

Sermon: God's Word, the Foundation of Worship

Grace Community Church

Sunday, July 28th, 2024

We'll be in Deuteronomy Chapter 6. We are going to do a sermon series on worship for five weeks. I'm going to do five sermons on what it means to worship God, and I like to return to foundational topics every once in a while because giving us a sure footing helps us to live the Christian life better. Worship is a very foundational topic; it goes back to the heart of why we're here and why Christ has called us to Himself.

To give you a little bit of a spoiler—and maybe it's not a spoiler as much as it is a trailer—uh, the first week we'll talk about worship, the foundation of worship, which is the Word of God. Next week, we are going to go into what worship is and how it can be done to the fullest extent. The week after that, we'll look into what it means to worship God as male and female. After that, it will be about how to worship God in families. The last sermon that I will do on worship will be on missions, which is really, if you think about it, multiplying worship throughout the world.

So that is the series that we're going to do. Today, my main point is going to be that the Word of God is the foundation for worship, and my goal for you is that we would be a church that's sourced and energized and radiating with the Word of God in our worship to the one true God.

Let's read the passage. Stand with me; we're going to read the whole chapter and read the very words of God.

"Now this is the Commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His Commandments which I command you all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Oh Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God; the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words which I'm commanding you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, human cisterns which you did

not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, then watch yourself that you do not forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall fear only the Lord your God, and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God. Otherwise, the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.

You shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tested Him at Massa. You should diligently keep the Commandments of the Lord your God and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you. You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which the Lord swore to give your fathers by driving out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has spoken.

When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments mean which the Lord our God commanded you?' then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. Moreover, the Lord showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers. So the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today. It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this Commandment before the Lord our God, just as He commanded us.'

Lord God, we know that the same God who came down at Mount Sinai and revealed Yourself is the same God that is here among us today and even in us as the people of God. What a fearful thing to think about, and at the same time, a wonderful thing, that we can approach You and worship, especially freely now through Jesus Christ. God, we pray that the preaching of Your word today would just sink down into our hearts and bear fruit to eternal life. In Jesus' name, amen.

Go ahead and be seated.

It is birthday season at our house. We have a lot of summer birthdays in our family. Almost all of our kids have summer birthdays. If you count September, Benjamin's is also in the summer. Alia, our four-year-old daughter, actually just turned four yesterday. So if you see her, wish her a happy birthday. You know, you'd think there would be some maybe change marked from on the day from 3 to 4; it's just more of her, basically, and she's just maybe just turning the volume up on her a little bit, but she's very excited to be four. My mom's birthday is actually in July as well, and we just celebrated that a few weeks ago. The kids made cards for her; they like to make homemade cards. Alia drew her a picture of a sad ballerina, and I'm not really sure with the story; there was some story behind why the ballerina was sad, but I'm pretty sure it had a happy ending. Elijah wrote with his own handwriting, 'We are glad God made you,' and seven-year-old Benjamin made an origami—kind of an origami robot, and when you opened it, it said, 'Dear Grammy, I'm glad you didn't just pop out of nowhere.'

In our house, during birthdays, they're used to hearing the language of 'God made you for a purpose.' We tell them, 'God made you; we're glad He made you; we're glad He gave you to us. You are here on purpose; you are not an accident; you didn't just pop out of nowhere. You were made for a purpose.' It is certainly true that God has made us for a purpose. If you ask a person on the street to tell you what the purpose of life is, you're going to get a lot of different answers. I suppose that's true for Christians as well. If you ask Christians what the point of life is, they would give you a lot of answers. Some of them that I hear are that the purpose of life is love—to love each other. Some people say that the purpose is to enjoy life. The answer that I hear probably most often is that it's up to you what the purpose of life is, which is very sad because that means there isn't a purpose to life. There isn't an ultimate purpose; we just have to make it up.

