

Deuteronomy 31:1-13

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[0 : 00] I don't get in any more trouble, okay? Let's go ahead and go to the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter 31. Deuteronomy chapter 31 is where we will be at this evening.

We'll only be looking at verses 1 through 13. Deuteronomy 31 verses 1 through 13. Y'all be quiet. Pastor's wife's coming in the room. We don't need to let her know anything we were just talking about.

We were talking about youth days. Maybe they think that maybe I was fun as a youth leader, but I said there's some things I can't do as a pastor now, so we bring that down. So we're in Deuteronomy chapter 31 verses 1 through 13.

But before we get into the text, let's open up with a word of prayer, and then we'll just get right into it together. Lord, I thank you so much just for allowing us to get together. Lord, we thank you for Lord, just the privilege.

The privilege of opening up your word, and Lord, the privilege of digging into it with one another. Lord, of looking at the text, understanding more of ourselves.

[0 : 59] We're growing in a greater relationship with you. Lord, we pray that when we look at your word tonight that we would not come with preconceived notions, or we would not come with our own mindsets.

Lord, that we would Lord, allow you to speak to our hearts and minds. Show us the truth of who you are. Show us the truth of who you're calling us to be.

And Lord, just help us to respond accordingly to that, not just to gain information. But Lord, may our hearts be sensitive, and our lives be willing to live pleasing to you, to live obedient to you, and for your glory and your honor.

I pray for those working with the kids. I pray for the children. I pray for the youth. Lord, we pray that in all things, in all ways, you would be exalted and glorified this evening, and may your name be magnified.

We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Deuteronomy 31. Really a transition chapter, which is kind of ironic that this week, not ironic, it's just kind of fitting that this week, when we go back to the book of Matthew, we will be in Matthew 13, which is also a transition chapter in the gospel of Matthew.

[2 : 10] Deuteronomy 31 is one of those as well. As a matter of fact, the grand teaching of the book of Deuteronomy is now over. It is finished. Moses has sought to expound the law, or to make clear, which is all the exposition or expounding is, is to open up for clarity and to really just to clarify what has already been written or what has already been said.

So he's expounded the law, and he's kind of fleshed it out in daily applications of what it looks like when they go into the promised land and they're living as God's covenant people, and this is how the law is going to affect their lives.

And if you know, if we went through the book of Deuteronomy, we see how the law affects every aspect of their life, right? Not only how they worship, but how they do business, how they do family life, how they eat meals together, the festivals that they would hold, how many trips they would take back to wherever the Lord God calls His name to dwell, which we know historically that first place would be shallow.

Later on, it would be Jerusalem. But we understand that the law has application to every aspect of their life. And now He has come to this blessing and cursing, because after expounding the law and telling them what it is that they should do, really, we don't want to, I'm cautious, we don't want to say the law is a list of do's and don'ts.

The law is really the standard of living, right? It's what it looks like to live in a covenant relationship with a holy God. Because when you're in a relationship with a holy God, your life looks different.

[3 : 40] Or at least it should. As a result of the relationship, not as a result of the list. There's a big difference there. This is not religion, this is relationship. Religion gives you a list of checks and

balances and a list of do's and don'ts.

And as long as you make enough check marks on this column, then you're pleasing. And we have a tendency to see the law that way. And I really think that's unfair, even though that we know by the works of the law, no man is justified.

Really, the law is that which kept them in bounds, Paul would say. It was a tutor. It was a boundary marker. What kept them living in that covenant relationship with Yahweh or with the Lord, their God. And their life looked different as a result of that relationship because all this is based. You remember where the book of Deuteronomy starts? The book of Deuteronomy starts at Mount Sinai. The covenant. It doesn't start in Egypt. Big difference there. The book of Exodus starts in Egypt. Your deliverance, your forgiveness, your redemption.

[4 : 43] That's where that starts. The book of Deuteronomy starts at Mount Sinai. The covenant. Because life looks different as a direct result of a covenant relationship.

