

Note: A sermon is not a sermon until it is preached. By the time you read this, Lord willing, a manuscript has been transformed into a message. Feel free to use these notes to advance Christ's kingdom.

**We Will Remember:
Be Careful
Deuteronomy 6:1-9
Englewood Baptist Church
Sunday morning, Aug. 8, 2010.**

August 2010 is a special milestone for the Englewood family as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of our Genesis. I wish I could tell you that there is something inherently special about us, some noble reason why our church has flourished and grown as it has, but truth be known, you and I are not responsible for the breadth or width of our church. For whatever reason, a decision was made in heaven, and God has poured out His blessings on this family. And I can't speak for you, but never a week goes by that I don't thank God for this church, and the impact that this body has had on my life.

I am all for celebrating what has happened here since 1950, but I want to be careful that we don't make the mistake of basking in our own goodness, or our wise strategic planning, or our innovative techniques for reaching people. With James, I agree that "every good and perfect gift flows from the Father of heavenly lights" and so it is with God in mind, that we celebrate 60 years of life, and breath, and everything else. August is a month to hit pause and to remember HIS goodness to us in the past. The series that we begin today is entitled "We Will Remember" and each text will deal over the next weeks will focus on a moment in history when God called his people to reflect and recount His goodness and His law.

Look with me today at Deuteronomy 6, as Moses stands on the edge of the Promised Land, a land that is filled with blessing, one that flows with milk and honey, not tasteless manna. This is a land that has dominated more than one of Moses' nighttime dreams, and daytime fantasies, a land that would provide the perfect place to have a family and freedom. Moses stands on the boundary line of that promised place, and he knows full well, that Joshua is going to taste it, and he will not. Moses knows that God is writing the final chapter of his life, and it is his role now to pass the baton to Joshua. So what does he do? He speaks a word of caution to his children, as they proceed without his guidance.

Look at his words in Deuteronomy 6:1-12.

Not long ago, my wife and I were traveling with all four children and it became apparent that we needed a potty break, and we needed it soon. The next exit was urgent and so we veered off the road to see a single truck stop that may I say, "needed some updating." We walked in the station, and the path to the bathrooms diverged, women this way, men that way. I looked at my wife and she said, "Ava and I will be in there." And I looked down, and there was a 2 year old, a 3 year old, and a 4 year old, all males, looking to me for leadership. And I gulped. Mommy and daughter disappeared and I grabbed three

boys by the shirt and said, “Listen, we are about to go through that door. There is one rule to follow: don’t touch anything.” And my 4 year old said, “Daddy, what about the seat?” And I said, “I’ll put the seat down. Don’t touch the walls, or the potty, or the floor, or the machines on the wall.” I sounded harsh, but I had their best interests in mind. I was being serious and offering words of caution.

I want you to notice the gravity of Moses in v.3, when he says, “*Hear, O Israel!*” That word means, “Lean in and listen carefully! Pay attention to what I’m saying.” He says it again in v.4, “*Hear, O Israel.*” This was an emphatic way of expressing urgency. Today, parents say it like this: “Look at me when I’m talking to you.”

Look at v.1, it says, “*These are the commands, decrees, and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, SO THAT you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live...and so that you may enjoy life.*”

You see, the rules of God were given to you and to me, not to be a burden to us or to be twisted into a noose around our necks. The Word of God was given so that we may be free and enjoy our lives and be protected from pain.

So Moses is concerned that the people are going to forget about God and return to a form of slavery. He is burdened by the fact that most people drift away from God, not toward God. And he lays on these reminders.

Remember These Things

1. Idols can easily creep in. (v.4)

V.4, “*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*” This was the basic confession of the Jewish people. This foundational truth in their faith is what made them “weird” to all the people who surrounded them. When neighboring nations were busy pleasing and placating a dozen gods or more, Israel was busy about one thing: keeping this relationship fresh with capital “G”-o-d. In the book of Exodus, we read these words:

Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Exodus 34:14

What does it mean that God is jealous for you? Is God insecure that he has emotional needs that he is counting on you to meet? Of course not. When the Word says that God is jealous, it means simply that He will tolerate no rivals.

Can you imagine if my wife approached me tomorrow and said, “Hey, I met a man at the store the other day, and he was quite handsome and very nice. I’m thinking about meeting him for dessert Friday night. Is that OK with you?”

Can you imagine? It makes me nauseous even to speak those words. As Lynley's husband, I cannot tolerate rivalry and it is right for me to demand exclusivity. I don't believe my wife would ever suggest such a crazy notion, but if she did, I would say: What does he have that I cannot provide? Do you need clothes? I can buy you clothes. Do you need food? I can make you steak. Do you need affection? Come and get it here. But don't even think about going somewhere else? I am yours and you are mine. This is a covenant we both committed to. There can be no competition.

And this is the same of our relationship with God. God loves you with a fierce, unwavering, full-on love and Romans 8 says that "nothing can separate you from His affection." However, God does have high expectations of your role in this relationship. That's what v.5 is about, which Jesus said is the most important piece of Old Testament Scripture. Jesus said, if you only get ONE thing right, get this right: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.*"

In other words, leave no room in your life for rivalry. It was A.W. Tozer that said:

The love of God is one of the great realities of the universe, a pillar upon which the hope of the world rests. But it is a personal, intimate thing, too. God does not love populations. He loves people. He loves not masses, but men. He loves us all with a mighty love that has no beginning and can have no end.

—A.W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy

That's the way God loves you and there's not a thing you can do to change. Putting \$100,000 in the offering plate won't make him love you more. You can't buy his love, He just freely gives it. Nothing you can do can change the way God feels about you. If you are a Christian, then you are a son or a daughter forever. But this does not mean that God expects nothing of you. He wants your undivided attention.

