

Deuteronomy 9:1-5

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[0 : 00] Let's take your Bibles and go with me to the book of Deuteronomy. The book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter 9 is where we will be at this evening. Deuteronomy chapter 9. We'll take a few moments to look at that and then we'll take some time to pray and hopefully be encouraged in prayer together. So Deuteronomy chapter 9.

I'm not looking at very many verses. This is one of those sections which I feel like that we can divide up at least fairly. We don't really do any disservice to the text by dividing it. I don't think sometimes in the Old Testament we get to portions of Scripture and I feel like that if we break up the chapter we kind of lose the meaning or the weight of it and we kind of do some disservice to it. But I don't think we do that here in this chapter. So we're just going to be looking at verses 1 through 5 here in Deuteronomy chapter 9 verses 1 through 5 this evening and then we'll get into praying together. But let's open up with a word of prayer before we get into the text.

Lord we thank you so much for this evening. Lord we thank you for just the privilege and the opportunity of being together. We thank you for the great gift of fellowship. We thank you for the gift of church family. Lord we pray that you would be with us now as we open up your word and that your word would speak to our hearts and minds. And Lord through it we would come to a greater understanding of who you are. We come to a greater understanding of who we are. And Lord that we would draw closer to you through these realizations. Lord we just ask that in all things and all ways you would be glorified. We pray that you would be exalted with the children in the back. You'd be exalted among the youth. And Lord we just pray that you would be lifted up on high. We ask it all and we proclaim it all in the name of Jesus. Amen. Deuteronomy chapter 9 verses 1 through 5.

Deuteronomy chapter 9 verses 1 through 5 will be our text this evening. Again this is on the heels of that 8th chapter. You say well that doesn't really have much to that's kind of you know that doesn't really have to be said. We can kind of assume that since it follows it but we need to understand what was being talked about in the 8th chapter there because it's directly connected. The one thing about Deuteronomy that is unique is that most of this book was delivered in one setting. Most of it was delivered as a very lengthy sermon. You feel like your pastor is long-winded but Moses is given a great sermon here and he delivers this message to encourage the people immediately prior to their entering into the promised land. As a matter of fact from our text today or tonight it'll say today you are about to enter. So the events were really upon them. It was time to do what God had promised 400 plus years prior to that. It was time to inhabit literally the promised land. The hope and the expectation and the anticipation ever since God called Abram out of the land of the early Chaldeans. Ever since he had walked around this land and especially after he had separated from Lot and God told him everywhere your foot treads, everywhere you take a step, I'm going to give you this land. He said I'm going to provide this for you and Abraham built these altars and he called upon the name of the Lord and he was worshiping and declaring the worthiness of God there.

And then time stands still and they go into slavery and we know all these things and then there's the wilderness wandering but they're really right there on the cusp. It's about to happen. It's about to take place. This is that time and Moses is encouraging them and he's pointing them to it and he's reminding them of where they've been and he's reminding them of all that God has taught them. Deuteronomy chapter 8 is just this again this recollection of how God had dealt with them in the wilderness. He had humbled them. He had shown them that they could trust him. He had shown them that that he could provide for them. He had shown them that he was sufficient and that humbling and that display was in preparation for the abundance they were about to enjoy. And our text this evening kind of falls right on the heels of that and speaks to it almost you know repeating itself. But we see in Deuteronomy chapter 9 starting in verse 1, hear O Israel you are crossing over the Jordan today to go in and dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. Great cities fortified to heaven of people great and tall. The sons of the

[4 : 29] Anakim whom you know and of whom you have heard it said who can stand before the sons of Anak. Know therefore today that it is the Lord your God who is crossing over before you as a consuming fire.

He will destroy them and he will subdue them before you so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly just as the Lord has spoken. Listen to this. Do not say in your heart when the Lord your God has driven them out before you because of my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land. But it is because of the wickedness of those are these nations that the Lord is dispossessing them before you. It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land. But it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God is driving them out before you in order to confirm the oath which the Lord swore to your fathers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Deuteronomy chapter 9 verses 1 through 5. Here's that answer. Here's the text that gives the answer as to why did God drive the nations out of the land of Canaan? Wasn't God just being a big mean God and and doing awful things? Isn't it terrible that God would take the land away from the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Hittites all the heights there as we call them? Isn't it that God was just being so mean and and doesn't it appear that God was just it's just unfair that he was given this land? But here Moses answers that question. He did it because of the wickedness of the inhabitants of the land. Because of their sin. Because of their rebellion against him.