And this is what he's expounded. This is what he's shown. And then he goes to a couple chapters of blessings and curses. What it looks like to live in that. And if you're faithful, then your life is blessed. And if you're unfaithful, then your life is cursed. And God, in grace and in mercy and even in, really, I don't want to say forbearance, but just understanding man's tendency tells them what's coming. They're not going to be faithful to him. They're not going to be obedient. And these things are going to happen. And now we're really at the end of Moses' life. I mean, literally, he's about to die. You know, in Deuteronomy 31, 32, you have this song of Moses. Not 31, 32, you have this song of Moses. At 33, you have the death of Moses.

[5 : 44] And in Deuteronomy 34, you have the mourning of the death of Moses. And that's it. We're at the end of Moses' life. And that's really a very pivotal time in the nation of Israel's history.

Because here is this one who has been used of God to deliver them, to set them free, to lead them. And he's led them for 40 years. He lived 40 years in Egypt.

As someone once said, I will never remember the name. Maybe someday I will. I read it in an old sermon. A preacher said, Moses spent 40 years becoming something in Egypt. And he went to the backside of the wilderness and became nothing in the wilderness for 40 years.

And then God used him for another 40 years to lead his people. So he became somebody for 40 years to become nobody for 40 years so that God could use him for 40 years. And now, that life's over.

And he's encouraging them. And he's moving them. And this is where we see this. Really, he knows his time is up. He understands it. We'll see in our text in Deuteronomy 31. We'll see. He knows.

[6 : 46] Absolutely knows. So I want you to see in Deuteronomy 31 verses 1 through 13 a faith that moves forward. A faith that moves forward. Because he's continuing to call the people to move.

And I want you to notice how much movement is in this text, right? It's either go or it goes or it's this continuous movement because God's people are never meant to stand still.

I know we can be still and know that he is God. But we're also to follow him in obedience, right? We are to walk in faithful obedience. We are to move.

And God's people are never called to stagnate or to just stop. It would have been real easy for the nation of Israel to do that. Plains of Moab, they already inherited the land of Sihon and Og.

They had land that was theirs. It would have been real easy just to be still. But now, he's calling them to have a faith that moves forward and I think that application even comes down to us. It says, So Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel.

[7 : 46] And he said to them, I am 120 years old today. I am no longer able to come and go. And the Lord has said to me, You shall not cross this Jordan. It is the Lord your God who will cross ahead of you.

He will destroy these nations before you and you shall dispossess them. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you just as the Lord has spoken. The Lord will do to them just as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and to their land when he destroyed them.

The Lord will deliver them up before you and you shall do to them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or tremble at them for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you.

He will not fail you or forsake you. Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and courageous for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them and you shall give it to them as an inheritance.

The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you. He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord and to all the elders of Israel.

[8 : 55] Then Moses commanded them saying, At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which he will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing.

Assemble the people, the men and the women and the children and the alien who is in your town so that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord your God and be careful to observe all the words of this law.

Their children who have not known will hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess. Deuteronomy 31 verses 1 through 13.

We want to see what it looks like or the encouragement to have a faith that moves forward because while the life of Moses is ending, the call of obedience and the call of faithfulness of the people is still resonating and God is still leading his people there not to hang out in the plains of Moab though they have become a more settled people.

They are no longer sojourning, traveling through the wilderness and they are no longer really going here and there and moving from place to place. There is one more movement they are about to get until they come to that place of promise there continue to move forward and we know that it will be a number of years because they did not just go in and take possession of the entire land of Canaan.

[10 : 18] It is little by little that the Lord drives them out and that faith is to continue moving them forward and pressing them forward and we see just a number of things here when it looks like to have a faith like that or to have a faith that resonates with that truth when it will continue to follow even in spite of everything around them and we see first the reality that there is this limitation of man.