But there is a purpose to life, and God has made it clear in His word that the purpose of life, our purpose, is to worship God as individuals and as a whole of mankind. The reason that God made us and made you is to worship Him—to love Him, to serve Him, trust Him, obey Him, to walk with Him in fellowship. That is the purpose of human existence. Worship is so important and so foundational to our existence that failure to worship is really the biggest problem of humanity. It's humanity's biggest problem. We read about that in Romans chapter 1, where we hear that even though humanity knows God—they know enough about Him through the things that He's made—they know generally what He's like and what He expects of us, enough that they are without excuse. They know enough to condemn them as they stand before God. Their failure to worship—it says that even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God nor were thankful. What it's talking about is the rejection of God and the failure to worship. The passage says that failure to worship God results in the wrath of God.

When you read that, we have to be clear on who that is talking about because it's not talking about someone out there; it's talking about everyone—you and me—that have failed to worship God.

I want us to get this before we get into Deuteronomy, before we dive into the text today. It's important for us to see this text not through the eyes of the law but through the eyes of the gospel, from the perspective of the gospel. We have to remember that all of our failure to worship fell on Christ. We have to remember that Jesus is the only one who worshipped God perfectly. He is the only one that, as a man, was the perfect worshipper of God. He was the one that obeyed the law of God and fulfilled it on our behalf, and in His death and resurrection, He gives us His righteousness.

So I want us to remember as we go into this that all righteousness comes from God. It doesn't come from our own obedience to His commands. If it weren't for our salvation, we would not even have the heart to love Him and to serve Him. We would still be hating God and hostile to God, but because we have new life from Christ, we have the ability to love Him. We have a new heart.

I. Worship Starts With God's Word

I want us to see several things in this passage about worship and just lay a foundation for worship through the Word of God. I'm going to start in verses 1 through 3. My first point today is that worship starts with God's Word, and we can see that in verses 1 through 3. The first things in this chapter are, "Now this is the commandment," and that is to say, "This is the message of the Lord." It uses the singular there as kind of a summation of the commandments of God, the statutes, and the judgments. What is it talking about? It's talking about the things that God revealed to the people of Israel, which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it. It mentions that again in verse 2: "That you might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you," and it says in verse 3, "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it."

So our worship starts with God's Word. His Word is the basis of our relationship with Him. We cannot worship who we don't know. God has revealed Himself in a lot of ways, through His creation to all humanity, and He's also revealed Himself specially with human language. Sometimes audibly, which happened at Mount Sinai. Sometimes He wrote with His own finger on the tablets of rock that He gave to Moses. He revealed Himself through the prophets, and He revealed Himself very clearly when the Word of God Himself became flesh through Jesus Christ. Like it says in John, "No one has seen God at any time, but the unique God who is with the Father, He has explained Him."

So God is a speaking God, and God has revealed Himself clearly to His people. The Word of God is the basis for a relationship with Him. I want us to note that God's Word initiates our relationship with Him. If we take an overview of the context of this passage, let's remember that God was the one who called Abraham. God was the one that made a covenant with Abraham. He was the one that took it upon Himself to ensure that the promises made to Abraham would come to pass. His promise to make a great nation of Abraham, His promise to bring him into a land, to give a land to his descendants, a promise to bless him, a promise that through him all the families of the Earth would be blessed.

So God initiated that relationship with His people through Abraham. If we move forward in history, when the Israelites became slaves in Egypt, God initiated contact with Moses. Moses didn't even want to go. If you remember, Moses protested and said, "God, I'm not up for this," and God said, "I will be with you." So God initiated His contact with His people through Moses. Then going forward, God was the one who judged the nation of Egypt with His plagues. He was the one who put up with the Israelites' rebellion in the wilderness and continued to reveal Himself and continue to give them His Word through those 40 years.

Now, when they're standing on the footsteps of the promised land here in Deuteronomy 6, Moses is preaching to them and reminding them of all the things that God has said to them and telling them to hang on to it. I know that this is true for us as well, that the basis of our salvation starts with God Himself. You didn't come to God to approach Him for your salvation; He was the one that came to you. He was the one that breathed life into you. And it goes further back than

that because our salvation is not rooted in what we have done or in our initiation of coming to God; it's rooted in the very foreknowledge of God. When God says, "I knew you before I formed you in the womb," He already had you in mind. He already had you in mind to choose you for salvation and, in His sovereignty, to bring the gospel to you so that you would be saved.