Because what may be known about him was revealed to them and they rejected it. That should be familiar to you because that's Romans right? Paul says what may be made known of what may be known about him is revealed to all man and man rejects it and pushes it away. And they go after their own desires and they go after their own ambitions and the wickedness of man here. But I want you to see this evening as Moses is is really preparing the people to go in the considerations before the move just three considerations before the move. He's already told them and reminded them how God had humbled them how God had shown them who he was in the worst place so that they would remember who he is in the good place right? He'd already been there to provide for them when they were hungry so that they would know when they were well fed who it came from. And now there's some considerations that need to stop and think about. Now the reason I stopped here is because by the time we get into verse six of this chapter those considerations are behind us and he's really looking inwardly at the nation right? He begins to remind the people of who they are. He begins he kind of builds on verses four and five and begins to remind the people of their rebellion and their sin nature and all those things and and the repentance that they need. But before you really get into it it's just just some considerations before the move. Before they do what God had been calling them to do. And my brother Benjamin and I were having this conversation back here in the fellowship hall earlier. There's this one great truth in every portion of scripture you open up right? When you open up anywhere in the Bible there's one great truth.

Deuteronomy chapter 9 verses 1 through 5. There's no way in the world you should ever come up with a different truth than I come up with. The Bible says one thing right? Not a multitude of truths there. Not truths with an S. That's hard for me to say. My southern tongue doesn't say it too well. There's one truth to the passage. There's thousands and thousands of applications to that truth. How it is applied in your life. What it looks like. Because listen the reason that matters is because these were the considerations the nation of Israel needed to make. These were the things they needed to stop and think about before they moved. Before they obeyed. Before they walked forward in where God was calling them.

That's the truth of this passage. The application that you and I'll go ahead and give you the application right now. The application to us is as we follow God in faithful obedience and we move to where he tells us to move. We too need to consider these things. And hopefully you'll see these truths resonate through the rest of Scripture. The we this is not something they needed to consider. This is something all of God's people must consider before they move. Jesus says it this way. Before you build a tower or sit down and figure out if you've got enough money to complete the task. Right? Before you go fight a battle make sure you got enough troops to win.

[9 : 04] Make sure. Stop. Consider. Think about things. It's the same truth here. Number one we see there is a recognized problem. There's a recognized problem. Look at what it says. And I love just the true talk of Scripture. Sometimes it's the rawness of it. Look at what it says. Hear O Israel you are crossing over the Jordan today to go in and dispossess. Yes. Hallelujah. We're going to go in and take that land. Right?

Yes. We're about to go in and we're going to go get our land. We're going to go into it. But look at what it says. Wait a minute. Because their excitement and their anticipation and their hope was yes today we're going to go get what is ours. But then he reminds them what stands in the way between them and what is theirs. Dispossessed nations greater and mightier than you. Great cities fortified to heaven.

A people great and tall the sons of Anakim whom you know and of whom you have heard it said. Who can stand before the sons of Anakim? Everything that the spies reported 38 years prior Moses says they're still there. It's not like the cities fell down. It's not like the people got weak.

It's not like all of a sudden the giants shrunk. These people are still stronger than you. They're mightier than you. Their cities are fortified to the heavens and there's giants in that land.

And that's where you're going. He recognizes the problem. The problem is a bunch of liberated slaves untrained in warfare except for their wilderness wandering time is about to go in and wage battle and try to take land away from these people. There's the problem. The problem is is that in and of themselves they're not fit. In and of themselves they can't do it because the task ahead of them is greater than who they are. And the enemies that will oppose them is stronger than who they are themselves. It is this realization that we cannot do what it is we're about to do. And recognizing the fact it's a fact that if we go in that land we're going to encounter these things. They're waiting on us.

[11 : 33] They know about us. They've heard about us. They've had 38 years to watch us wander around in circles and count us. Right? They've seen us in our good times and they've seen us in our bad times. They've seen us fall. They've seen us rejoice. They know what we did to Sihon and all but then they know how we came down to the plains of Moab too. They know about the 23,000 that died in one day as well.