The limitation of man is seen in life of Moses because Moses stands up and on that day he declares to all of Israel and he stands up before them I am no longer able to go with you and he declares this reality though they knew this day was coming I mean there is only three that are left of those from 40 years prior to this or 38 years prior to this who refuse to go into the promised land remember there is about two years before they get to Kadesh Barnea from Egypt from the time they left Egypt they cross the Red Sea it takes about two years before they get to Kadesh Barnea it is not because it is a two year journey it is because they had about a year and a half delay at Mount Sinai where Moses gets the Ten Commandments he gets the instructions on the completion of the tabernacle how they work on the tabernacle the craftsmen are doing all their work they construct all the articles of the tabernacle and after about 18 months then they start marching again they get to Kadesh Barnea and at Kadesh Barnea God says go in and take possession of the land I have given you all the instructions you need and you remember the ten spies went in and they came back and eight said no and two said go and everybody went with the eight and there is this generation that dies so now we are to this place where only three people are still alive you have Joshua and Caleb and Moses

Joshua and Caleb are going to go in doing some amazing things Joshua is going to lead the people and Caleb is going to be an old man who takes possession of the land of the giants it is really a story it is so amazing when you see Caleb Caleb says I am old and I am not what I used to be but God is still with me and I am going to take possession of the land and he does so he goes and takes possession of the land because he trusts in the word of God Joshua will be used but Moses' day is done but God is still calling his people but in Moses we see this limitation of man because the faith of the nation does not rest in the person of Moses and that is important that is very very important we see it being played out in our own life how people will walk in faithful obedience until a certain person is removed until a certain person is removed the heart and the desire of every pastor ought to be and I know I've only moved one time and I hope I don't ever move again I mean you guys get mad at me and kick me out that's one thing but I only move one time as a pastor and I don't ever want to move again

I want to be a long tenured pastor but the heart of every pastor when leaving a ministry whether through retirement through the Lord calling him home or through the Lord leading him to another place is the same thing when you talk to a pastor I don't want God's people to stop simply because I

leave and we see it so often and it's really discouraging and it's really heartbreaking and it's because we understand this man is limited the faith of God's people to continue to move forward should never ever rest in man alone now God uses man or woman whoever it may be but man is very limited and Moses declares two limitations he has here Moses says I'm not able to go I'm 120 years old right so the first limitation we see is Moses is old right he's advanced in years but he could still climb a mountain he climbed

Mount Pisgah's lofty heights we've seen about it right he still had vigor and strength he still was bright eyed and could see clearly enough to look into the promised land but the reality is all men reach that point sometime where it's done man is limited God says that my heart will not strive with man forever and there is this limitation that he declares is that God's people move forward not based upon their dependence upon any man or woman or individual because of the limitation of age and then he declares the second thing for the Lord has said to me you shall not go across this Jordan now God did not tell him he would not cross the Jordan because he was 120 years old remember God told Moses he wouldn't cross the Jordan because he struck the rock the second time so here are the two limitations while we can never depend upon man to be that which moves us and motivates our faith to continue going forward number one man's age which limits him! [15:08] and two man's sin that was Emmanuel God in the flesh and what we see so often is that God's people fail to continue to live with the faith which moves them forward because of their absolute dependence and reliance upon a fallible sinful man or woman the reality is this we will always be let down if we put all of our faith hope and trust in any individual we will because we're sinful mankind should we strive to live holy lives yes absolutely should we strive to live lives perfect yes absolutely you say well what a man Paul said be imitators of me right but finish that verse imitate me as

I imitate Christ I don't think Paul wanted us to imitate him when he got mad at Mark right I don't know that Paul wanted us to imitate him at every one of his weaknesses what he did want us to imitate was his imitation of Christ because even Paul was limited Moses is limited Abraham is limited Abraham lies twice about his wife you didn't think he got it the first time maybe David was limited every Old Testament when you read the book of Hebrews chapter 11 you have the heroes of the faith chapter every single one of them were limited Peter cut Malchus his ear off he walked on water sure but then he sank like a rock you know I mean there is this limitation of man and we understand this reality that the faith which moves us forward is not a faith which is founded upon man it may be encouraged by man we'll get to that in just a moment but it is not founded upon man and if there was one group of people it would have been the nation!

