

THE STORY OF *Everything* LUKE 24:27

You wake up in the morning. You've got a full day. Work. Errands. Chores. You know you need to write them down. So you go to the drawer to pick up a pen and paper and on the way the phone rings and you're distracted. Or you go to unplug your phone to make a note when a text message notification pops up. And just like that, you end up getting sucked down the rabbit hole of smart phone distractions.

Or maybe you find yourself walking from one room to another and have reached that point in life where you go, "Why did I come in here in the first place?"

As humans, we have a propensity to forget. We can tuck a lot of information away into our short-term memory, but it takes intentionality to move something into the long-term memory storage part of the brain.

Deuteronomy is a book about remembering and not forgetting. As Moses stands at the edge of the Promised Land, he wants this new generation to remember. For forty years, Israel had wandered in the wilderness as the old generation died off and a new Israel was born. So Moses gives three farewell sermons to Israel so that they won't forget who God is, what he has done, and what he has promised. He wants them to remember the past, the present, and the future. He knows that the hardships of the wilderness will soon be forgotten once they begin to enjoy the blessings of the Promised Land because the previous generation had forgotten how terrible slavery in Egypt had been only after a few months in the wilderness.

So Moses repeats the covenant that Israel had made at Sinai to help Israel remember. While there is much to this covenant, what do we need to remember?

Remember the Past – See God's Sovereign Election (7:6-11)

Israel was coming into a land of blessing. A land flowing with milk and honey. A land of prosperity and riches. So Moses reminds the people about a basic truth: God's sovereign choosing of them.

Why did God choose Israel? He tells the people that it wasn't because they were more in number than any other people, but that they were the fewest, the smallest. God chose Israel because he chose to set his love upon Israel. There was nothing good about Israel that caused God to say, "Hmmm, you are amazing! I think you'll make a great choice for my plans!" No, God chose Israel for no other reason than to show that he is merciful and gracious.

God's saving plan doesn't look for any precondition in a person. He doesn't look for someone who looks willing, able, powerful, or strong. God chooses the weak, the foolish, the things that are not. Why? He wants the world to see that he abounds in mercy and grace, and that he doesn't pick people who look worthy or have it together.

I love how Charles Spurgeon, the 19th century Baptist pastor from London says it:

I believe the doctrine of election, because I am quite certain that, if God had not chosen me, I should never have chosen Him; and I am sure He chose me before I was born, or else He never would have chosen me afterwards; and He must have elected me for reasons unknown to me, for I never could find in myself why He should have looked upon me with special love. (Spurgeon's Autobiography, 51.)

When you know that God loves you because God is love and not because of how great you are, it humbles you. It keeps you from pride and thinking you must be something. It keeps you coming back to grace, and moves your heart to see that you are a treasured possession to be holy. It moves your heart to have compassion on people who are perceived as worthless to this world and love them with the love of heaven.

Remember the Present – Devote Yourself to Faithfulness (8:11-20)

So if God loved you and saved you just because – no other reason – then this teaching should keep you humble. If the difficulties of the wilderness had been a trial, then Israel should beware of the temptation of prosperity. Trials will tempt you to despair; prosperity will tempt you to indifference. Multiple times in these verses Moses warns the people that prosperity brings with it a very strong temptation: to forget the Lord your God (v. 14). The reason prosperity causes us to forget the Lord our God is that our heart becomes proud and says, “My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth” (v. 17). Who brought you out of slavery and rescued you? Who brought you through a terrible wilderness, and fed you, and gave you water? Was it not the Lord?

The way that you devote yourself to faithfulness is by continuing to practice the commands of the Lord (v. 11). It begins by remembering that “man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord (v. 3).

As Moses speaks to this generation, they have grown up in the wilderness. Many of them were born while their parents wandered. The oldest ones saw what happened at Mount Sinai. But many of them had grown up with grumbling and complaining all around them. And the danger of prosperity would be biblical illiteracy.

We live in one of the wealthiest areas in the wealthiest country in the wealthiest time in human history. We have an abundance. For most of us, we have probably never wondered where our next meal was coming from. We see the value of real estate and know that our net wealth has grown substantially. Has your knowledge of God grown proportionately to your wealth?

God is not against wealth. But wealth is a test. Will we remain faithful, or will we become proud and apathetic? For this reason, in 10:12-13, Moses tells them what the Lord requires of them: to fear the Lord, walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve him with all their heart, soul, and to keep his commands. In other words, devote yourself to faithfulness. Be committed to knowing and obeying God. Don't just read a little verse

and devotional and think that will be enough. His word is your food. Feast on it! Don't starve yourself.