This brings me a great amount of peace to know that God is the initiator of my salvation. There's a verse that I really love in John. Jesus says, "I know My sheep, and My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me. And I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish." You can see the golden chain in that series that He's saying there, but His voice—"My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me"—the Word of God is the initiating force of our relationship with Him. It's also the basis of our relationship with Him. All the commandments and the statutes, all the festivals that He gave them, all of the laws that governed what they were supposed to wear and the sacrifices in the temple, all of that defined them as a people of God and gave them an identity. It was the basis of their relationship with God and as the basis of our relationship with God.

As God is the one doing the initiating, God's Word gives life to the people of God. We see that here when He talks about bringing the promises of Abraham to pass—promises that He made with Abraham. The Word of God is giving life to the people of God. That is true for the nation of Israel. We have to remember that the nation of Israel— not all of them were redeemed, not all of them were regenerated because they were a physical kingdom. If it is true that the Word of God gives life to His people, and if that was true for them, how much more is it true for us as New Testament believers?

When you read about the New Covenant in Jeremiah, if you turn with me there to Jeremiah 31, we'll look at what makes the difference in Jeremiah 31:31. Before I read this, let's keep our attention on the fact that the Israelites did not keep the covenant. They broke the covenant because of the sinfulness of their hearts. Not all of them had been regenerated. So this is what God says: "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord. "I will put—listen to this—I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it. I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them."

That is the position that we are in as New Covenant believers. God has given us life through His Word. He's put His law into our hearts. I like the way that James puts it in James 1:18. James says, "By God's will He brought us forth by the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures." If you think about what that means, that God, through the gospel, the Holy Spirit used the gospel as the means to breathe life into us. So the Word of God is the life-giving source of believers. It's also the life-sustaining source.

In Deuteronomy 6, you see a lot of forces that are threatening to decay and destroy their identity as a people of God—idolatry and the sin that's going to come in and corrupt them. God is telling them to hang on to His Word as a means of preserving their life, as a means of survival. It says as the people of God. If we turn to Deuteronomy 8, just a few chapters later, He tells them that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. There's a lot of spiritual entropy that threatens to overturn their identity as God's people. God tells them to cling to the life-sustaining source of the Word. Jesus, also as our example, used that in His defense before the devil. When He was tempted by the devil, He quoted the verse that says, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Now, I think also for us, as we think about the fact that the word is the source of life and that the word sustains us as Christians, and as we think about what it says in Romans or in Deuteronomy 6 about the forces that threaten to undo our own faith, I don't think we should limit what's being said here to the Israelites. Because I think that there is a real possibility—there's a real threat of falling away, even for us Christians. And that is not to say that Christians who are genuinely saved can lose their salvation, because, like I said before, if God is the one who foreknew you, He will carry that salvation to the end. But I think we all know people who we thought were Christians, that displayed what looked like the fruits of the Spirit, and they have turned away. And we can see the deadness in their lives right now. And I think it would be wise for us to use those people to mark them, to look at the desolation that is there—almost the dead husk of a person that's left. You can tell I've had personal experience with this. It's painful and tragic to see that. But just to remember that we need to cling to the word of God too, as our source of life, and just let those fallen people serve as a warning to us.

So, the word of God is the basis and the foundation of our worship. It gives us life; it sustains us. I want to make this point too, because I just—the teacher in me—I just can't really help myself that I want to give us a defense, a very brief defense, of how we know the Bible is the word of God. And this is why, when Moses was talking to them and he says, for example, in verse 6, "These words shall be on your heart," I think it's appropriate to ask the question, which words? Because they knew the words that God had given to them through Moses, and they had a way of telling that this was the word of God. So, the question is, how do we know that the Bible is the word of God? How do we know that the Bible's words are God's words? Now, that question has a lot of different aspects to it, and there's a lot of different questions that go into that. And I plan on actually covering that in our church history course—questions like why are these books, why do we consider these books inspired and not those books? What does inspiration even mean, anyway? Does the church have authority? Does the church's authority equal that of the Scripture's authority? And those questions are important. But I'm going to give you—I'm going to give you one thing today, one answer to that question about how we know the Bible is the word of God and how they could have known that they were dealing with the word of God, the very words of the Creator. The answer is that God's word is active. God's word is active. And it's living. It has an energy to it that does its work in the people of God. Now, when I say that, I hope that you think of Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12, right? Which says, "The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The word of God has

