 8, 13, 16, 18, 22, 27, 28, and 32. It is all over this passage and the Lord uses different words and different phrases to help us capture the richness of what he means when he says that we are to obey God.

[11:19] So verse 1 begins not with the word just obey God, but with what? Look with me. 11 verse 1. You are to love the Lord your God.

Repeating the main idea that we heard back in chapter 6 that this is a summation of all the law to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength. It is love and devotion not merely duty and not merely a fear of consequences that is to characterize their obedience.

And right after that phrase to love the Lord your God is this phrase to keep the charge, to keep the commandments. His statutes and His rules.

And this is a fascinating word that's translated again three other times in this chapter. You can look later in verses 8, 16, and 32. This phrase is used again and it's translated differently.

It might be thought that to just keep a charge is kind of like to do your duty. But when you look at the way this phrase is translated and what its idea is, it is more like being a caretaker of a precious treasure or a gift not to be lost.

[12:31] Therefore, the charge to keep the command is to take the command as something precious, to consider it carefully, to follow it to its fullest extent.

We are to obey by looking at the commandments of God and seeing in it sweetness and goodness that we are to treasure and be exceedingly careful to fully obey as closely as possible.

verse 13 then adds another understanding to this idea of obey here by saying you are not only to but by saying that you are to obey, to love, to serve the Lord your God.

To obey God is to submit to Him, to recognize Him as a master worthy of our service because He has authority and a role over us.

This is exactly what it meant to be in a covenant relationship with God, the God of the universe. Now, I don't know how many of you have seen the recent series Downton Abbey that has made some waves in public television.

[13:46] It depicts an English manor home with a family of nobility and title showing both the life of the Lord and His family living upstairs and the life of the servants living downstairs.

And it is striking to see that there are good servants, there are poor servants, and there are servants who just can't wait to not have to serve anybody else anymore.

And it was striking as I reflected on that and as I reflected on verse 13. What kind of servant do I think of myself as?

Am I a faithful servant? Am I a poor servant? Am I a servant of God but just wishing that I could do it on my own and do it my own way?

This idea of servanthood is then strikingly picked up again in verse 16. Moses picks up for the first time the idea of the possibility of disobedience.

[14:47] He says, if you disobey, it is not simply to say, no, I won't do it, but it is to become a servant of something else. Both times in this chapter where Moses mentions disobedience, it is tied to turning and going after idols.

idols. Obedience is tied with worship in this sense. And so it asks us the question, who do we serve?

Who do we worship? If we answer those, who do we obey? How do we obey? It becomes a little clearer. And then finally, in verses 18 and 22, we see a little more about what Moses is saying

about what it means to obey God.

Verse 18 says that God's people are to lay the words of God up in their hearts. They are to put it before them all the time. On their hands, on their foreheads, on their doors.

They are to talk about it all the time with their children. And then verse 22 says, and they are to walk in the way of the Lord. To be able to obey God's people are to have the commandments in a place where they will shape all of their life every day.

[16:06] It is to be constantly reminded and it is to be seen not simply as a task list, things I can check off so that then I can get to being done, but that to obey the Lord is to see it as a way of life where we are constantly following Him and allowing Him to shape what we do.

And in fact, it is to shape everything that we do. Deuteronomy chapter 11 is positioned at the end of this section as I said. If you started in chapter 12, you would see for the next 14 chapters, God gives commands about all sorts of everyday practical realities of life.

And the point that we are to see this morning is that obedience is not simply in certain areas of life, but it is meant to be comprehensive, to affect every area of life.

We see in the law it covers everything from proper religious observance to spiritual leadership to how to deal with the poor, instructions regarding slavery and justice, how to set up a judicial system, how to settle civil disputes, how to conduct ourselves in warfare, rules concerning inheritance, family discipline, divorce, what to do with escaped slaves, how we are to fulfill our vows, financial principles regarding lending with interest, picking, and finally, picking the grapes in your neighbor's fields.

I could go on and on, that was just a taste of what the law covers. But what I want you to see is that the law was meant to instruct God's people on how to live as His people in every particular of their life.

