

Exod 04-09-05a

This is Sunday, the 5th of September, 2004. We begin our worship this morning by taking a moment at the outset to clear our minds and prepare our hearts and seek the ministry of God's Holy Spirit so that as we worship together in the study of God's Word and in the ministry of God's Holy Spirit that is present with each one of us and enables the gift that has been given to each one of us, our time together will be a time of blessing and encouragement and will provide for us the spiritual fuel that we need to operate in our lives in a way that pleases God and in a way that fulfills His plan and purpose for our lives. So let's take a moment and go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we are so grateful for our salvation. We know that we can do and have done nothing to earn or deserve it. We are born in iniquity.

We are conceived in sin. We are corrupt and fallen and without hope and without You in the world. From the time of our birth until the moment we recognize the valuable gift of salvation through Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in accepting that, we have received from Your hand so many great and wonderful benefits.

We thank You for our redemption. We thank You for the absolution and the cleansing and the enabling and the bright hope for the future that You give us. We thank You for the gift of Your Word, the presence of Your Spirit, all of those things that are gifts and bequests to us from the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank You for Him. We thank You that He even now sits at Your right hand and intercedes for us. He is the mediator between us and You, and we are so thankful that we are the beneficiaries of that great and constant ministry.

We thank You for the country in which we live and the environment of freedom and opportunity that we have. We thank You that we are not oppressed. We are not persecuted.

We live in a time of unparalleled access to Your Word and the resources to understand it more clearly. And we pray this morning that as we spend time together, worshipping through the study of Your Word, that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts, will overcome the limitations of the presentation, and will provide that spiritual manna that sustains and strengthens and builds us up in the faith so that we can fulfill Your purpose for us in this life and will be prepared for the life that is to come. We pray for those who are not with us physically, who study with us by tape or by other remote means, and we ask Your blessing on them.

We pray that their fellowship will be equally blessed and equally beneficial. And we pray that as the few days that lie before us are spent, that they will be a time of reflection of Your glory, a time of seizing the opportunity that is ours through Christ. We pray all these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's begin this morning by turning in our Bibles to the book of Deuteronomy. We're going to have something of an extended scripture reading this morning.

There will be more scripture and a little bit less commentary because it really speaks for itself. It directly pertains to our study and the place in our study we find ourselves in the first few verses of Exodus chapter 33. But we will go there by way of Deuteronomy beginning in chapter 7. Deuteronomy, as you can deduce from its name, deutero means second and the onomy part, the nomos, has the idea of law, second law or second giving of the law, the affirmation of the covenant a second time.

This is where we are going in our Exodus study. The first covenant is broken before it can even get down the mountain and it will need to be renewed. All of the blood sprinkling and meal eating and so on that we've seen up to this point is off the table because in our modern parlance the ink is not yet dry before the thing is already broken.

Deuteronomy is a detailed account of the renewal of the covenant. We're not studying Deuteronomy but we certainly find a close connection and here Moses is speaking to the people of Israel and he is recounting their history. They stand near the Jordan.

They are ready to go across and enter the land and Moses is reminding them of the past and seeking to prepare them for the future and much of Deuteronomy is Moses' final injunctions, final exhortations to the people of Israel. He reviews for them in great detail the statutes and the commandments and the judgments that the Lord has commanded. You see this at the beginning of chapter 6. Now this is the commandment and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess.

That's what's going on. That's where we are here in Deuteronomy. But go forward now to chapter 7. I would love to just read all of these chapters but we'll take an excerpt here beginning in chapter 7. When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites and the Canaanites, the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven representative nations, seven nations greater and mightier than you.

And when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Isn't that interesting? We think of the Bible commanding us to love one another and love your neighbor as yourself.

God is love. The love of God is shared abroad in your hearts. And yet God tells his people make no covenant with them, show no mercy to them.

Why would God say this? Because we have to have discernment when we choose those to whom we express love and to whom we express mercy. Some people are qualified under God's

criteria for love, for mercy, for compassion, for patience. Others are not.

And from them we are to separate. From them we are to distance ourselves. There is a distinction.

There is a distance that we put between ourselves and some people. We don't kill them as the Israelites were commanded to do, but we distance ourselves from them. Touch not the unclean thing.