They know all about us. And what's waiting on the other side of the Jordan River is a problem. But that's where God's calling us to. See, we would like to paint the picture today. And unfortunately, I don't mean this to be despairing to any parents or anything like that. Around our house we always tried to be real. We tried to be honest. We tried to be true. Right? We never painted our kids better than they were. We never painted our kids worse than they were. It's okay. You know, we told them, hey, if you want to play a sport you better work hard because you didn't get athleticism from your daddy. Right? I mean, I ain't no super athlete whatever. But we always just tried to be honest. Right? But I think in the world today, I think sometimes we try to paint too good of a picture. When Christ tells us that following him is not going to be easy. Following him is going to make us run into cities fortified to the heavens, people mightier and stronger than us, people greater than us. You know, as we follow him and we live in obedience to him and as we go with him, we're going to run into things that in the flesh cause us problems.

They're going to be issues. And that's the reality. This is why Paul speaks of the armor of God and just about every piece except for one is defensive. That is to stop the problem from getting you.

Right? You only have one offensive. That's the sword of the Lord, which is the word of God. Everything else is to keep the problem from hurting you because you have an enemy. This is why we speak of the reality that we wrestle against the spiritual forces of darkness. And this is, we understand this, you know, God didn't call us to ease and comfort. He called us to follow him somewhere that is going to create a problem. And to follow him where it's going to be difficult. And we see this. And I like that because the promised land is not a place of ease and comfort. Right? The promised land is a, is a place of plenty. But before they get to the plenty, they got to go through the problem. They got to deal with the issues. They got to deal with the struggles. They got to deal with the pain and the discomfort and all of those things. So many people, I think, think, well, if I trust Jesus Christ, I get the plenty. You do get the plenty. But we're walking in a land full of problems. We get the necessity in the midst of the problems as he brings us to the place of the plenty. Right? Someone, I think, has rightfully said, I can't remember who it was. I don't know if it was Warren

Wearsbey or someone else, that the promised land is not a picture of heaven. The promised land is a picture of faithful walking, of Christian obedience. Because there are no battles in heaven. There are no issues in heaven. There are no, there are no struggles in heaven. But he was calling them there. And now that's intentional.

[15:10] Because what happens a lot of times is, if we're following Christ, and we're, we're living in obedience, we have this tendency to think that God will never call us to do something that would create a problem. I can almost guarantee you everything God calls you to do will create a problem. It'll create a conflict internally. You're like, I don't know, there'll be this wrestling inside of you. Sometimes it'll create a conflict externally. People look at you and tell you you're nuts. People will think you're crazy. It'll create a problem socially.

Some people think, well, you just went up too far off the deep end. You became a Jesus freak. They don't want to hang out with you too much more anymore because you're taking these things too literally. They weren't really supposed to be literally applied. But I can almost guarantee you, every time God calls us to follow him, it creates a problem. Because the problems are there for a reason.

It leads us to the second thing. There is the recognized problem. And that problem exists to show us the second thing. A reassured presence. If they were being led to go somewhere that they could handle it themselves, if they were being led to go take possession of an uninhabited land, or a land maybe full of, you know, little people that were no problem or sparsely populated, or maybe just a place where they knew they were stronger than, why would they need anybody to go with them?

What would be their level of trust, hope, reliance upon the one going with them? Because see, the problems exist to remind us of the presence we need.

The problems are there to show us we cannot do it on our own, and we have to have him going with us. Because look at what it says. After he states all these problems, verse 3 says, know therefore today. Again, it's this reaffirming of today. Today, you're about to go to a place full of problems. Know therefore today, this day, which you're about to go into a place full of problems and issues and obstacles and things that are greater and mightier and stronger than you, things which you cannot stand before, know today that it is the Lord your God who's crossing over before you as a consuming fire.

[17 : 43] See, without the problems, they didn't need to know God was going with them, but because of the problems, they needed to make sure God was going with them. Without the problems, hey, if he doesn't go, it's okay, we got this.

But because of the problems, we need to know that he is going. We need to know he's going not just with us, but before us. We need to know, we need to make certain that we are following him, not running ahead of him.

We need to make sure that our dependence is on him, not on us. Because what's waiting over there is greater than those of us that are crossing.

What's waiting over there, we can't handle on our own, so we need to make sure that he is going. And there's, again, this imagery, Deuteronomy 4, 24, it's also in the book of Hebrews, chapter 10, and here it is again, in Deuteronomy 9, 3, as a consuming fire, right, as a consuming fire, he will destroy them, and he will subdue them before you so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly, just as the Lord has spoken to you.