[17:55] And so again, it raises the question for us. Do we ask that question? Do we ask, God, how am I to obey you? In my late night entertainment, my professional ethics, my financial management, my dating life, in my choice of vacations, my reading material, and so on and so forth.

In every area of your life, we are to ask that question. So what does it mean to obey God? This new framework that I want you to see is that obedience is much more than duty.

It is loving devotion. It is willing submission and service. It is careful stewardship of the commandments that God has given. It is a commitment to bring every area of our lives under the instruction of the Lord to allow Him to shape, reshape, and transform our lives however He pleases.

We do this because He has delivered us. He has called us into this covenant relationship with Him. So this then leads us to the second question that our text addresses about obedience this morning and that is what significance does God give to the obedience of His covenant people?

We've seen that this is what it's supposed to look like. What significance does God give to it? And the answer is that God takes it very seriously.

[19:33] Look with me in chapter 11 verses 26 through 29. See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse.

The blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today and the curse if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God but turn aside from the way that I'm commanding you today to go after other gods that you have not known.

Moses says that there are two ways to live for Israel. There is obedience and there is disobedience. And tied with that there is with blessing or with obedience is blessing and with disobedience there is cursing.

And Moses says God wants you to remember this so much he is going to take mountains that will never move and call one blessing and one cursing so that you will remember this choice that God has put before you today.

And if we went ahead and we read chapters 27 and 28 of Deuteronomy we would see how serious God is about these blessings and cursings.

[20:50] They are severe in either their goodness or their horror. To be under God's blessing is painted as a picture of the most wonderful abundance in material blessings the fruitfulness of the field and the womb the political might and honor given to the nation.

The position of the greatest of all nations because of the God that they serve because of what God is doing. But to be under God's curse is to be degraded beyond recognition of humanity.

The picture is one of continual loss of hardship of affliction. To be under God's curse is to see that the fields in the womb will be barren the enemies will overrun them take them away to slavery they will endure unimaginable deprivation and be driven to inhumanity towards one another in an effort to survive.

To be under God's curse is to delve into the darkest horrors of the human imagination. But to be under God's blessing is to be showered with unimaginable goodness peace and abundance. Why? Why would God be so severe about obedience? It is because Israel as we have seen over and over again Israel was called especially from all the nations of the world to play a unique role in God's work in history.

[22 : 21] It was meant to be a physical nation state a picture by the way that it worked of the character and the nature of God and his kingdom. So they were called to be God's people and by their obedience they would display who God is what he looked like what kind of God he was in righteousness in peace in rest in beauty in joy in satisfaction.

Ultimately they would experience a creation that would no longer have the scars of sin and death. This is the picture and Israel was meant to be this picture.

And so disobedience would mean that they could not display this character of God or his kingdom. And so God says there is a curse for you to violate this process because if you cannot display my glory you will be under my curse and the world will see what it looks like to be outside of me and my kingdom and it will be horrible.

Again it is instructive to see that disobedience here is not a minor lapse it is not a slip it is not an oversight of obedience.

He says that each and every act of obedience is an act of rejection an act of rebellion it is turning from God to worship something else.

[24 : 06] And this is a helpful thought as we think about obedience that to disobey God is to exalt something or someone else to the place that God rightly calls us to place Him in in our lives in our hearts and in our actions.

And this is why God sees blessing and cursing so severely this is why for Him obedience and disobedience is such an important thing.

And we see we see that in fact Israel and its history failed over and over again their lives were characterized not by obedience and blessing but by disobedience.

they turned over and over again to idols and they experienced the cursing of God. Instead of loving, trusting, and serving God they failed.

The question for us today is how often do we take lightly what God takes seriously? How often in our present evangelical culture in reaction to the legalistic fundamentalism of the 20th century do we treat carelessly or lightly the issue of obedience to the Lord?

[25 : 36] Do we mourn over our sin? Do we crave willing obedience in our hearts? Do we feel the weight of God's concern that His people should live lives careful of careful devotion to Him?

Do we understand how great the blessings of God really are? Do we understand how severe His cursing really is?