What fellowship hath light with darkness? Right? Because in fellowship, in coexistence, in having commerce and conversation with those who are in this category, we defile ourselves. What does God go on to say? Deuteronomy 7, verse 3. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

For they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods. And the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. This is what's on the line.

Which do we value more? There are two great commandments. Love our neighbor as ourself and love the Lord our God. Which one comes first? Jesus said the first and greatest commandment is to love God.

And when there is a conflict, when one precludes the other, relationship with God, fellowship with God, love for God must trump all other factors. And there comes a time when within families, within circles of acquaintance, within friendships, within schoolmates or whatever it may be, a separation has to be made, a distance has to be enforced so that we are not dragged into destructive forms of fellowship. Thus you shall deal with them, you shall destroy their altars, break down their sacred pillars, cut down their wooden images and burn their carved images with fire.

This is what Moses did with the carved image of the golden calf, isn't it? He burned it with fire. Look at verse 6. You are a holy people to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

This is a choosing. This is an election, isn't it? This is a calling. Now, has everyone that God chose, has everyone that God elected to be a people for himself, made the trip? Are they going to be in this select and august company? No, they're not.

They can opt out, can't they? They can resist God. They can choose other things. They can disobey.

They can break the covenant and be outside the covenant and lose all of the covenant promises and blessings. They do not lose their salvation. They are not now bound for the lake of fire, but they lose all of the privileges, all of the blessings, all of the opportunities that come with being in the covenant.

So, I have this underlined in my Bible. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people. The remaining question is, have we chosen to be those people? God has chosen us.

Are we now going to choose him? The Lord did not set his love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples. There was no quality about us where God said, you know, I can see from the distance of eternity past as I look forward, here's some that I just really kind of like. I'm going to love them.

We talked about this in our Acts study when we came across the Apostle Paul using the word *progenosko*. And many people try to read some sort of love into that because of Genesis 4.1 where the Bible says Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived and bear a son. And they say, see, knowledge implies intimate acquaintance and some sort of love.

And so God foreknew. God foreloved. Well, if God wanted to say forelove, he would say *proagapao*.

But he didn't, did he? Whom he foreknew, Romans 8.29. Those he destined ahead of time to be conformed to the image of his Son. God has a special destiny. You will notice nowhere in the Bible does it say that Israel as a nation or as a people or even as individuals are going to be conformed to the image of Christ.

The Bible never says that. Find me a verse where it ever says Israel, the chosen people of God, are going to be conformed to the image of his Son. It doesn't say that.

Whose destiny is that? Now, taking nothing away from Israel, they are the chosen people of God. They have a tremendous destiny. They have a tremendous opportunity to reflect the glory of God.

But it is not their destiny to be conformed to the image of his Son. Whose destiny is that? Church age believers. Church age believers.

You and me. We have the opportunity to have Christ formed in us as the hope of glory. To be conformed to his image.

To be the many brethren with whom he stands as the firstborn. In Romans 8, 29 and 30. Right? It never says that about Israel.

It takes nothing away from the glory of Israel that God gives them. The purpose and so on. But it's different.

It's a different destiny. It's a different opportunity. But like them, we can either opt in or opt out if we get busy, get distracted, if we don't care enough about the things of God and we spend our life on frivolous pursuits, short-term pursuits, things that seem important in this life.

You know, I remember being in kindergarten for a brief time when I was a young lad. And there were things that were very important to me at that time. Our kindergarten teacher used to pick

one person each half day to lead the class in the Pledge of Allegiance.

And this was a much coveted honor to be the one chosen by the teacher to stand up and be the human flag holder. You hold the flag in your left hand, you put your hand on your heart with your right, and you lead the class in the Pledge of Allegiance. And that was really important.

Everybody thought, wow, you're really special if you get to do that. Well, it seems very trivial and insignificant now, but at the time I was a kindergartner, it was a big deal. And there were other little privileges that were a part of the class because the teacher was inculcating us with some principles.

When you do well, you will be rewarded. When you are disobedient, you will not be rewarded. You may be denied some privileges and denied some opportunities.

Some people got to take extra playtime because they did well. Others who were disobedient had to come in and do extra work. The teacher decided.

The teacher set the rules. And if you conformed to the teacher's expectations, you were rewarded with privileges and opportunities. If you were careless and didn't pay any attention to the teacher and what she wanted, you wound up being penalized.

