

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

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[0 : 01] Deuteronomy chapter 26 verses 1 through 11 and as always when we look at the Word of God and we're looking at the truth that it contains and we hope to find this application, one thing that we need to be careful of and I'm constantly reminding myself of this and we kind of alluded to it just a little bit this morning is we don't want to gain understanding for understanding's sake.

We don't want to gain knowledge or truth just so that we can say we know more cool stuff or we know things. That truth without application is ultimately useless information is the way I like to put it.

Unless we apply the truth which we learn then it becomes useless information to us. All of us know useless facts or maybe we don't all know but some people are very good at that.

I kind of tend to do that thing, random facts and random truths and things that we kind of around our house just kind of laugh about because in the grand scheme of things it may not matter as much.

But when it comes to Scripture, when it comes to understanding more of God, we're always looking for the truth that Scripture contains. We're looking for the application but let us be careful that that truth finds application in our life, right?

[1 : 12] That that truth, what we see as being true and real in Scripture finds application because it's written for our benefit. It's written for our edification.

It's written that we may grow into Christ's likeness and even here in portions such as Deuteronomy 26, a very, and I don't want to say very, a lot more easy text than what we've had in our previous text leading up to this point.

But still, we see the truth that it contains for the people in particular and in the application hopefully we'll begin to see as it applies to our life. And this is something we want to apply, something we want to do.

So Deuteronomy 26 starting in verse 1. Remember, we've just read this series of what seems to be odd laws and regulations and requirements of how they are to behave and how they are to respond even in fightings and bickerings and all these things that seem just to kind of be jumbled up and thrown out there.

But yet we've seen how the standard of Yahweh, the standard of God for His people touches every aspect of their life. And it touches that aspect because it is for the intended purpose of leading them to worship.

[2 : 31] Their life was to be centered around worship, their relationship with Yahweh, their relationship with the Lord their God. Over and over again we read that in the book of Deuteronomy, the Lord your God, the Lord your God, the Lord your God.

Life revolves around that relationship of who He is. Now that Lord, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D is the covenant name of God, right?

The fact that they're in a covenant relationship with God and they live in light of that. Every area and every aspect of their life is touched by that relationship and ultimately leads to this great thing of worship which we find really being applied really ultimately in Deuteronomy chapter 27.

But played out kind of in smaller portions here throughout Deuteronomy chapter 26. But starting in verse 1 it says, The Lord my God, that I have entered the land which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us.

Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. You shall answer and say before the Lord your God, My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there few in number, but there he became a great and mighty and populous nation.

[4 : 10] And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us and imposed hard labor on us. Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers. And the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toll and our oppression.

And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. And with great terror and with signs and wonders. And he has brought us to this place. And has given us this land.

A land flowing with milk and honey. Now behold, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which you, O Lord, have given me. And you shall set it down before the Lord your God and worship before the Lord your God.

And you and the Levite and the alien who is among you shall rejoice in all the good. Which the Lord your God has given you in your household. Deuteronomy 26 verses 1 through 11.

I want us to see this evening as we look at the word of God together. His goodness confessed. His goodness. The goodness of the Lord confessed.

[5 : 15] What we have before us is an event that was to take place at a particular time in history with a peculiar group. This was a one time event that has eternal applications.

It was to be one time in the life of each member of society. Or each family or household of society. It was not a recurrent theme. This is not to be, as Warren Wiersbe and others remind us, this is not to be confused with the offering of the first fruits.

Which was an annual event. Because there are so many things that take place here in this presentation of first fruits. That does not have its application elsewhere in the offering of the first fruits and the worship and celebration.

That's one of their festivals, right? And we see that in Deuteronomy chapter 12. And I believe also in Deuteronomy chapter 16. Each year they were to bring in the first fruits, the end gathering. And they were to praise God.

And they were to give thanks for his harvest that he has provided for them. And that was an annual thing. That was this recurrent opportunity to praise God each and every year for his provisions. This is not that.

[6 : 19] This is a one time event that was to take place after they initially took possession of the land in which they were given. A promised land. And again, Moses is dictating something to them that will take place and transpire when they take possession.

Not if. Right? With God, the promises of God are yes. They're yes. They're not if, maybe, kind of. They're yes.

And so when they take possession of the land, these are the things. Or this one right here that we're looking at this evening. There's another one that starts in verse 12. But this one in particular is to take place after they take possession of their land.

And the very first thing they're commanded to do was really to come and confess the goodness of God. To confess his goodness and what he's done.