And this then leads us to our last question today. What do we do with this picture of God from Deuteronomy 11 and 27 and 28?

What do we do with this picture of God today? Does God still do such things? Does He still treat us this way? Does Jesus coming make any difference? To answer this question I want to start by going back to something we said at the beginning of the sermon and that is that our framework today is almost always to view obedience through the lens of consequences.

If the carrot is sweet enough or if the stick is big enough we will obey. And so we may today seek obedience from God because we are afraid of His punishment or because we want to earn His approval.

[26 : 57] But as I have said already I declare to you this morning there is another way another paradigm how to understand obedience how to ground it in a biblical framework.

framework. What does this new way look like? Well just as so much of the Old Testament and so much of God's instructions to Israel meant to point us ahead to Christ so also it is true with this issue of blessing and cursing.

Galatians 3 if you will remember for those of you who are here this spring Galatians 3 teaches us that the law was given as a teacher as a task master to lead us to Christ.

That is the law was given to show us that we could never be able to be completely obedient to the law. It could not provide a basis for our justification and it would only drive us to look for a Savior outside of ourselves.

And Jesus and His perfect obedience He being the truly obedient Son of God He being the truly perfectly obedient vine of Israel He satisfied the covenant requirements of Deuteronomy 11 and yet then Jesus did more than that for He not only offered His perfect obedience to the Lord but then He willingly took upon Himself the curses the curse for our disobedience His death was the wages of our sin His dying separation from God and His experience of the full wrath of sin the full extent of the horrors of God's curses those were ours and He took them for Himself as it says in Galatians 3 13 and 14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us for it is written in fact in Deuteronomy chapter 21 verse 23 cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree so that in Christ

[29 : 06] Jesus the blessings of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith friends what good news this is just as Israel faced a life and death decision so all men and women today are faced with a life and death decision but how gracious God is we do not need to choose to obey or disobey for that would only lead us to ruin instead we must choose to believe or not believe in the one who has kept the law for us the obedience demanded by God in Deuteronomy is satisfied in Christ and the call of God today is to believe and trust that Christ is satisfied the Father I hope you will also hear this morning that there is an ominous warning beside this glorious truth if you are here this morning and you have not placed your faith in Christ if you have not put your trust in his obedience if you are still longing to be acceptable to God by your own obedience by your good intentions by your religious practices then you are outside of Christ you will be found disobedient and the horrors of

God's curse will be upon you they will be your lot unless you repent of your sin and even your self-justifying religious activities and throw your hope and faith in Christ this glorious truth then frees us from the two misunderstandings that we started with at the beginning of the sermon God is not a harsh taskmaster nor does he relate to us in a tit-for-tat fashion bringing good when we're good and bad when we're bad God is serious about disobedience but in his upholding of his righteousness and punishment of disobedience he has made a way so that in Christ we no longer need to relate to God that way but this then leads us to the third view of God that we put forth this morning earlier in the message if God is a God of grace and obedience and disobedience are satisfied in Christ then why do we need to obey

God now can't we do whatever we want our first reading in first Peter this morning suggested no that obedience still has a place in the life of a Christian first Peter 1 14 referred to believers as obedient children and that they are commanded to be holy in all of their conduct as God is holy the New Testament affirms that God not only expects but commands his people his church to be obedient to God as well not to the law per se and not as a condition of our salvation but on we are to be obedient to his instructions as how to live as his people why should we do this well that could be the subject of many sermons but let me give you a few thoughts in closing first Christians are to be obedient because it reflects God's character and nature

Peter says be holy as I am holy is an expression of this God's purpose is always that his covenant people display who he is by the way that they live our obedience to God means that others will see and understand God by how we live and so they will know we are Christians by the love that we have for one another they will know that we are disciples of Christ because of the character of love that we live for one another we are in Christ adopted into God's family and God's intention is that our obedience will build a family likeness between us and our heavenly father and so we must see that our disobedience today misrepresents God to the world and brings shame to the one that we ought to honor secondly