an activity to it. It has a life to it of its own. And they would have recognized this. They saw the word of God go to work in their lives. They saw God's promises go to work and come to fruition. They saw God transform the hearts of the people there. They saw God's warnings—God make good on His warnings to discipline them. They saw the victories as they put their faith in God's word. They saw the transformation of Moses as a man of God. They also saw that God was right about their sin. They would have seen that. And we see that in verses 12 through 14 when he talks about not following other gods—that the word of God can pierce into our hearts. It penetrates and it can see into our hearts and what's really there, our motives. And we recognize that too. We recognize the divine qualities of the word of God and specifically the ability of the word of God to be active in our own lives—the way that it transforms us, the way that we see His promises come to pass, the way that we see God's word read us. Right? Because I think that you would agree that when I read the Bible, it's reading me more than I'm reading it. And it's able to discern my thoughts and intents of my heart. It's able to convict me of my sins. It has an insight into the nature of man that is from a divine source. This knows something. And so there's that one thing that we know that the word of—that the Bible is the word of God because of its activity in our lives and the people of God. As the years progress, not only here with Moses but as they move forward, they continue to recognize the speech of God in its activity and in its divine qualities. And I want to read to you a passage from 2 Kings chapter 17, because in this passage they are recognizing the words of God that came through Moses and through the prophets.

He says in 2 Kings chapter 17, verse 37: "The statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which"—get this—"he wrote for you," talking about God. The statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which God wrote for you. So what is it talking about? It's talking about the law of Moses and that they are recognizing that God is the one who co-authored these books.

Now, we could ask the question: Do we need some kind of a church council to tell us that these are the words of God? The answer to that is no, and we know that because the word of God had to go to work immediately in the lives of the people of God. It had to come out of the gates doing its work. They can't wait for a church council. You hear what I'm saying?

In Jeremiah, when he says to Jeremiah: "Behold, I put my words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant," see, the word of God goes forth and does its work immediately, and the people of God recognize that, and so on and so forth. We could talk about that going into the New Testament as well, and Jesus recognized that the words of Scripture are the words of God, and he affirmed that when he said: "Have you not read what God spoke to you?" He equates the written word of God with the very speech of God. So the people of God were able to recognize that these are divine words, and Jesus affirmed that.

So when we say that the Bible is the word of God, we're saying that the Bible's words are God's words, and we're justified in believing that. When you came to believe the Bible, you may not even have been aware of why you believed it, but I think this one reason is enough: It has divine

qualities in itself. The word of God is self-attesting, and the activity of the word of God gives credence to that.

Now, knowing that the Bible is the word of God, the next question is: Do you know what you have here in the Bible? Do you know what you have here sitting in your hands? Because if you look back at early church history, they didn't have the whole New Testament in their possession. It was very rare to actually have the Bible in their possession, and it was valuable to them. Throughout the Middle Ages, you would get the word of God from what you heard when you went to service, and there's no doubt that God used that very little they heard to save people. But if you lived in the Middle Ages, you couldn't even read, so you had to rely on what you heard.

You have the word of God, and you can read it. This is the question: Do you treat it like that? Do you appreciate it? Do you treat it as if you appreciate what you have? Because some of you haven't read your Bible in a week, and you'd rather watch another episode of *Stranger Things*. You'd rather keep scrolling through Facebook. You'd rather keep—let me just finish reading the comments in this YouTube section. You know, the worthlessness compared to what we have in the word of God. Let's not forget what we have.

I remember times when God has answered my prayers in an undeniable way. I thought, "Wow, I just talked to God!" And I try to remember the exhilaration that I felt and transfer that to know that the Bible is God's word.

I can think also of the time when I met Renee. I knew her; I was kind of admiring her from afar. And let's not read too much into that, but there came a time when I actually got to talk to her, and I started developing a relationship with her. My thought was, "I actually get to talk to this woman." I try to remember that in our marriage, what—what—I try to remember how I felt when I first started talking to her, and to retain that appreciation in our marriage.