To confess his goodness and what he's provided. To confess his goodness upon their life. And we see this just being played out. And they wouldn't have all been doing it at the same time because these things would have taken place, you know, throughout the years.

[7 : 28] Because God didn't bring his people into the land and give it to them all at one time. Right? They pushed out the inhabitants of the land. They divided up the land. And the tribes continued to expand.

And people were taking possession of their land at different times and different years. And they would have had different seasons of their first harvest. But still, we have this truth of something that was going to be done or was commanded to be done in their initial harvest within the promised land.

But this leads us to a truth which must be lived out or ought to be lived out in the people of God all the time. Something that should be applied to our lives on a daily basis or at least on a repeated basis.

And it is confessing his goodness. And we see this happening here through something that is very symbolic but something that is also very practical.

Now, God is good to us. Now, we understand God is so much other. Right? He's greater and mightier and all these things. But what he gives to us is good and right and proper and fitting.

[8 : 43] What he provides for us, what he does towards us is deserving of confession. Even the difficult things are good.

Even the unwelcomed things are good. Even the uncertain things in our life are good. Because the Bible tells us no good thing does the Father withhold from his children.

And it also tells us let us not be confused. Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father above. Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father above.

So we understand that this is a practice that can take place repeatedly among the people of God. But we see it being lived out here at this time in history among the inhabitants of the nation of Israel.

And we see, hopefully, how they did it. Kind of the model of how they professed or confessed his goodness. And that would allow us to have that same model in confessing it as well.

[9 : 48] Something that we could bring into our lives and apply this truth to us. Number one, we see an announced possession. Confessing his goodness started and began with an announced possession.

He says, when you come into the promised land and you take possession of the land which the Lord your God has promised you. So that is, when God's promises become a reality.

When that which the Lord had promised, now begins to be a possession. When that which God has said would be, has come to be. And you know that you've taken possession of the land when you gather in your first harvest.

And the reason you know that you've taken possession of it is because now you have had time to work the soil, plant the crop, and harvest the crop. And you live there long enough to bring in an ingathering or a harvest.

He says, when you have done that and you've brought in your first harvest, then you should take the first fruits of the harvest. Now, first fruits would be the best. Right? The best things brought in.

[10 : 51] The first of the best. Kind of the best of the best, if you will. But it was also a symbol that not only did that portion, that tithe, or that 10% belong to the Lord your God.

But by bringing in the first fruits, you were declaring, all of my harvest belongs to God. It is all His. He has the best and the rest.

He just allows me to enjoy the rest. Much like our giving to Him now, it's not that if we give God 10%, then we get to enjoy 90%.

No, that declaration of allowing Him to have the tithe is also confessing that everything belongs to Him. He just allows us to utilize the rest of it. So when they were to bring in this harvest, if you will, they were to bring it into the place where the Lord their God had called His name to dwell.

Which shows us, again, this reality is that man is not free to worship however, wherever, and whenever he wants to. There were particular times and places, and there were standards which he had set. We have that freedom in Christ because He is with us.

[11 : 58] Yahweh is with His people now. He is Emmanuel. We have God with us in our presence. He lives among us. But here, this time, there was one place of manifestation.

And they were to go to that place and to the priest that was in office at that time. This, again, shows us that it wasn't all going to happen at one time in history because it doesn't say to the priest. It says to the priest that is in office at that time, at that particular time.

And you were to bring it to Him and you were to make this great profession or this great announcement. He says, and you shall go to the priest, who was in office at that time, and declare.

He says this, I declare this day to the Lord my God that I have entered the land which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us. Verse 3. I declare that I have entered and taken possession of the land which the Lord my God promised to give us.

And it is this announced possession. And this is important because in order to confess His goodness, one had to first announce the reality that what God has promised has come about.

[13 : 09] He had promised many years before. He had promised even Abram, right? A multitude of years before. He had promised them when He brought them out of Egypt.

Remember that great truth? He took them out in order to bring them in. He didn't just get them out of Egypt. He took them out. Sorry, He took them out to bring them into the promised land. There's always that.

They're always connected together. You're not just set free from Egypt. You're set free to be brought into Canaan. God didn't just set you free from sin. He set you free from sin to bring you into His presence.

He didn't just set you free so you can run around however you want to. You are set free to be brought in. And there is this declared promise. And there's this promise that just resonates throughout the ages that God is going to do this.

God is going to do this. God is going to do this. And you begin to confess His goodness when you can stand up and publicly announce that you now possess what God has promised.

[14 : 05] What God has said He would do, He has done. And you announce that you now possess what God had promised before.