You lost things that were desirable. Well, I learned this as a tiny child. But I don't think now that I need to go find my aged kindergarten teacher and see if I can get her to let me hold the flag.

I mean, those things are trivial and inconsequential now that I'm older, right? At the time, they filled my view. But I was a child. I spoke as a child.

I thought as a child, as Paul says over in 1 Corinthians 13. In the same way, we have to be careful that we do not act like kindergartners in this life and consume ourselves with the immediate and the short term what seems to fill our view now but is going to be so trivial and inconsequential in eternity to come in the millennial kingdom to come. We need a larger view.

We need to grow up. You go to Ephesians chapter 4 that God's goal for us is that we grow into the stature of a mature man, that we be fully supplied, that we be edified and built up into something that reflects the glory of Christ. That's Ephesians 4 in a nutshell.

Walk in love. Be edified and built up by that which every joint supplies. The joints determine direction and movement and the application of strength.

If your joints are stiff or arthritic or seized up, you can't do much, can you? You look at these great gymnasts and athletes in the Olympics that were recently completed. It's a beautiful thing to behold the symmetry and the achievement that people can attain with their human body. But if their joints didn't work right, can you imagine a long jumper, the broad jumpers running down with a stiff knee? Ker-klump, ker-klump, ker-klump, splash, five feet into the sand, face down.

Stiff joints. That which every joint supplies. The joints in this case are our sources of the Word of God.

Pastors and teachers, authors, students of the Word of God. It's not just me, by the way. There are a lot of places where you can glean insight into the Word of God.

Your own private meditation on the things of God is the best source of encouragement and nurture and strength and orientation to the plan and purpose of God. Got to keep our joints loose and flexible. Sometimes we have to stretch a little bit for that to take place.

Well, back to Deuteronomy chapter 7. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself. Verse 6. A special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. Israel and their calling and their destiny is no less great than that of the church, but it's different.

We have also been chosen to be, as the old King James puts it, a peculiar people. Not peculiar in the strange sense, but a special people. The Lord Jesus wants to present Himself with a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she should be holy and without blemish.

How is that possible when we are fallen and sinful? We have to know how to cleanse ourselves. We have to know how to be refreshed and renewed like David did. Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Renew a right spirit within me. Read Psalm 51. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me, David, the murderer. David, the adulterer. David, the bad father.

David, the bad king at different phases in his life. He says, wash me. I shall be whiter than snow.

That's what we have to understand. That's what we have to know. That's what we have to care about.

Verse 7, the Lord did not set His love on you or choose you because you were more in number, because you had any particular glory. You were the least of all peoples. But because the Lord loves you and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand.

God made a promise to Abraham and that's why He preserves and protects and defends Israel, even when they are rebellious. And He maintains a remnant, even in generations where they have to go out under discipline as a nation. Who did God make a promise to with regard to us? What promise sustains us as church age believers? God the Father made a promise to the Lord Jesus Christ, didn't He? Jesus said, all that the Father has given me will come to me.

He claims the Father's promise. The Father has promised Him a bride, has promised Him a body, has promised Him a people of His own. And that's us.

And you can see a real close parallel between us and Israel, can't you? Therefore, verse 9, know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments. Who is it with whom God keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations? Is it just the saved? All those who have come out under the blood of the Passover lamb? Who is it He keeps mercy and covenant with? Those who love Him, those who keep His commandments. Those things are just nearly synonymous, aren't they? If we love Him, we will keep His commands.

To keep His commands, we have to know His commands. It's all the same thing. He repays those who hate Him to their face.

Can the people of God hate God? Absolutely. Absolutely. Are the people at the foot of Mount Sinai dancing around the golden calf, are they the people of God? Yes.

Are they acting like those who hate Him? Yes, they are. What does it mean to hate? We think of an emotional distaste and repulsion and revulsion, right? Love and hate in the Bible are policy decisions. Whom the Lord loves, He chastens.

It's a policy. God is trying to bring along those that belong to Him. Emotion of love is a wonderful thing.

The emotion of hate is not a wonderful thing. But there can be a policy of hate that is biblical. God hates a lot of things.

Is God sinful? Is God wrong to hate? Are there people that God hates? Absolutely. Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated, Malachi, Romans, right? This is not an emotional, unthinking, unknowing, sinful attitude. This is a policy.