You know, you might be thinking, "Well, wouldn't you run out of things to say after all these years?" And I can tell you one thing: I mean, Renee hasn't run out of things to say; she's a talker. But—we're talking about the Bible. So, that is to say that I've been a Christian for a few decades now, some of you much longer, and the word of God has not lost its riches; it's only grown in depth. I ask questions of it, and it answers. I grow to love the word of God more and more. So let's treat the word of God accordingly.

II. Worship Is Not Casual Or Compartmentalized

Worship starts with God's word; it's our foundation. As we move on, we'll look at verses 4-9. My second point here: Worship is not casual or compartmentalized. So, in verse 4, God reveals Himself; He gives us revelation about Himself. He says, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one." And when God revealed Himself—when they hear these words, "The Lord is our God"—they would have been thinking back to the mountain, to Mount Sinai, when they saw the smoke and heard the thunder, heard the deafening trumpet blast, and saw the activity of God and the terror of God in that context. We need to remember what a fearful thing it is to be in

contact with God Himself. That means that our worship should not be a casual thing. It's not only true in the Old Covenant.

If we take a look at Hebrews 12, verse 25, it says, "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on Earth, how much less will we escape if we turn away from Him who warns from heaven?" And His voice shook the Earth then, talking about Mount Sinai when He gave the law to Moses. But now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the Earth but also the heaven." So, He's contrasting what the Israelites had in the Old Covenant with what we have in the New Covenant, and it's an even greater weightiness that we approach—the God who gave us His Son, the God who took on human flesh. And it says, "Do not refuse Him who is speaking." It's a fearful thing to approach God in worship; it should not be a casual endeavor. We should approach it with the gravity that it has.

Think about God—the one who made the sun, that enormous ball of fusion energy. You can fit many Earths across it. It's enormous. The power that was needed to create that. And God made trillions of stars. The power of God and the terror of God. And I think, as New Testament believers, the question naturally arises in terms of, "Well, is it a fearful thing for God?" But what happens if I don't obey Him? Because He said to His people Israel, "The Lord your God is in the midst of you. He is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the Earth."

And I want to be clear about this as New Testament Christians: What happens if we don't obey? There are several possibilities. The first one is that you might not know Him in the first place. If your life is characterized altogether by rejection of God, disinterest, disobedience, and sin, that's a sure indication that you have not been born again. Because, like John says in 1 John, "The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him." So, that's a possibility. But for those of us who are true Christians, and we can see the fruit of God in our lives, we can see the evidence of God's work in us, there is still the possibility that our Father disciplines us now in this life.

Do you think—do you all think about what Jesus is going to say to you when you stand before Him, when you meet Him? I think we should think about that. We should think about that. The other option is that you miss out. And you can see this throughout this chapter that He says it's going to go well with you; you're going to multiply greatly in the land. He's going to bring you into a land flowing with milk and honey. You're going to miss out on the blessings of what it means to fully worship God. And this is not a small thing because, again, if the point of our lives is worship, and if we're coming to the very One who made us to be in fellowship with Him, that is the greatest good; it is the greatest blessing. In the Old Covenant, God gave them material blessings, physical blessings. In the New Covenant, He gives us the blessing of knowing Him, the blessing of being conformed to the image of Christ. And what did Paul say about that? He said, "I consider everything else rubbish compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ and being found in Him."

So, those are the options. When we hear things that God says in here about falling away and the danger of disobedience, we need to keep those things in mind. We do have a fearful God that we approach, and worship should not be casual. He also says, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." This one Lord revealed Himself as a singular God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But we have one God, and that means that our hearts toward Him should be single. Our hearts toward Him should be undivided. We should have undivided devotion to this one God.

I think when we look at what God requires in these verses, He reveals Himself and says that He is our God; He is one. He also says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." The world's notions of worship are compartmentalized. The world wants us to think of worship in terms of what happens in a building, in a very limited time and space. And that's a convenient definition for them. The reason they hold to that definition is so that they can hold their own lives as their own. They can maintain a grip on their lives. "My time is my own, my life is my own, my space is my own. I'll give God this little bit." It also is convenient because it helps them to tell us to keep our Jesus in church. If worship is a compartmentalized thing that we only do in a certain time and space, they can tell us not to bring our Jesus into this. But worship is everything.