And you announce it by bringing in proof of that possession. Here are the first fruits of my land. And you say, well, okay, that's great. But what does that mean for me?

When you open up the pages of Scripture, over and over and over again, you find the promises of God. God has promised a number, a multitude of things to His people.

Over and over again, you not only find the declarations of God's truth, but you find the promises of God's provision. And the further we get into Scripture, the more we see Him promising His people.

We see Him promising His people this peace, this joy, all of these things, right? He promises not to forsake them. We could just go on and on and on and on again. It is very nurturing to the soul, but also encouraging to others.

[15 : 15] When God's people stand up and announce that they personally possess what God has promised. That is, when you can look at the reality that what God has promised you He would do, He has done.

When you can study the Word of God, and you can see in the Word of God, this is what God has promised He would do. And lo and behold, look in my life, He has done everything He has promised.

I possess the promises of God. And we begin to confess His goodness when we begin to announce our possession of those things.

You say, well, what are those things? Well, I can't tell you what those things are in particular. I know we're not dealing with land here, right? God has not promised to lead us into a promised land, even though we're talking about an eternal home.

But here in this day and time in history, there are promises that have application to our lives. I have seen God fulfill His promises. I remember just very quick when I came to Christ, and I had all these sleepless nights, and I had all these things that God was dealing with me, right?

[16 : 28] He was really bringing me under conviction, is the right way to say it now. And He was really just allowing me to have an unsettled soul, and was calling me to Himself through bringing me under conviction.

And so many nights I would lay awake, and so many nights I would just go through all these great scenarios in my head, and just so many what-ifs. And I remember the very night that I got down on my knees, and I said, I can't do it anymore.

And I gave my life to Christ, and I went to bed that night, and I slept great. It was the best night of sleep I'd had in a couple of years. And really the hand of God was just upon me, and I slept good.

And I remember the very next morning, I woke up, and I was reading the Bible, and I'd read in the book of Proverbs that day, somewhere along the line of that day, that God promises that the sleep of the righteous will be sweet.

And you know what I could confess? I could confess at that moment that I possessed that promise. That the sleep of the righteous is sweet.

[17 : 29] Because I realized all my worries, all my cares, all my concerns, they're in His hand. And there's a promise of God that I now possess. I've never seen the righteous forsaken, nor begging bread.

I'm not going to tell you that it's always been easy, but I can tell you that I can confess we have possessed that promise. There have been moments where my family and I had went to go serve the church, this is years ago, where we'd go serve the church, knowing that we didn't know what we were going to eat for lunch when we got home that afternoon.

We'd come back, and our freezer and refrigerator would be just overflowing and full with food. No plans. No understanding. No realities of how that was going to happen.

And we found out later how it happened, but God never forsook us. And we could look, and listen, this is why I don't care how hard somebody tries, they will never cause me to waver from what this word tells me.

I don't care what your circumstances declare. I don't care what your feelings may feel like. I don't care what your mind may convince you of. But I know that let every man be found a liar, and this word be found a truth.

[18 : 41] Because what I have found is that what God has promised never fails. And when I can begin to confess and declare that I have possessed over and over and over and over again, the very things he has promised me, and I can open up the word and I go, oh, wow, I've seen that in my life.

When I begin to announce, first of all, to myself, and then secondly, corporately or publicly, I begin to announce that I now possess what God has promised me, it begins to lead me into a confession of his goodness.

People say, well, if God is so good, then why? I can always answer, I know God is good because of. And too often, people are quick to declare why he is not good, rather than to announce why he is good.

Because we often don't know everything we possess that he has promised us. And when we begin to see these realities, when they took a hold of the land, and they could go think about this, and they could finally stand up and say, I now possess what God has promised me.

God is good at that moment, right? In that moment, the goodness of God is on display in their life because they don't deserve that land.

[20 : 12] They don't deserve it. Listen, I don't deserve a peaceful night's sleep. I don't deserve to not be forsaken.

You say, well, sure you do. No, the reality of scripture, I deserve death, hell, and the grave. That's what I deserve. But these things I possess as a result of Christ and his gift, and we begin to announce that, and we begin to declare that.

When you can publicly announce the reality that what God has promised you has not failed, then we begin to lead to an attitude of confessing his goodness.

Number two, we see an acknowledged past. Not only an announced possession, but an acknowledged past. Because they were to take that basket, and they were to give it to the priest, and the priest would lay it before the Lord, and then the priest would give it back to him, and they were to take it.