Christians are to be obedient to God because it is the outworking of what God has put in Peter says again that God has caused us to be born again to a new and living hope God has given us a new life in fact the very life of Christ that is now resident in all who have placed their faith in him and this new life enables us to be obedient people we can now choose to obey to walk in the way of the Lord because we are freed men no longer in slavery to sin and we live this out even in our momentary failures of obedience through repentance of sin reaffirming our trust and confidence that we are forgiven in Christ putting off the old patterns of our life that used to be ours when we were enslaved to sin and putting on a new person a new pattern a new life increasingly that we have in

Christ because he's given us the Holy

[34 : 45] Spirit to live inside of us so we must see that our obedience is working out what God has worked in us and therefore our disobedience is contrary to the new nature for all Christians and it results in inner conflict divided hearts confused spiritual lives and it breaks the sweetness of our fellowship with our loving heavenly father thirdly even in the new covenant of Christ Christians are to obey God because they will reap what they sow God will not be mocked to sow towards obedience is to reap good things to sow towards disobedience is to reap otherwise but we must see that the reaping that we do and the sowing and the reaping that we do is in kind so it's easy for us to think if I had a great quiet time this morning then I should be able to have a great day at work without conflict with my boss and I should be able to be really successful in what

I do and conversely it's easy to think if I didn't have a quiet time this morning and I got in this car accident well there it goes see I didn't obey God and that's what you get but this principle of reaping and sowing is one of in kind when we have a quiet time in the morning it allows us to focus our heart and our mind on our Lord so that we can walk into the day bearing the fruit of the spirit and depending upon him that will enable us to have a day that will be a day full of blessing from God even if it's full of conflict with our boss and inefficiency and similarly if we don't have a quiet time God did not cause a car accident simply because you didn't have a quiet time what you reap from your disobedience in that situation is that you have poor resources you are spiritually impoverished to respond with grace and trust to that car accident that you were in and to see it as a part of God's sovereign plan in your life so we reap what we sow this is the third reason why Christians ought to be obedient but lastly and most gloriously Christians are to obey God as an act of devotion as a worship to him Nick and I were talking about this if you asked the saints of old why we should obey God they would probably furrow their brow and tilt their head and not even understand the question they would say you don't know him if you ask that question we obey God because we want to please him we want to please him because he has rescued us from such a severe curse and such a horror of judgment we want to please him because he has given to his people every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ

Jesus we want to please him because in Christ he has given us his spirit to bear fruit in our lives we want to please him because he will one day bring to fullness the vision of his kingdom when Satan is vanquished and sin is defeated and there are no more tears no more sorrow no more death when God reigns supreme we want to please him because we love him we want to please him because as we read in first Peter though we have not seen him we believe in him and are filled with a joy that is inexpressible true vibrant Christian faith creates in us a self forgetfulness where we are no longer consumed with the consequences of our obedience or disobedience but rather we are captured by the beauty the glory the wonder of God and his grace to us in

Christ to be God's covenant people is to be magnificently obsessed with God we live to please him because he died to make us his and this is worship this is devotion this is adoration this is love for God and this brings us back full circle to Deuteronomy 11 1 we obey God because we want to please him because we love him and my hope and desire this morning is that we Trinity Baptist Church would hear this call to obedience I hope that in the face of the larger evangelical movement that may not value this that we would not be characterized by laxity concerning our lives but that we would be devoted to pleasing God in every particular that God would graciously allow us to sit under this word this morning to be moved to deeper obedience to our

[40 : 25] God let's pray God we praise you that it is in Christ you have made us yours God we praise you that your blessings are unimaginably wonderful and Lord we praise you for Christ who by his obedience fulfilled what we could not and by his willing submission and death on the cross took the curse that we deserved Lord that we might be set free from sin to live a life of obedience to you oh God change our hearts and make them new that we might live to please you we pray this in Jesus name amen as the worship team comes forward we're going to sing a praise chorus that will say here I am to worship here I am to bow down here I am to say that you're my God and I hope you will hear this morning that when we say here I am to worship we also mean here I am to obey here I am to live to please you in all that I do so please stand as we sing to what or they sing with the thoughts on our e p p e ah

Live home