Why does God have a policy called hate toward Esau? Because Esau cared nothing for the birthright, which was a reflection of God's pattern and God's blessing. The birthright was God's blessing in the family of Abraham and Isaac. And to treat that as unimportant, to not care about that calling to be the people of God, to not care about the promise of God to be a blessing and a light to the nations, Esau gave it away in exchange for a bowl of stew.

God says, you know what? If Esau doesn't care any more about me than that, then I don't care about him. That's hate. Esau hated God, so God says, I'll hate you right back.

So, Deuteronomy 7, verse 10, He repays those who hate him to their face to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates him. He will repay him to his face.

Now, what do you think is the situation here in Exodus? What is the situation? Are people hating God? Dancing around the calf? Are they hating God? Standing in the door flaps of their tents? Moses says, if you're on Yahweh's side, come to me, and they don't come. I'd say that's hating God, and they are the people of God. So, once again, verse 10, chapter 7, Deuteronomy, He will not be slack with him who hates him.

He will repay him to his face. Therefore, you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments, which I command you today to observe them. What is the point here? Obedience is not optional.

Obedience is required. If you fail that call, you will be hated by God in the sense that He will repay right in the face. You get it right smack in the face.

Look at verse 12. Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them. Is this saving faith that we're talking about here? It is not.

This is obedience. This is works. At the last judgment, the final judgment, the great white throne judgment, it says the books are open and they are judged according to their works.

Works are a basis for judgment for believers. There are going to be believers standing at the great white throne judgment. I think they're going to be the millennial saints because they have not yet been judged for the life that they live under the power of the Spirit.

In the millennium, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your men will dream dreams and have visions and so on. Israel, the revived Israel, is going to walk about in the land and they are going to live the life that you and I live now.

They were supposed to get it first. They were supposed to live the life of the Holy Spirit, the new covenant life that you and I have, but they sold it for a mess of pottage just like Esau. And we are the younger son.

We are like Jacob. And we are getting the first opportunity to live the life that the Lord Jesus demonstrated. He lived His human life in the energy and power of the Spirit sustained by the Word of God.

That's how you and I are to live. That's why Jesus is held up as our example. Israel will come in behind us in the millennial kingdom and get the same opportunity.

And at the end of that time, God will place the sheep and goats on one side and on the other and there will be a judgment. You go to Revelation 20, the books are opened and another book which is of life. And they will be judged according to their works.

He will love you and bless you, verse 13, and multiply you. He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land and your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle, the offspring of your flock in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all peoples.

There shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock. 715 of Deuteronomy, the Lord will take away from you all sickness and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you. Also, you shall destroy all the peoples whom the Lord your God delivers over to you.

Your eyes shall have no pity on them, nor shall you serve their gods. That will be a snare to you. If you should say in your heart, these nations are greater than I. How can I dispossess them? Don't we say this sometimes? We say, I can't separate from this person.

I can't put a distance between myself and this person who cares nothing about the things of God. It would cause too much trouble. It would ruin me.

I would suffer too greatly if I were to do that. Look at verse 18. You shall not be afraid of them.

You shall remember well what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh, and to all Egypt, the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out. So shall the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. Moreover, the Lord your God will send a hornet among them until those who are left who hide themselves from you are destroyed.

Now, this is the problem after a great battle and a great victory is you've got mopping up to do. There are still pockets of resistance and people hiding in caves and holes in the ground. Had this trouble in the Pacific Islands with the Japanese.

Had this trouble now, today, in Iraq where the war is won but the battles remain to be fought with these little pockets of resistance. God says you don't have to worry about that. I will send hornets.

The thing about a hornet is he can go anywhere you can, right? The Lord will send the hornet. You shall not be terrified of them. The Lord your God, the great and awesome God, is among you.

Now, this is a really important principle. Why do you not have to worry? Why do you not have to fear? God is in your midst. God is with you.

What is the greatest of all of the blessings that we have because of the Lord Jesus Christ? God with us, Emmanuel. We have the opportunity for not only the ever-present indwelling of the Holy Spirit but the filling of the Holy Spirit. We have the potential for the indwelling of Christ, the indwelling of God the Father, Jesus.

How many times have I quoted this to you? He says, the one who has my words and keeps them, he's the one that loves me. I and my Father will come to him and make our home with him. Why do we care about that? You say, well, I'm not sure I want God making his home in me.