What does God require? Does He require religious activities? He doesn't want religious activities. Look at verse 5: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." He requires everything. Every breath that we have should be an act of worship to God. And if your response to that is, "Well, that doesn't leave a lot of room for loving my wife and kids," what you need to keep in mind is that your love for your wife and children should be an expression of your love for God. Everything fits within that context as our worship to the one God who requires everything from us. And that changes the way that we love our wife and kids, doesn't it? As an act of worship to Him. So, does worship extend then to things like eating my cereal? Yes, it does. It does. And more on that next week. I want to develop that very concept in our next sermon. But we have to realize that worship requires everything. And Jesus affirmed this as well when He said that whoever loves father or mother more than Me, whoever loves children more than Me, is not worthy of Me. All of our hearts belong to Him. We must give Him everything.

Now, this is not to say that we need to become good worshippers and be obedient people before we come to Christ and before we can have salvation. Because, again, as we think about this in a gospel way, God is the one—excuse me—God is the one who gives us His own righteousness. But there is a recognition on our part when we hear the gospel and we're hearing the fact that Jesus is Lord of all. There is a recognition on our part that if that is true and if I believe that, everything is going to have to change. And that's what repentance is. I don't think we do anybody a service if we don't tell them that. In evangelism, when we preach the gospel, we have to bring to their attention that, "Look, this is the God you're coming to. If you want to come back to God freely through Christ—and it is free—you don't have to do anything." I mean, think of the people in Acts who heard the preaching from Peter after he saw the vision, and he came to the Gentiles' house. They were just listening to Peter preach. Had they done anything when the Holy Spirit fell on them? No, it wasn't by works at all. They were just hearing the word.

And yet, we need to tell people that if you're going to come back to God freely through Christ, this is the God you're coming back to. You're coming back to the God that requires everything from you. And this is what it means to love God. And that is not a burden. If you are a sinner, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness, and if you're stuck in the misery of your separation from God and the misery of your sin, hearing, "I get to come back to God and worship Him with all my heart and be free from my sin," that's good news. To know that I can now worship Him, I can now be given a new heart to worship God, it's good news to them.

I also wanted to add in here—I know I'm probably running long—but I wanted to add in this point: Worship is not casual or compartmentalized. It's also not individualized. Because when you look at verses 7 and 8, it's talking about teaching them. Look at verse 7: "You shall teach them diligently to your sons. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." I want us to think in this church. I want us to be the kind of church that talks about the word of God even more than we are now—sharing fellowship over the word of God, having it pour out of us in fellowship with each other, teaching each other and encouraging one another with the word of God, and helping us to pull each other even up to memorizing scripture and reading it together. Worship is not an individualized endeavor; it's a corporate endeavor as well.

III. Worship Is Giving to God What Belongs to Him

So, let's move on to verses 10-15. My point here is that worship is giving to God what belongs to Him. Worship is giving to God what belongs to Him, what is His. And so you read in verse 10: "When it shall come about, when the Lord your God brings you into the land—He gives you great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and human cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied—then watch yourself that you do not forget the Lord." I think there's a tendency for us to think that all of the things that God has given to us are ours. We treat them as if they are ours. We treat our time as if it's ours. We treat the blessings in our life as if all of these things belong to us, and we use them as we see fit. But God encourages us—God commands us to see those things as belonging to Him. There's nothing that we have that wasn't given to us as a gift from God. The strength in your muscles is borrowed from the God who made you. The breath in your lungs is borrowed from the God who gave you breath. The ability of your eyes to see and your ears to hear, the friendships that you have, are all gifts from God.

And reminding us again of Romans chapter 1, when it says that they did not worship Him, they did not honor Him as God, nor were thankful. Think about what that means. They looked at all the gifts that they had—all the good food and the laughter and the fellowship that they have with other people—and they did not honor the God that gave it to them. They were not returning to Him in worship. And that's what worship is. Worship is offering back to God what belongs to Him. There's nothing that we have that isn't God's. So when we eat our cereal, we're acknowledging that this is from God. My ability to taste good food is a gift from God. And we offer that to Him in worship, with our thanksgiving, with our praise, with our enjoyment of who God is. We offer it back to Him. We dare not put anything above Him.