And they were to get into this long discourse, right, of what they were to say. It says in verse four, Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. And when he did that, and you were to be there in that presence, and you were to say, You shall answer and say before the Lord your God, My father was a wandering Aramean.

[21 : 31] Now that's Jacob. Wandering, going around from place to place. Some don't use the word Aramean. The New American Standard does. Other translations do as well. Some say, in other words, same thing, because that whole region was referred to in a number of ways.

But that's Jacob, right? He's a wandering Aramean. So, you know, he just kind of, the New King James, I think, says, and close to death. But the reality there is he was just small in number, right?

He's just one man. He went down and spent 20 years around. Some of his kinfolk down there came back with two wives and 12 sons. And, you know, really God began to multiply, but still just small in number, right?

Not much, just a wandering man. But then they went down to Egypt, and he says, And then he went down to Egypt, small in number, 70 persons. They came out 2 million. 70 persons.

Now look at this confession here. Look at this acknowledgement of what's going on in the past. But he went down to Egypt, and he sojourned there a few in number, but there he became great and mighty and a populous nation.

[22 : 30] He went from 70 in number to, most Bible scholars estimate, around 2 million by the time of the Exodus events. And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us and imposed hard labor on us.

And then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers. And the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toll and our oppression. And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and signs and wonders.

And he has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Do you see this acknowledgement here? Not only are they announcing that they possess what God has promised them, they acknowledge the past where God found them.

They acknowledge who they were in the past. They acknowledge the reality that their father was just a wandering aramean, that he was weak in stature, he wasn't that large. They acknowledge the past that they really grew in number in the midst of affliction and pain and misery.

They acknowledge that the past, that they stood in desperate need of deliverance. They acknowledge that in the past, the only way that they got to the present reality of possessing the land was because God set them free from their enslavement, right?

[23 : 39] They acknowledge the past that God had to come to their rescue and lead them out. They acknowledge the past was miserable and they acknowledge that the past was suffering and they acknowledge that God did wonderful things.

And this acknowledgement of a past situation leads to the praise of a present reality. Because as they look back and see where they came from, they are reminded of his goodness.

They weren't just some mighty people wandering around looking for a place to live. No, their father was a wandering aramean who was close to death and small in stature and went to sojourn in Egypt.

And there they suffered and while sojourning in Egypt and while they became oppressed and mistreated. And there they needed a redeemer, a rescuer and they cried out and God intervened.

And really what this acknowledgement is of the past is that everything they now possess is a direct result of God's activity in their life. They are reminded of the reality that while they may possess the land that he has promised, the only reason they possess it is because of what he has done in the past.

[24 : 45] Past experiences are leading to present realities. And they are able then to acknowledge his faithfulness and his power and his wonder in their life.

That if God wasn't faithful to his people, if God wasn't powerful in display towards his people, then they would never possess what they possess today.

See, unfortunately, now I know that God has cast our sins as far as the east is from the west. I know that God has cast our sins into the sea of forgetfulness.

I know those realities. I know that God has a great ability to forget. He chooses to forget who we are apart from Christ and only sees who we are in Christ.

That's God's prerogative and power. But unfortunately, what I think has happened is that God's people have striven so hard to forget the past, they forget how good God was then and how good he is now.

[26 : 01] is we are so ashamed of our past, which we should be. We are so ashamed of who we are apart from Christ or who we were apart from Christ, which we ought to be.

We are not to rejoice in who we are. We're not to relish in the past. But friend, listen to me. There is great hope that comes in the acknowledgement of the past, but for the grace of God, but for the intersection of God in my life, but for the death and the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but for the reality that he drew me to himself through these, but for the reality of my miserable existence and him rescuing me from the miry clay of sin, but for that I would not possess any of his promises.

And when we acknowledge who we were in the past, it enlightens who he is in the present. When we try to convince ourselves that we were pretty good without him, then we will inevitably come to the place where we really think we're okay without him now.

But when we cannot get over the grace and the mercy and the wonder of salvation, and we cannot move beyond the reality that while I was yet a sinner, Christ died for me.

And when I cannot get over the reality that before the foundations of the earth were created, my name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and that for 20 of those years, when my name was already inscribed in the Book of Life, I lived as if God did not exist, even if I confess it with my mouth in practice, I lived as if it didn't exist.

[27 : 47] And had it not been for him intersecting my life and really calling me to himself, I would have continued to live that way. And if it had not been for me crying out to him and him accepting me as I was, then I still would be that way.

And when I can truthfully acknowledge the past reality of where he found me, I would come as Paul and say, I am the chief of all sinners and Christ died for me.