There was some work they were going to have to do. They were going to have to drive them out. But he was going to enable them to drive them out. He was going to make it where they could overcome them.

[18 : 58] They couldn't just, you know, walk in there and let God get rid of everybody. They had to put their hand in it as well, but their dependency was on the fact that when they got there, they may have to walk around the wall seven times, but they were trusting the fact that when they walked around it on that seventh day that God was going to cause it to fall down.

Right? And then they were trusting the, I mean, you ever put that, I mean, just really put that picture in your head. I know I'm just totally going side. I'm marching around the walls of Jericho.

Typically, archers that are afraid of being attacked hang out on the top of walls. And you're just marching around. The base of the wall.

So you're trusting that what I'm doing makes sense. You're also trusting that the people up there with arrows don't shoot me. God called me to march. I'm going to march. But I'm resting in the fact that the consuming fire is with me.

It's like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, right? Let it be known to you today, O King Nebuchadnezzar, that we will not bow down and worship the golden image which you have made. And let it be known to you today that our God is greater than you.

[20 : 10] And He can deliver us from this fire. But if He does not, we still will not worship. See, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego put that if in there. They said, we were okay to go even if He does not deliver us.

He can. But if He doesn't, we're still going to praise Him. We know He can. But if we die in there, we're still praising Him when we die in there.

Because the fire was the problem, but He who was going with them into the fire was bigger than the problem. They didn't care if they died or not, right? You see the trend here in Scripture, right? God always calls His people to walk into problems so that they can realize they need Him in the midst of them.

So they can realize that His presence is the thing that is making the difference. So that they can realize that the fact that He is there is the game changer.

It is the thing that makes it not only doable, but victorious. Right? It is the thing that overcomes. It enables them to do what it is they need to do because of everything He's already done.

[21 : 14] In our Christian walk, when He calls us to step out on faith and to do things that seem impossible, it is the realization that as we step out on faith and we confront these problems, it is He who is going with us, not we ourselves.

See, I think, this is honestly the more I've thought about this all week long, churches need to be walking into places with problems because that's where they're going to need His presence the most.

that's where they really need Him. Because if there's no issues, no struggles, nothing too hard, then do we really need Him?

I mean, do we really? Or are we okay? I see it's this reassured presence that says that He will do these things and how good it is to consider before we move that He is going with us in spite of the problems and because of the problems so that we can confront them.

Number three, and I'll be done. Because just as the eighth chapter shows us this, so here, beginning of the ninth chapter, we are introduced to this theme as well.

[22 : 32] When people as weak as the nation of Israel are about to go in and take over the land as fortified and strong as the land of Canaan. And when these people go in and from the world's vantage point, it looks like they have won the most unlikely of victories.

Now the nation of Israel knows that God is with them and they understand that it is God who is leading them victoriously and they understand that it is presence that is there. But God also knows the tendency of man and the tendency of man here to say, man, look at us.

Look at us. Look at what we've done. Look at what we've accomplished. And really, look at who we are in comparison to who they are. Because see, there's this great danger in judging ourselves by the fall of another individual.

Or of seeing ourselves better because someone else's situation ended worse. And we see it here. He says, do not say in your heart, not out loud, but in your heart, not even internally, do not say in your heart when the Lord your God has driven them out before you.

So what is he saying? When these things take place and when these people are driven out and when you have defeated them, don't look at them and say, see, I knew we were better than they were.

[23 : 56] Because if they were as good as we are, they would still be here. He says, be careful. He says, don't say in your heart, when the Lord your God has driven them out before you, because of my righteousness, the Lord has brought me in to possess this land.

So here's the temptation. Don't think God did what he did because of who you are. Now that's humbling, right? Don't assume the fact that because others were driven out, you were better than them.

Don't look at the fall of another and see yourself better. Don't say, well, I knew I was better than them all along because look at where they are now and look at where I am.

He says, be careful. Don't say that. Don't look at the favor of God displayed to you and the judgment of God displayed to them as being a confirmation of your righteousness or a confirmation of your worthiness because he stops them and he says, and here again is that answer, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is dispossessing them before you.

He said, the reason they fell was because of their sin. Now, this is both a reminder and a caution.

[25 : 21] He is reminding them they're not technically better than the inhabitants of Canaan and he is warning them that if they begin to do what the inhabitants of Canaan did, then they will become like the inhabitants of Canaan.