The word "worship" means to ascribe worth, great value to something. Ask yourself this question...

What Do I Ascribe GREAT Value To?

- **My free time**
- **My hobbies**
- **My children**
- **My marriage**
- **My retirement**
- **My house**
- **My car**
- **My season tickets**
- **My vacation home**
- **My job**

Listen to me...none of those things listed are sinful. It's not wrong to have free time or a 401K, or front row seats at Neyland Stadium. None of these things are automatically evil. They just easily become competition for your time, your trust, and your attention.

So the question is a question of priority. Where does God fall in your list of priorities? Is God calling you to invest more energy in the relationship.

A second warning that Moses brings. Remember this about your life:

2. Kids can easily drift away. (vv. 6-9)

Idols can creep in; kids can drift away. Notice in v.6, that Moses now puts healthy pressure on parents.

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

I warn you, if you apply these truths in your home, you will consider fanatical. This kind of religious devotion is unheard of today. We read this and we think it's Amish, or Mennonite, or somehow out of touch with the times. But the meaning is crystal clear and convicting to all of us as parents.

Our number one job is not to raise star athletes or valedictorians or Homecoming Queens. The Bible says that the first role of parents is to impress upon the hearts of children the truths of God. That word there, "Impress," carries the meaning of great force. Like a stamp, you take it and you push it down on the ink, and you force it down on the paper to leave a permanent mark.

And so many parents today say, "Well, I don't want to force my values down on my children." Yes you do! That's exactly what you're supposed to do. But back up. Let's be sure that we get things in the right order. Look at v.6, "*These commandments that I give to you today are to be upon YOUR hearts.*"

Who is Moses talking to there? He's talking to the leaders of families. So Mom and Dad, it all begins with you. You can't impress a Bible upon your little boy that has no bearing on your Monday-Saturday life. You can't expect your child to love the Lord, when you so rarely speak of Him. You have to put it in your heart first, or else, you become like the Pharisee whom Jesus said, "*travels over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.*" Jesus could not stomach religious talkers. He was drawn to the sincere in heart.

5 Tough Questions For Parents

- **If my child asked me, "What is the Gospel?," could I respond with a clear answer, and quote Scripture?**

- **When is the last time my child interrupted me in prayer?**
- **If I died today, would my Bible be a keepsake for my children?**
- **Do I want my children to enjoy time with God? If so, am I devotional?**
- **If my child were asked, “What’s important to your parents?, would God, church, or the Bible be mentioned?”**

Moses said, “These commandments I give you today, don’t forget parents, they should penetrate your personal life.” It starts with you first.

And then the challenge continues in v.7. Now he puts pressure on parents to pass the promises on to their children.

Now I want you to notice that he gives parents four key times during the day to work the Bible into real life. You can’t host Vacation Bible School in your house every week, so you have to make the most of strategic moments. He mentions:

- When you sit at home.
- When you travel.
- At bedtime.
- Early in the morning, before activity begins.

He also mentions that you should use symbols on your hands, your head, your doorposts, and your gates.

All these commands, I’m convinced, are not to be taken literally like some legalistic formula that guaranteed godly children. The idea that Moses is trying to communicate is quite simple:

Make God’s Word a regular part of your life.

Make this book the centerpiece of your day, your week, your month, your year. Talk to your kids about the Lord. Tell them what He is teaching you. Ask them what the lesson was about in Sunday School. Share your favorite verses. Hang Scripture in your house, post it on cards in your car, and on your mirror when you get ready in the morning.

#3, final warning...Remember this about your life...

3. Wealth can easily lull a person to sleep. (vv.10-12)

Vv.10-12 are essentially a warning about the blessing and the curse of financial freedom. Look what it says...

When you make good money, you will be tempted to make less of God. You see, Israel had been in a serious state of dependence with manna in the wilderness. God gave them just enough to eat so that they would rely upon His hand of provision. These people lived in tents that were easily pulled up and moved. There was no sense of territorialism or capital. And now, instant prosperity was about to happen.

God was going to drive out all these peoples from the Promised Land and Israel would inherit a fortune! Land, cattle, vineyards, large houses with furniture...they would go from the bottom to the top in short order. And notice, Moses is concerned that their superior standard of living would cause them to forget that God is behind it all.

Notice the language...

v.10...large, flourishing cities you did not build

v.11...houses filled with all kinds of good things you didn't buy.

v.11...wells you didn't have to work for.

v.11...olive groves you didn't plant

God gave you everything, and don't you forget it. Our comfort can create the illusion of self-sufficiency and that we no longer need God.

Have you ever been on the airplane when the woman is giving the demonstration of what to do in emergency. If the cabin loses pressure, an air mask will fall down. Take the mask, pull out the string and place it over your head. Be sure that your safety belt is clasped...

What are people doing when she is talking? Reading magazines, checking their email on their phones, talking to their neighbors.

Now, change the scenario. What happens when those same people are in mid-air and the pilot comes over the speaker and says, "Folks, I am sorry to inform you that a bird has flown into our right engine, and I'm going to have to land this plane on the water. This is going to be a difficult landing, but I believe I can do this and I need you to follow the directions of the flight attendant." Now, this same woman, with the same mask, comes forward and gives the same demonstration she gave 90 minutes ago on the ground, and suddenly, she has a captive audience. The passengers are hanging on every single word. Why? Because they no longer feel safe.

Moses looked ahead at the Promised Land and he saw beyond the milk and honey and fancy things. He saw a people who would no longer pay attention to God. And he said, "Remember this! When your belly is full, your shelves are stocked, and your retirement fully funded, DO NOT forget that God is jealous for you and that God is the source of all of your blessings. Just remain grateful and remain holy.

The message of Moses is a message of priority. Stop now and reflect on your life. As you look back, has God had first place in your life?