Notice what He says in verse 15: "The Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God." It's not, as Oprah once thought, that God is jealous of us. He's jealous for us. Which means that He doesn't want anything to be above Him in our lives. When you hear that, you might think, "Well, that's kind of mean that God would be like that." It's not. It's just kind of unkind. We tend to think that that's a negative quality of God. But I want you to think about the fact that this is love that God is giving to us. The fact that He's jealous for us. But it's not the kind of love that sometimes we want. It's a greater love. It's a fierce love. And think about it. He wants all of you, and He wants to give us all of Himself. And that's what He gives us in Christ. Again, we're reminded of the words of Christ when He said, "Whoever does not hate those around him—his family—whoever does not hate them cannot be My disciple." That's how great our love of God should be—how much greater our love of God should be between the first place and the second place. There is a correlation there. There's a connection there. When we hear the words, we should hate them. I want us to think about what Jesus taught about what hatred is in the law of God. It's actually murder, right? And who was willing to murder his son because God commanded him to? Abraham. Abraham offered his son Isaac and said, "Here, God. You've given me this anyway. I'm willing to give this up." Now, of course, God didn't kill him. God didn't allow Abraham to plunge the knife in because child sacrifice is evil.

God calls us and commands us to put Him first and to keep Him so far in first place that everything else is distant. He's a jealous God, so we ought not to think that the things we have are our own. We need to give to God what is His.

IV. Worship Requires Remembrance

Let's move to our last point. So, the fourth point, verses 16–2: Worship requires remembrance. When you see in verses 16 through 2, there are several things that God calls them to remember. He says, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tested Him at Massa." He's asking them to remember the times when they sinned and how much it stung, the misery of that incident, the terror of God, and the horror of the consequences. He's asking them to recall that so that the experience would be burned in their minds.

Let's recall the times when we have fallen away from God so that we don't go back to that—not as if we need to have the sacrifice of Christ applied to us again, as if we're not saved anymore, but just to recall the misery of what it is to be in that sin. God requires us to remember that and let it drive us to His word. He says in verse 17 right after that, "You should diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God which He has commanded you." So He's saying, "Don't put the Lord your God to the test as you did that one time. Let it drive you to My word; be diligent to keep My word."

He also calls us to remember what He has done. He commands parents to tell their children about the history of what God did and His actions and His faithfulness throughout the years. Of course, we can remember—we can tell our children and remind each other and remind ourselves of what God has done in His word. We can remind ourselves of what He's done in His word and the history He's given to us of all His dealings with us. We can also remember what God has done in our own lives and the faithfulness He's had to us in our own lives.

So worship requires remembrance. It requires us to recall the things that God has said and the things that God has done. All of this comes back to the word of God. Everything in this chapter—He gives them different forms of His word. He gives them a history to remember, promises to hold on to and look forward to, and a future to give them stability and hope. He gives them His commands to give them their identity. He gives them teaching about who He is. There are a lot of different forms of the word of God here, but worship comes back to God's word. It has the word of God as its foundation, as God has revealed Himself to us.

Now, I want us to be a church that is centered on the word of God, as individuals and corporately as a body. This is why the elders have decided to put more effort into our scripture reading plan. We're going to have a plan that is going to be centered around the sermon schedule. It's a way for us to come together and have something to talk about and fellowship over, and to unite on what we're reading. It's not going to necessarily take the place of what you're doing in your own devotions, but it's something that is going to help us talk about the word of God together as a church.

We're going to see that in practice. This fall, we're going to start that reading plan, and we're also going to continue doing our scripture memory. Scripture memory this year is going to look a little bit different, but we are going to continue doing that. I would like you all to consider, if you haven't been a part of that scripture memory plan before, that this fall will be a great time for everyone to be involved. We want to open that up to the whole church to participate because we want to be a church that treasures the word of God and stores it up in our hearts.

So, we're going to put effort into scripture memory. The worship of the one true God is no small thing; it is fearful to approach God. The God who has made us is also wonderful, and the fact that we approach God in Christ, being free from a system of dead works and being alive as children of God, is thrilling. It is thrilling to be called into fellowship with your Creator, and He's given us the grace to do it. So, may we be a church that worships God with fear and joy. May we be a church that loves God with all of our heart, all of our soul, and all of our might. Let's pray.