of Israel when he who has led them he who has really been the instigator of their faith he who has been the great dependent upon the nation is about to leave them I mean it is Moses who went and interceded for the people right it was Moses who went out to the tent of meeting and came back with his face glowing it was Moses the whole reason that God says hey I want go with us and I am not moving right it was Moses who did all of these things it was Moses who said show me your glory oh Lord so that he could go down and declare that glory to the nation it was Moses that was the whole reason why these people had any faith to begin with but Moses should not be the root of their faith because all man limited each and those are gifts given to us the book of

Proverbs says iron sharpens iron and great contributors to our faith be it individuals be it friends be it pastors be it parents be it grandparents and we thank God for that but friend the reality is when that stops we don't because while our faith may be encouraged by individuals our life and walk of faith does not depend upon individuals there are few that I really can look back in my life and say they are absolutely essential to my faith God used them and I can point to them probably count them on one hand and I could just really I could just say these are the men that God put around me to instill the kind of the reality of faith the movement of faith here's the truth none of those five are around me anymore there's not there and we get this thing that man is limited man is limited and we need to understand that at the beginning faith while motivated by man encouraged by man is not dependent upon man because of man limitations but that limitation is encouraged or met with a lasting assurance and the lasting assurance is this while

I'm leaving the Lord your God is still going with you do you see that Moses says I'm leaving but the lasting assurance is this the Lord your God is the one who goes with you just because I'm leaving it doesn't mean he's leaving when I depart he doesn't depart he is still with you he is going to go ahead of you he's going to lead you into the promised land he's going to defeat the people you were

depending upon me to defeat Sihon and all we were depending upon him he would defeat the inhabitants of Canaan just like he has here God will not change this is one of the greatest things I the writings of the saints and I see the things which these saints have started reading William Carey William Carey was the founder of modern day missions William

[20 : 57] Carey was a pastor slash shoe cobbler slash whatever else he was he had a number of things that he did there and really was just burdened with the nations and he was burdened with all this thing that was going on and he was like a teacher and just really burdened he preached this message I think it was in Nottingham England and he preached this message in the 1700s and it was a missional message and everybody was going to get up and leave and William Carey was like we can't just leave right we can't do this we can't just depart from here we have to do!

do something and he called the people back in and said get everybody to come back in here so they formed this missionary society and now we need to send a missionary and William Carey said I'll be the missionary I'll be the first one and he said he volunteered so he left everything behind and he went to India he is considered the father of modern day missions because he was a Baptist guy they sent him that India had ever had he did all these things and was using that college as a base to really spread Christianity and instruct and was doing so much more than just preaching he started employing people there he is really one of the ones that is attributed with the stopping of pier burning where when a woman's husband would die they would take the body still a little bit do! put the body on these piers or these pylons of wood and put it up on the river and then they would put the widow on top of it and light it on fire so that she while still alive could ascend with her husband and he saw that and really just caught an end to it really just changed the face of India and he was getting near his death and the gentleman who was coming in to replace him showed up there and I was so excited to see Dr.

Kerry Dr. Kerry Dr. Kerry this man in so many languages and it was there and the last thing that William Kerry told the man said ever since you've been here you've been talking about Dr. Kerry Dr. Kerry from this moment on quit talking about Dr. Kerry and start talking about Dr. Kerry Savior because all men are limited right it wasn't William Kerry it was William Kerry Savior that was really changing everything that's the lasting assurance that though I'm leaving he is still here the Lord your God he is with you he's going to go ahead of you he will go before you he will continue to do what he's always done and the reality is no matter where we read in church history the reason I like reading it so much is not because it's interesting stories it's because what I see God doing then I still see him doing now and the God of the 100s and 200s and 300s and 1700s and 1800s 1900s is the God of the 2000s he's still here doing the same thing and it's it's amazing this is the lasting assurance the reality that faith depends presence not man's presence and if he's still on the throne and he is then we can't expect him to continue to be what he's always been and we see this resonate and he reminds them first of all who it is that's going with them and who they are in light of who it is the