When you read the writings of Paul, and I've told you this before, and I want you to pay attention to them, 1 and 2 Thessalonians are probably his first letters, followed by Galatians, and then moving on down.

When you read the early writings of Paul, Paul refers to himself as an apostle born out of due season in his early writings. Then he refers to himself as one kind of rebellious and a persecutor of the church.

By the time you get to Paul's last letter, Paul says, I was the chief of all sinners. Which meant the longer Paul hung out with Christ, the greater he looked back in the past and acknowledged who he truly was.

[29 : 13] When Jesus saved me, he didn't save a pretty good boy. I'll go ahead and confess that when I shared my testimony for the first time, shortly before my 21st birthday, I remember when I shared my testimony, I was even convinced in the sharing of my testimony that I had been a pretty good guy, I was a pretty good boy all my life, and Jesus finally saved me.

Now, 21 years later, I realized that when Jesus saved me, he saved a desperately wicked individual. Even in all my goodness.

He saved the chief of sinners when he saved me. And when I can acknowledge that, I begin to confess his goodness. I begin to confess how good he is to forgive me.

How good he is. The reality that I possess his promises in light of where he found me, that is overwhelming. And this leads to praise and praise and praise and praise.

Which brings us to our third and final thing, an ascribed possibility. An ascribed possibility. When something is ascribed, it means that it will flow from other things.

[30 : 39] It is bound to happen. If you look it up in Webster's Dictionary, I have in my office a facsimile of Webster's Original Dictionary in the 1800s, and I keep that, not an original.

I have an old dictionary there too, but I keep kind of this facsimile copy of Webster's Original Dictionary, because when Noah Webster wrote his dictionary, the original one, he wrote it as every word pertained to relationship with God.

It's every word pertained to Scripture. And he did that for the words that he could find a meaning in Scripture, because the Bible was the only textbook used in schools at that time. So he wrote it as the words pertain.

So to ascribe, as he defines it, is to naturally flow as a result of, right? Glory is ascribed to God because it flows from God. So this is an ascribed possibility.

So something that we can think which will naturally flow from this. When we can begin to announce that we possess what God has promised, and we announce that possession in light of the reality of who we were in the past, and we acknowledge that we don't deserve these things, yet we possess these things, this is what will happen.

[31 : 53] He says, and then you will come, and you will declare in verse 10, now behold, I have brought the first produce of the ground which you, O Lord, have given me.

So when you have done this, and you declare to God, here it is, here it is, and it says, and you shall set it down before the Lord your God, look at this, last half of verse 10, and worship before the Lord your God.

Worship naturally flows from this reality. When I can announce that the very things which God has promised are now a reality in my life, and I can confess that where he found me doesn't deserve this, it doesn't lead one naturally to this, but his supernatural intervention has brought these things to pass, and I lay that before him, then I begin to worship.

I begin to worship. I begin to praise his name. But not only me, because look at what verse 11 says, and you and the Levite and the alien who is among you, so the reality is that everyone that's around you, right, those who are near you, those who are affected, the Levite and the alien, they are affected by what happens in the life of the individual because they rely upon that.

You'll get to that as we start verse 12, we start talking about taking care of the Levite and the alien, but they're affected by the worship of the individual, the faithful worship, and him declaring God's goodness.

[33 : 26] And as he worships, he says, and the Levite and alien who is among you shall rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given you in your household. So what does this show us?

You cannot rejoice in the provisions of the Lord your God until you have come before him and confessed his goodness. Too often, we do not rejoice in what he's provided for us because we have not first come before him and confessed his goodness and providing it to begin with.

We do not get to rejoice in everything he's given us because we have not stopped to consider the reality of how good it is that he would give us anything.

We do not pause to consider the reality of how good he is. and then whatever he's chosen to provide for us as a result of his goodness, we have the opportunity now to rejoice in.

And not only will we rejoice in it, but so too will those who are affected by our lives. They will rejoice in it as well. Confessing his goodness.

[34 : 43] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. And Lord, we declare that your work towards us and among us and to us is good.

Lord, it is worthy of our praise. Worthy of our humble declaration of your majesty.

so much more than we deserve. So much more than our work and efforts could ever seek to gain. Lord, all that you have given us to possess in Christ is good.

Lord, in spite of where you found us, it is good. So we come. May our lives be a life of rejoicing in that reality.

In spite of our circumstances at times and even as a result of our circumstances. May our life be a life of rejoicing.

[35 : 54] In Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.