Maybe I have some stuff going on. I just assume he's not there. What's the benefit? You shall not be terrified.

The Lord your God, the great and awesome God, is in your midst. The Lord your God will drive out those nations before you little by little. You will be unable to destroy them at once lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.

God says, I'm not just going to give you one big nuclear victory. I'm not going to have one big mushroom cloud and then you just come marching in. He says, I need to give it to you little by little so that you can grow into it.

You'll drive them out as you are able to occupy and control. If you vacate the land, it's kind of like Jesus saying, if I drive all the demons out, they come back later and find the house clean and swept. There's nobody occupying.

There's nobody to hold the ground. We have to learn and grow and be able to hold our ground, right? So God gives us tests as we go along. He doesn't just say, okay, you've got the rose petal strewn highway to heaven here and everything is great.

No more troubles, no more trials, no more temptations. You're saved and no problems from now on. Jesus said just the opposite.

He said, you're going to have tribulation in this world. I'm going to give you victory little by little. It's kind of like the Yield Not to Temptation song.

If you've ever sung that, particularly as a child, yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin. Each victory will help you, some other to win. We learn and we grow and we get better at the spiritual battle.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, it's principalities and powers and rulers. We've got to learn to fight the spiritual fight and we learn as we go along. This is why we're always glad to have seasoned military veterans in our armed forces, right? Do you really want to take people that have all their learning out of books and throw them over into a big conflict? We look around and we say, where are our Vietnam veterans? Where are our Desert Storm veterans? Where are the guys who have been face to face even now in the election? I hear people on the liberal thinking side of the political equation saying, well, I look at George Bush and I look at John Kerry and Kerry was in Vietnam and George Bush wasn't, and who do we want leading our nation in a time of war? We want somebody who's been there.

Well, all other politics aside, that argument has some traction, doesn't it? We do want somebody with some experience. Now, I would argue that point on other bases, but the reason that has any weight at all is because it's a sound principle that you want experienced leadership, right? The Lord your God, verse 23, Deuteronomy 7, will deliver them over to you and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed. Isn't that great? That verse ought to be on everybody's refrigerator.

The Lord your God will deliver them over to you and He will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed. That is a great, comforting verse. He will deliver their kings into your hand.

You will destroy their name from under heaven. No one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them. Notice in verse 23, God will inflict defeat on them until they are destroyed.

Verse 24, you will destroy them. You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire. Notice, you can't burn somebody else's carved gods in the fire until your own carved god has been burned in the fire, right? This is what Moses is telling the Israelites now that their golden calf has already been turned to ashes and drunk up, right? You shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them nor take it for yourselves lest you be snared by it.

It is an abomination to the Lord your God. You know what people do in the modern church? They say, here are great principles of success for groups. Here are great principles of success in sales.

Here are great principles of success in philosophy or in psychiatry or psychology. Here is the way that people can make things happen out in the world. We, of course, don't want the whole carved image.

We are not going to buy into philosophy or psychiatry or psychology, but we are going to take the gold off of it. We are going to take the value out of it and we are going to bring it into the church. We will take these valuable principles of sales and selling and make our church grow.

We will use telemarketing. We will use advertising. We will use bait and switch.

We will use softening the bad stuff and emphasizing the good stuff. We won't talk about Jesus on the horse with the blood up to the horse's bridle. We will just talk about the gentle Jesus walking through the field of flowers with a child in each hand.

We will sell. We will market. We will do a lot of things of that nature and we will just take the best of what we see in the world.

We will take the gold off of their images and bring it in. God says, Do not covet the silver or gold that is on them. Don't take it for yourselves.

You will be snared by it. It is an abomination to the Lord your God. Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it.

Remember the sin of Achan, which is going to be in the immediate future from this time that Moses is speaking. They are going to go into the land. Joshua is going to take them in.

Remember what happens between Jericho and Ai. Because Achan violates this very statement. He takes an abomination into his house and he is doomed to destruction just like it.

You shall utterly detest it. Utterly abhor it. It is an accursed thing.

You say, Well, didn't God make the gold? I am taking the gold. It is just gold now. God says, No, it is an accursed thing.