Remember the Future – Hope Because of a New Heart

In light of all of these things, Moses reminds Israel that there are blessings and curses: blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience (Deut. 28). But Moses sings a song (Deut. 32) and in it he warns Israel about disobedience, arrogance, pride, and how these things will lead to exile.

Is there any hope for Israel? Will they ever enjoy the full blessings of the covenant? Yes! What God will do is he will take the hearts of people and he will cut off the unbelieving, sinful heart, just as Abraham was commanded to do to all his male household. The sign of the covenant will be a new heart that loves God. All of this is intended to help us...

See the Glory of Christ

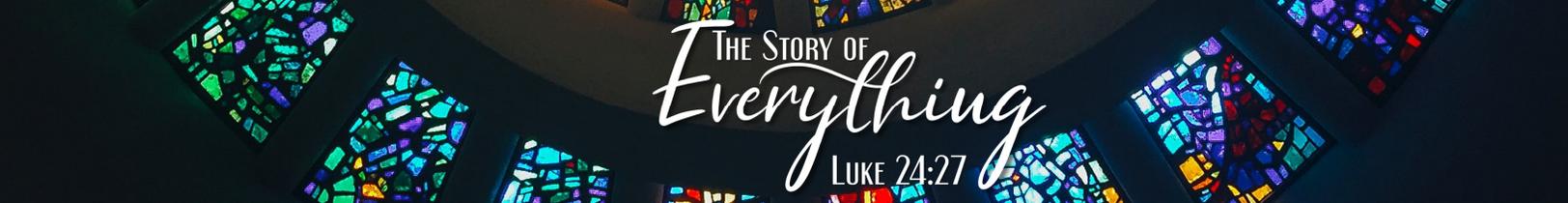
When Moses was born, the world was upside down. Hebrew baby boys were being thrown into the Nile. The Egyptians were working a plan of genocide. But God was about to do a great deliverance for Abraham's family. A little baby boy was placed in an ark in the Nile River, passing through the waters of judgment. And just like Noah was delivered from judgment, we have great hopes that Moses will come out of the ark and enter a new creation.

But Moses dies on the mountain looking over into the new creation that he cannot enter, the land promised to Abraham: "And the Lord said to him, 'This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, 'I will give it to your offspring.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.' So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab..." (Deut. 34:4-5).

Moses had led the people valiantly. He had forgiven them when they accused him. He had led them when they wanted to return to Egypt. He had prayed for them when they sinned against him and the Lord. But he had abused God's authority and word (Numb. 20:8ff), and could not enter the land.

Deuteronomy ends with an expression of how great Moses was: "And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, none like him for all the sins and the wonders that the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel" (Deut. 34:10-12).

What hope is there for Israel if their greatest leader could not bring them all the way home?



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Moses knew the limitations of human leadership because he knew his own sinfulness. That's why he told the Israelites, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers – it is to him you shall listen – just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb....And the Lord said to me, "...I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him" (Deut. 18:15-19).

One day, another man entered into the wilderness after he had passed through the waters of judgment like the Red Sea. For forty days, just like Israel's 40 years, he was tempted by the devil. But when faced with temptation, he replied, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). He never failed. He succeeded and secured all of the blessings of the covenant. And then he died on a hill – receiving all of the curses for breaking the covenant when he never once did anything wrong.

But he didn't stay dead. God raised him from the dead, justifying his perfect life and his sacrificial death. He was raised to newness of life. And he sent his Spirit. And what does his Spirit do? Paul says that the Spirit does what Moses couldn't do: "circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter" (Rom. 2:29). He makes hard hearts soft. He makes sinful hearts confessing hearts. He makes disobedient hearts obedient hearts.

What Moses couldn't do was change the people's hearts. He couldn't lead them into the promised land. He couldn't bring them the blessing of God. He was the greatest prophet of Israel, but his leadership was inadequate.

But Jesus can speak the word that makes your heart soft and bring you all of the blessings of a new and better covenant, leading you to the Promised Land. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight in love" (Eph. 1:3-4).

He chose you. He gave you a new heart to obey. And he has blessed you with every covenant blessing: the forgiveness of sins, redemption in his blood, adoption as sons, an inheritance in heaven, a guaranteed future stamped and sealed by the Spirit (Eph. 1:3-14). He won't let you forget. You'll remember. And when your heart has had the surgery of heaven, you'll want to know him more and be more like him!