

Something Dad Didn't Know

Deuteronomy 8:10-18

November 24, 2024

Please open your Bibles this morning to Deuteronomy 8. Pew Bible. Mark Twain is a very interesting character and much of his work is quite hilarious, even yet today. He had a way of bringing realities into clear focus. He once said, "When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years." Anyone else? It seems that way. 1

Today, we're actually going to talk about some things our dads **didn't** know. Before we read our Scripture, however, we need to remember the back-story. God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt with plagues and incredible miracles. He led them to the Promised Land that would become Israel and which is Israel today. Along the way He revealed Himself and His will and in this passage, God warns them about a crucial temptation they will face so that they would not fall for it. It applies perfectly to us today. If you are able, please stand as we read from Deut 8:10 When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. 11 Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. 12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 15 He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. 16 He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. 17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." 18 But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. 19 If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. 20 Like the nations the Lord destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the Lord your God. (pray, sit)

In this passage, we discover something that the fathers of these people never knew. Say manna. God miraculously fed them every morning with this bread of heaven that their ancestors never even heard of, much less tasted, and which their descendants would never see again. It was a special provision of God for a special time. We still don't know exactly what manna was but praise God we don't need it today. Why not? We have plenty of food. This is something our grandparents and great grandparents

could only dream of. I learned recently one of my relatives stole food during the depression to feed their family. Many of our ancestors lived on the edge of starvation depending on each year's harvest to sustain them till the next. Years of drought were particularly difficult. People died. They couldn't just run to Walmart or Food Lion. There were no Mickey D's or Italian Touches. Fast food was squirrels, rabbits and turkeys. In fact, they didn't even have freezers or refrigerators. Instead they had spring houses and smoke houses. We have the safest, highest quality, and most abundant food supply of anyone in the world and until just recently it was also the least expensive. We have so much that we complain about what to do with our leftovers. Thanks to agricultural advancements and the American farmer, we have a cornucopia of food our fathers could never dream of, though it is built on their foundation. But ultimately, all of this food is a blessing of Almighty God. America exports food to many other countries and the US farmer's productivity feeds 165 other people; 100 years ago, it was just his own family. Praise God for food that our forefathers never knew. 2

Another thing dad, or grandad, didn't know was electricity. Say electricity. Think how this has changed our lives, mostly for the better. Electricity not only gives us light, heat, and hot water, it powers our stoves, vacuums, washers and dryers, hairdryers and razors, coffee pots and now even some cars. We take this convenience for granted today, until it goes out or we have to pay our bill, but our ancestors never dreamed of the cornucopia of benefits electricity has dumped into our blessed laps. This source of energy has always existed but God allowed Edison and others to discover, harness, and employ it to do much of our dirty work.

Speaking of hot water, there's something else our forefathers knew nothing of apart from heating it over a fire. In fact, indoor plumbing itself is a blessing, amen? Our grandparents had a bath with a path. Imagine running to the Johnny house on a night like last night. Our visits would be fewer and shorter, I guarantee it! No checking phones on that toilet.

Say modern medicine (thanks Dr/nurses). This is another thing our ancestors never knew. Walk through an 1800s graveyard and read the ages. Many infants and children. Our 2 year old grandson may well not have made it this past week had it not been for hospitals, Drs, and nurses. Many others died in their 30s or 40s. A few lived to the life expectancy we now have of 77 if we make it out of the womb, but not many. And ours would be even longer if we listened to the Drs and took care of ourselves better. It's 82 in England. But in 1900, a year two of my grandparents were born, it was 47. Many of us here today would have already died. We have an average thirty of additional years! What are we doing with those years? Despite its flaws and our complaints, we still enjoy unbelievably better health care than most all of our ancestors. 3

In addition, we enjoy good roads (thanks VDOT), relatively cheap clothing, heated and cooled airtight homes, air travel, access to information, basic human

freedoms. We could go on and on and on. If our ancestors could see the relative luxury we live in and what we waste every day, including those 30 extra years watching television or scrolling Facebook, they would have some harsh words for us. Even claiming we're too busy to worship once each week the God who has blessed us with all this abundance and who is overflowing our cups on a daily basis. All of this is from Him! And we must acknowledge that!

Does this not sound **exactly** what God warned His people about in our Scripture? "12 ... when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." Although most of **our** ancestors weren't slaves, many of them were bitterly persecuted for their faith. Many came to this country as indentured servants dreaming of better lives for themselves and their families and their descendants. And look what, by God's grace, they've passed to us? We have eaten and become satisfied. We are some of the most well-fed, over-fed people in the world. We live in the finest houses. Our silver and gold have increased. Just look at the number of banks even in our own county. All we have has been multiplied. This passage is a photo of the US! Of our Valley! But in typical fashion, when we've "made it" we have neglected to praise God for this good land He has given us. Most people, even in our community, are **not** in church today. We have forgotten God. We are failing to obey His commands, His laws, and His decrees. Our hearts have grown proud and we attribute our plenty to our own ingenuity. To our own hard work or intelligence. God have mercy! We have fallen to the temptation He warned us about 3500 years ago.

Someone told me once, "I have nobody to thank but me for all of this, by the sweat of my brow I've earned it." Who gave you your sweat? Your brow? Not to mention your health, your brain, and everything else. But sadly, this is the mentality of America today. The worldview. God isn't even a consideration on most people's radar. Until they end up in the ER. In Jesus' parable of the rich young man who bragged about his own accomplishments and vowed to build bigger barns without God, God said to him, "You fool!" And He's saying that to a nation today that has largely turned its back on Him! Until we get into a war, a pandemic, a 9/11 attack, a depression. You fool! Don't forget God!