[24 : 29] Lord your God or Yahweh your Elohim God is the powerful name right he is Elohim he is all powerful in the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth he's spoken into existence this name just really invokes just his power and his majesty and his authority and the fact that he's Yahweh that means this God who is all powerful is in a covenant relationship with you and therefore he emboldened you with the faith to move forward this is not just a little God with a little lowercase g that you're going with you're going with almighty God and he's going with you this lasting assurance the reality that God's presence is not dictated by man's limitations but yet even in light of this there's still the leader appointed because the leader appointed is Joshua he says there's the Lord your God going with you and he calls Joshua out he says and Joshua you're going to go before them now the whole nation knew that

Joshua was going to be the man and Joshua only deserves to be the man because it was Joshua who went up Mount Sinai with him it was Joshua who was there when he received the Ten Commandments you remember that Joshua said I hear the sound in the camp it sounds like the sound of battle do you also remember the admonition that God said let no one come up the mountain with you be it we find Joshua with him so evidently there wasn't but one person that God said could come up the mountain it had to be Joshua because he's there and he went down with him and that's when Moses broke the two tablets it was Joshua who hung out Moses would go back and forth at the tent of meeting remember that Joshua stayed at the tent of meeting scripture says he stayed there he was always in the presence of the Lord his God he's a political leader not a

religious leader because the religious leader is the descendants of Levi descendants of Aaron right Joshua is the greatest candidate to take on the political leadership because he is the one who stood not only in the presence of Moses but literally in the presence of Yahweh God always has his man or his person

I don't mean to be this I'm not when I say man I mean individual God always has his individual God always has his man God is not limited the way man is limited Moses is passing off the scene but God raised up Joshua to fill the void there will not be a vacuum one thing we see throughout history is that God stays the same but he always has his people he always has his man to encourage we think it may be in the darkest of moments right you can read in the darkest of moments or in the medieval period or the dark ages and rightfully called that because of the things that took place but you see even there God has his people God has his people there's never a void the truth resonates and it continues to go and it may go through the most unlikely of people but God has always got his people always has his people and he always has them to encourage others to move forward in faith I've told this story before and really it's an amazing story where you have D.O. Moody getting ready to come to leave the United States he's leaving Chicago and he's going to go to England with the intention of preaching and if you remember the story right someone Moody was a guy of just okay if you invited him you better want him to come over right if you told D.O.

Moody he was okay to come over to your house and eat you better have a plate for him it's just the way it was somebody by chance told Moody said hey we'd like to have you come to England someday so he took that as an invitation so he decided to go to England to preach this great crusade problem is when he got to England nobody wanted him there right and nobody had done anything there was no finances set aside nothing he said well I'm here so he started going to the YMCA and preaching and that's okay because he did YMCA here in Chicago so he did the same thing there and all of a sudden all these people just started coming to Christ you got to keep in mind that while England at that time was a pretty good religious scene it was also a pretty good religious on the surface it was exactly what I called it it was a religious scene it was a status if you wanted to sit in the front you had to pay more money if you wanted to get in the door you had to pay somebody that's the way they took their contributions to the church and each pew had a gate on it and you would get the key to that gate that happened even in

[29 : 09] America too so depending on how much you gave you could get closer to the show up front and you have a key to the gate that would have! your went down to the local bar and cleaned it up and used it and started a moody church that way he started ministering to the street kids that way but anyway we go so now he's in England and he's preaching and he's YMCA's and now some people are coming they trace that great awakening that happened in England back to one of the most unlikely of people there were two sisters that were a member of a church one of them was bedridden and couldn't go anywhere and really the heart was breaking over the spiritual need and the spiritual apathy that was going on in England at that time and she said I can't do anything but she had heard about Moody and she had read some of his works that made it across the ocean so she started praying for she prayed for years and one day her sister came home from church and said you will never guess who preached at church today a rather unannounced unwelcomed visiting preacher because he wasn't a pastor he was never a pastor visiting preacher from