This is where the book of Deuteronomy ends, right? With blessings and cursings. That if you become like the people you push out, then you will have happened to you what happened to the people you have pushed out.

And that's exactly what happens. The nation of Israel rebels. They fall away. They begin worshiping all the lowercase g gods of the inhabitants of Canaan and they begin to go astray and God judges them just like he did the inhabitants of Canaan.

And he gave them warning after warning after warning. So the end result of their lives, when they looked at the people being pushed out before them, they were supposed to see that's the consequence of sin.

But the temptation was to say, that's why I'm better than them. And just in case we're not careful, that's a battle the church still fights today.

[26 : 34] It's to look at those who stumble and fall and to say, see, I knew we were better. When in reality, our eyes are supposed to be open. That's the consequence of my sin.

And if I don't lean on my Savior more, there to go I. That's me. Right? That's me. It's a reminder and a warning.

It's a caution and it carries, it's be careful that I don't end up in my sin like that. He says, it is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land.

It is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God is driving them out before you in order to confirm the oath which the Lord swore to your fathers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Again, He reminds us, not because of who you are, but He does this thing at the end here.

Look at what He does and I'll be wrapping up, we'll be through. He says, not because of your righteousness or your worthiness, but it's because of their sin and He did this to fulfill the promise He made with your forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[27 : 41] What is He telling them? The only reason you're here is because of a covenant. The only reason you have a right to be in this land to take possession of it is because of a covenant which God made and you weren't present.

That's what He's telling them, right? You weren't even there. It was with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Do you remember the Abrahamic covenant? Do you remember? I'll remind you of it really quick.

Found the book of Genesis where God is making this covenant and you've read of it, right? But the covenant was sealed in this weird way. Taking animals and splitting them in half and you cut the animals in half and you lay half over here and half over here and half over here and there's all these succession of animals and remember Abraham did that and he stayed awake all day running the buzzards off of them wanting to get the buzzards and the vultures away from them and trying to do it and then Abraham fell into a deep sleep and then Abraham woke up and he saw a fiery furnace going back and forth between the carcasses and we scratch our hand and go, what in the world does that mean?

To us, it doesn't mean much of anything but to Abraham and to people in his day it meant a lot because see, to make a covenant, you and I would come together and we would say at the terms of our covenant, I'm going to do this and you do that and I'm going to do this and you do that and we're like, yes, yes, okay, let's ratify that thing, let's sign it.

Today we sit down at the table and sign it. I don't know if they didn't want to sign their name or what but this is what they do. They would take an animal and split it in half but half over here, half over here, half over here, half over here. You take your torch, I take my torch and we walk by one another.

[29 : 07] We pass between them. You come this way, I come that way and then we turn around and we do it again and we go back and forth and what we've done, we have ratified, we have signed the covenant and the blood of these animals is a testimony to the fact that I'm going to do what you're going to do and you're going to do what you're going to do and we ratified it by walking through it, right?

We've passed through the blood. Abraham didn't walk. Abraham woke up and God was going back and forth between the covenant. That's the fiery furnace because see Abraham, the covenant that God made with Abraham has really very, very, very little to do with Abraham.

It's a one-sided covenant. God is going to do what he said he's going to do even in spite of Abraham. And when Moses told them that, you know what he was saying?

You're not here because of what you're doing. You're here because of who he is, because of who the Lord your God is. He's faithful. He's true.

He fulfills his word. It is him you rely on, not upon yourself. What's our application? You know why we are who we are in Christ?

[30 : 24] Not because of who we are, but because of who he is. Last I checked, I didn't hang on a cross. He did. Last I checked, I didn't go into a grave. He did. Last I checked, I didn't come out of that grave.

He did. I didn't walk between that carcass. I didn't, my fiery torch wasn't lit. He did all of the covenant work. He did all of the promises. He did all of the penalty. He did all of the suffering.

He did all of the shame. He's the one who rose victorious and he says, now I'm going to do it for you too. See, I'm not, none of these things are mine because of my righteousness or my worthiness or because of who I am, but because of who he is and his faithfulness and his goodness and his grandeur and his mercy.

And now all of a sudden, before I follow him, I remind myself of that. I get to follow him.

I get to move forward in obedience because of who he is. Just some considerations before moving forward from Deuteronomy chapter 9 verses 1 through 5.

[31 : 34] Thank you, brother.