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Look at verse 17 You may say to yourself, "**My** power and the strength of **my** hands have produced this wealth for me." Is that not exactly what we're saying? For God sake no! Without Him, we can do nothing! Vs 18, "But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth..." He gives us this ability individually and together as a nation. Whenever we claim for ourselves success or glory or honor or praise that belongs only to God, we become the idol. We

become delusional. And we risk becoming the object of God's wrath. If He did not spare Israel then, why should He spare the US now?

Vs 19 If you **ever** forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be **destroyed**. 20 Like the nations the Lord destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the Lord your God." Study your history books. Scour the annals of time and you will see that no nation has enjoyed as many abundant blessings we now have. And those who have come close were destroyed when they neglected the God who raised them up.

In my newspaper column this week, I wrote about King Hezekiah. Few leaders in all of history were blessed more than he. When the monster Assyrian army was steamrolling the Middle East and had already destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel, God miraculously spared him and Judah. Many people brought gifts to Hezekiah and 2 Chronicles 32:27 says, "[he] had very great riches and honor, and he made treasuries for his silver and gold and for his precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuables. 28 He also made buildings to store the harvest of grain, new wine and oil; and he made stalls for various kinds of cattle, and pens for the flocks. 29 He built villages and acquired great numbers of flocks and herds, for God had given him very great riches... He succeeded in everything he undertook." (How would you like in your obituary?) God even miraculously healed him from a fatal illness on his deathbed.

Now you would think with all of this, that Hezekiah would humble himself, praise and glorify God. You would think. Vs 25 But Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the Lord's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem." He did not respond to God's kindness and God eventually brought destruction. The Holman Christian Standard Bible says, "he didn't respond according to the benefit that had come to him." Oh my brothers and sisters, if Hezekiah had reason to be thankful and praise God for the benefits, for the kindnesses God showed to him, we have 10,000 times more! And yet, we have become proud. We have chosen the gifts over the Giver and have failed to respond with gratitude. We must enter His gates with thanksgiving! 5

A few years back, we looked at Deuteronomy 28 and talked about Obedience Economics where God promised them 1. If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. 2 All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: 3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country." He promises them economic blessing, military superiority, agricultural abundance, and more. In Vs 13, he says, "The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom."

But then he goes into the curses. Vs 15 However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: 16 You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country.” He warns of disease, economic, agricultural, and military failure. Vs 43 The alien who lives among you will rise above you higher and higher, but you will sink lower and lower. 44 He will lend to you, but you will not lend to him. He will be the head, but you will be the tail. 45 All these curses will come upon you. They will pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the LORD your God and observe the commands and decrees he gave you. 46 They will be a sign and a wonder to you and your descendants forever. 47 Because you **did not** serve the LORD your God **joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity**, 48 therefore in **hunger** and **thirst**, in **nakedness** and **dire poverty**, **you will serve** the enemies the LORD sends against you. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you.” And that’s exactly what happened when Israel rejected God and He sent Babylon to overthrow them and carry them into captivity.

Oh my friends, this is still the time of **our** prosperity. Are we serving the Lord joyfully and gladly? If not, begin immediately! I know Israel has a special place in God’s plan and that we are not Israel, but God is bound by His word to bless any nation that honors Him and to curse any nation that does not. Ps 33:12 says Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. And the opposite is also true. Someone has observed that since nations are not eternal as are our humans, they must be either rewarded or punished in this world since they will not be in the next.

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Deuteronomy 8 and 28 and 2 Chronicles 32 all warn of God’s judgment and wrath if the people fail to praise and honor Him for His blessing. And I fear we are beginning to see God’s wrath poured out on us. We have a fentanyl crisis. Our economy is teetering on the edge of collapse. Our life expectancy is actually now declining. Our standard of living is now number 3, 7 or 22 instead of number 1 in the world. We are facing challenges in education, manufacturing, health care, militarily and many other areas. If you think a new president will turn all that around, you’re praying to the wrong god. Leadership certainly makes a huge difference. I’m praying for our new administration, but God cannot and will not bless a nation that has received all the kindnesses and benefits that we have and then turn away from Him. Look at Israel. Look at Hezekiah.

We’ve talked about the blessings we enjoy that our fathers, grandfathers, and ancestors never knew or even dreamed of. Let’s talk about something they did know even better than we do, and that’s where all their blessings came from. They knew from Whom all blessings flowed. They knew Whom to thank on Thanksgiving, and every

other day. They knew they were totally dependent on Him and that every good gift came from Him. The pilgrims who had almost nothing thanked God for what they did have. And most importantly, most of them knew the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. They knew that He came from heaven, lived, taught, loved, bled, died and rose again that they and we and all might be saved regardless of our standard of living. Regardless of whether we have indoor or outdoor plumbing, regardless of our life expectancy. But they also knew they had to put their faith in Him. They had to trust Him and not their wealth or their good works to get them into heaven where we will all enjoy the highest standard of living ever! They had to admit their sins, including pride and self-reliance, and ask forgiveness through Jesus' blood. That's something the Israelites didn't know but we do today because we live on this side of Calvary. If you've never done that, please do today. And if you have, tell someone else. Share the Scriptures we looked at today as warnings against neglect and rejection of God that we might be spared. Let's thank Him for His grace and seek His face now as we pray.