

**The Weekly Word**  
September 12-18, 2016

This week we finish Deuteronomy and spend a few days with the Psalms. Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

**Monday, September 12: Deuteronomy 31- Passing God's truths to the next generations...**

How do you preserve faith? How do you pass along faith from generation to generation? How do you maintain integrity with its origins?

These questions are important today but in Moses' day possibly even more so since they were an oral culture.

Part of the answer is that you write it down and you make sure people read it (or at least hear it) periodically.

*So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. Then Moses commanded them: "At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Festival of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing. Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns—so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. **Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess**" (9-13).*

I wonder if Israel actually did this. There is the one occurrence in Ezra and Nehemiah's time, but that was after the exile in Babylon. And in Josiah's time, when the temple is being refurbished, we find the Book of the Law. That comment doesn't bode well for reading it aloud to all the people at least every seven years.

Whether Israel did this or not, the principle of writing down and then reading to the people, the core of the faith repeatedly is sound. And Moses gives special heed regarding children who must hear the law and be taught to fear the Lord.

As I think about this I wonder if we are any better at this today. Oh, we are a written culture, but do we take the fact that things are in books for granted? Regarding our faith, I know we have God's Book but do we transfer that wisdom, knowledge and revelation from God's Book to our minds and hearts?

God directed that people repeatedly read His Book and then pass its content along with the fear of the Lord to the coming generations as they train up the children.

God's whisper to me... do I attend to God's Book and do I see that its content along with the fear of the Lord to the ensuing generations? Do I? Do you?

*Lord, burn within me the treasure that we have in having Your Book. Burn within me a desire to honor it, know it, live by it, and fear You in the process. Burn within me the importance of passing along to the coming generations a reverence for and commitment to Your Book and even more importantly, a reverence for and commitment to You. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## **Tuesday, September 13: Deuteronomy 32- Songs of faith...**

While I was reading this song of Moses, I kept thinking about some of the great and lasting songs of the Christian faith. Song, words with melodies, has a way of burrowing more deeply and more memorably into the human psyche than words alone.

I thought about how songs have led people over the centuries. They have led people in faith. They have led people into battle. They have led people on expansion. Song has a forceful sway.

I returned to my initial thoughts and considered some great classics of the Christian faith, songs that teach as well as inspire... Martin Luther's

*A mighty fortress is our God,  
a bulwark never failing;  
our helper he amid the flood  
of mortal ills prevailing.  
For still our ancient foe  
doth seek to work us woe;  
his craft and power are great,  
and armed with cruel hate,  
on earth is not his equal.*

And Reginald Heber's

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!*

And Joachim Neander's

*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!  
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!  
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;  
Praise Him in glad adoration.*

Titles began tumbling, Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee; God of Grace and God of Glory; All Hail the Power of Jesus Name; Praise My Soul the King of Heaven; O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing; Be Thou My Vision,... then classic Advent, Christmas, Good Friday and Easter hymns came to mind. Oh my, the songs of faith that have carried pilgrims for centuries.

The Lord knew what He was doing when He inspired Moses to pen this song and others to pen the songs of the Psalms. And even more powerful, Moses' song and Psalms are inspired Scripture.

*Lord, I am basking in Your glory this morning. Singing songs of faith that praise and exalt You, my Lord and my God. Through Jesus, I pray. Amen*

## **Wednesday, September 14: Deuteronomy 33- Blessing...**

I love the fact that Moses' last corporate act was to bless the people. He names each tribe and the son of Israel, who was their father, and blesses each tribe with a personal blessing.

Blessing is a powerful gift. Moses knew he was going to die, and he chose his final words to be a blessing. What a gift he gave. Not everyone is given time before they die to speak with key

people in their lives. I don't know when or how the Lord will bring me home, even so Moses' example speaks to me.

When the time comes for me to leave pastoral work, I pray I follow Moses' lead and bless the people of God with a blessing particular to whom they are in Christ.

I also hope and pray I have an inkling from the Lord before I die so that I have time to bless each of my family members as Moses blessed the tribes.

It is beautiful to me that a blessing is the last words the people hear from Moses' lips. Moses inspires me to do whatever I can do to let a blessing be the last thing my family and the people of God hear from my lips...

*Lord, I make this request, that You allow me Your grace to have my final words to those I love be a blessing. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Thursday, September 15: Deuteronomy 34- Legacy...**

Death comes to everyone, great and small, rich and poor, famous and average. Death comes to everyone.