America named Dwight Lyman Moody and then it just went crazy the Lord started moving in hearts and minds it all traces back Moody himself would say it was the prayers of that woman laying in that bed which turned England upside down he just happened to be the mouthpiece that he used so we see that God has always got his people he always got his people and we see that as it just resonates which brings us to this last thing that because God's people have that faith or at least the ability to possess a faith which moves forward there must be a legacy continued because the legacy of faith could not stop with Moses Moses has an unbelievable faith he passes that on to Joshua and Joshua is to pass it on to others the legacy of faith which trusts God enough to continue to move forward in spite of circumstances even as a direct result of circumstances is a faith which must be passed down so Moses writes this law down because the law really is a record of what it looks like to live in a relationship with a holy God that is to possess faith to believe him enough to live differently so he writes it down and gives it to the priest because they are the ones who need to carry it they carry the ark of the covenant so this is an important document as well and he gives them a copy of the law and Moses declares by the Lord God a specific day every seventh year that's the year of jubilee the year of the release of debts so every seventh year on the day of the

Feast of Booths the Feast of Booths is designed that's a hard word for me to say because of my southern tongue and I apologize we call it the Feast of Tabernacles that's a little bit easier for me to say same festival because it was set up to remind the people that God sustained them for 40 years in the wilderness!

That's the whole reason they did the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths whichever one you want to call it they were to go live in huts and be reminded that God provided for them for 40 years right? that they were wondering people and God provided for them so Moses says every seventh year on that day have all the people stand up and read this law now a little bit later in the chapter we're going to see that during the festivals only the males are required to come three times a year and the Feast of Booths is one of those at least three times a year only the males but evidently every seventh year everybody in the house was supposed to come because Moses says on that day stand before all the people men women the children even the strangers who are living in their midst everybody stand up and read this law why?

[34 : 02] so that they may know they may know the Lord their God to continue to pass on the legacy what is the tragedy of the book of Judges?

the book of Judges is not a very warm and fuzzy book it's a very disturbing book really when you read the book of Judges especially by the time you get to the end of it in those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes five times it's repeated but what is the tragedy?

the tragedy is found in Judges chapter 1 there arose another generation who did not know there arose another generation who did not know after the elders and Joshua passed on there arose another generation who did not know what God had done the legacy was not continued we don't know that this was ever done but a faith that moves forward is a faith that passes itself on no one wants to continue a legacy of an unresponsive faith but a faith that moves forward is one that resonates and continues to declare to the generations to come this is what it looks like to follow the Lord our God this is not an Old Testament principle right?

this is a New Testament reality even for the church the church that trusts Jesus Christ as its Lord and Savior and the church that is following Jesus as its Lord is the church that is declaring to the generation that follows it this is what it looks like when we walk in obedience to our Lord and Savior this is what it looks like when we really love Him with all of our heart with all of our mouth with all of our soul with all of our being and all of our strength this is what it looks like to really love the Lord our God and it declares it to the generation that comes after it because it's a legacy to be continued and it is one that is moving and moving and moving our ambition and our desire ought to be to have a faith that continues to move forward in the world of Christ has put us in and to pass that faith on to have a faith worthy of passing on to the generations that follow us because friend the reality is if we don't pass it on this world is not going to give them that and it's not the world's responsibility it's ours Moses didn't say go to the inhabitants of Canaan and ask them to tell you about God Moses said you who know tell the next generation and then tell the next generation and tell the next generation and tell the next generation so that we don't end up in the tragedy of Joshua there arose another generation who did not know and then all of a sudden there's no king in the land so I guess the raging question is whose fault was it?

[36 : 59] was it theirs? they did not know or was it those who quit moving forward and never passed on a legacy of faith? it's just a great question to be considered here we see what it looks like to have a faith that moves forward thank you brother so I guess Thank you.