And for Moses, death comes on the top of a mountain in the hands of the Lord. This seems somewhat fitting for a man who lived his life following the Lord and leading others to do the same.

There is something fitting about Moses being buried in an unmarked grave. Except for a few slipups Moses lived a life that never gloried in self but always pointed to the Lord. A revered gravesite would only have attracted attention to himself. People would have flocked there and turned it into a sideshow. This way Moses' legacy is his life not his gravesite.

Thinking about this, gravesites are for the living not the dead. Many people erect large, 'look-at-me' gravestones or even mausoleums, but the reality is that their body is decaying just like everyone else's. However, our truest legacy is the touch we have had on the people around us.

I guess the pyramids are the most lavish example history has of people erecting a monument to self. But even there the wonderfully embalmed Egyptian Pharaohs have decayed. Only the stone remains, much of the treasure looted by tomb raiders. And were it not for massive preservation efforts, including controlling ground water, the pyramids would not be in the condition they are.

Buildings decay, deceased bodies decay, what remains is our influence on the lives of others. Moses didn't need a marvelous tomb to cement his legacy. The people entering the Promised Land did that.

I began to wonder about the legacy I will leave. How about you? What will yours be? And more importantly what can I (we) do in the years we have left to cement our legacies?

Think about it...

*Lord, I know that my best legacy will be my following of You as vigorously and well as I possibly can. Help me, Lord, to live for You today and all of my todays until I meet You in eternity. Then I will enter Your rest and hear the best welcome of all time, 'Well done my good and faithful son, come and enter Your Father's happiness'.*

*In Jesus I live and move and find my being... Alleluia Amen.*

### **Friday, September 16: Psalm 115- For God not self...**

*Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness (1).*

We are in the midst of the presidential political season right now, not my favorite season. It seems as if every candidate is all about self and what I can do for you, for the country, state, etc.

This kind of hubris is not only in politics. You can hear it in sport and other sectors, too. And while hubris might be an overstatement in some cases, human pride is all around us. The 'hiring interviewing dance' is often all about how 'good' we are. And this is true for the hiree and the to-be-hired.

I suspect it is the seeking and proclaiming of human glory that caused my spirit to be drawn to verse one of our Psalm and particularly its opening. *Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory...*

The Psalmist goes out of his/her way to glorify God. Two times he rejects glory for self in order to lift up the name of the Lord. And somehow it does not seem out of place, maybe because it is in Scripture.

As I sat with these words before me, I wondered how I might live them today. How might I give glory to God rather than self in a way that fits the conversation and feels normal and natural?

I am not sure I have an answer for this... but that is the joy of Scripture and sitting with the Lord. He leads me to new waters and down new paths. And this will be a new path for me, one that will take some time growing used to...

*Lord, thank You for the Psalms, these inspired prayers. Prayers You, Spirit, uttered and authored through the voices of men. I pray for Your leading, not simply to read or even repeat these prayers, but to have them conform and transform me into a man who more and more closely resembles and mimics the character and attributes of You, my God. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Saturday, September 17: Psalm 116- Rest, God's peace-filled rest...**

The Psalmist is effervescent with appreciation and praise for the Lord. Clearly the Lord has reached down and saved the psalmist in some way(s) and the psalmist is praising God for His goodness.

In the midst of this Psalm, verse 7 connected with my heart. My sleep has been disturbed lately, waking often, uncomfortable dreams, and restless sleep. I cannot put my finger on anything in particular going on in my life. Overall I would say life is in a good place, no particular worries and yet, my sleep is not refreshing.

As my eyes lit on verse 7, it was as if it was a promise extended to me... *Return to your rest, my soul, for the LORD has been good to you.* Could it be that I have 'forgotten' all the wonderful things the Lord has done and is doing in my life? Is it that I am fixated on the few pressures I have? Maybe. Maybe.

My heart seems to hear, "Focus on Me. Look around and recall all the ways I am active in your life. See My hand, and be at rest. I am with You. Nothing reaches you that has not gone through My hand. Rest in this. Rest in Me, my child."

I felt a wash of peace come over me. The Lord has spoken to me. The word came alive. I am the Lord's.

Alleluia sings my soul. Alleluia.

*Lord God, I thank You for this reassurance of Your love and care. I bless You because You have cared and are caring for me. I join the Psalmist singing... I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live (1-2). Amen and Alleluia.*

**Sunday, September 18, 2016, Sunday Worship**

*If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.*

*If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at [office@pcogonline.org](mailto:office@pcogonline.org).*

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.