Look at chapter 8 now. Every commandment which I command you today, you must be careful to observe that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land of which the Lord

swore to your fathers. You shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these 40 years in the wilderness to humble you and test you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

Why are we still here after our salvation? Why does God leave us in this life? Why are we beset on every side with struggles and trials and the failures of people around us, the pressures that come from our own failures? Why do we have to go on in these uncomfortable circumstances? You shall remember the Lord your God is leading you all the way. Our 40 years are this life. We have not yet crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land, have we? We have not yet seized and laid hold of our inheritance.

The Lord God leads you all the way these 40 years in the wilderness to humble you, to test you, to find out, to know what is in your heart, whether you will keep his commandments or not. We know this is the test. We know this is what God is looking for.

Alright, I'm putting some stumbling blocks, some obstacles, here's some difficulties, here's some pressures, here's some failures, here's some hard things to go through. What are you going to do? What is God looking for? Whether you will keep his commandments or not. That's the test.

It's a great thing when the teacher tells you what's going to be on the test, right? Anybody that's ever been in school? Got a midterm, got a final coming up? My great appreciation was for my professors who would say, let me tell you what I'm going to ask you on the test. They didn't just pontificate through the semester and then you get down to the test and you say, well, is he going to emphasize the book? Is he going to emphasize the lectures? Is he going to test me? Is it going to be essays? Is it going to be multiple? What's it going to be? Look, God is telling us exactly what's on the test. God is looking down on us this moment.

God is going to be looking at us this afternoon. God is going to be looking at us tomorrow. And he's going to see us facing trouble, facing challenge, facing pressure, facing tests.

What's he looking for? Do we keep his commandments or not? My calculus professors, and trust me, I was no great whiz in calculus. We had three semesters of calculus. I got a C, a C-, and a D. But I passed.

Barely. By the grace of God. But when I was taking calculus, trying to take it, trying to understand it, trying to pass it, the thing that got me through was that my professor said, show your work.

Turn in your scrap paper. Turn in the way you got your answers with your test. And what was he looking for? He didn't just look and say, well, you know, it's five points per question.

You got this question wrong. You five points off. He said, let me look and see how you got your answer.

Why did he do that? He wants to know, did I learn the procedure? What his goal is, did you learn, do you know the formulas? Do you know the way to solve the problem? Okay, so you had a math error here. You forgot to carry one, and you didn't get the right answer. But did you know the formula? Did you follow the proper procedure? That's what the test is over.

Do you know the right way to do the problem? Even if you have a slip here and there in how you execute it, did you at least have the knowledge? And did you apply the knowledge? That's what God is looking for. For us, we slip and fail all the time. But when he looks in our heart, what is he judging? It's our intentions.

It's our thoughts. It's do we know the commands of God, and do we apply them? It's just like formulas in physics, or calculus, or chemistry, or anything else. Do you know the procedure, and are you trying to implement it or not? That's what God is judging.

To know what is in your heart, whether you will keep his commandments or not. So he humbled you, allowed you to hunger. Is it a hard thing to take somebody you know and let them hunger? You're caring for someone elderly.

You're caring for someone young. You've got a little child, and something is happening, and you have to wait a while before you feed them. They've got an illness.

They have a problem, or whatever. You can't just feed them even something they may want. It's not good for them.

It will hurt them. It's hard, isn't it, to deny food to somebody. But if it's in their best interest, sometimes you have to go down and get a medical test, and in order for them to x-ray your abdomen or something, you have to not eat for 12 hours before you go.

It's important. It's necessary. They can't get a good diagnosis.

They can't fix the problem unless they can see all the way through your body, and you can't have any food in your alimentary canal. So you deny food. Well, if you have to do this with a little child that's got appendicitis or something, or a suspected problem of some sort, they say, Oh, Mom, I'm hungry.

Sorry, I can't give you any food. It's necessary, but it may be hard for the child to understand. God says, Look, I allowed you to hunger so that you would appreciate what I was about to give you.

Then I fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, so that he might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Is that an important verse? It was important to the Lord Jesus when he was face to face with Satan, wasn't it? Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these 40 years. Even in their disobedience, even in their wandering in the wilderness until they dropped, God cared for them.

God sustained them. God provided for their physical needs, didn't he? He fed them. He gave them clothing that supernaturally did not wear out.

We're going to see in the construction of the tabernacle that the dolphin skin, the fine leather that was normally used for sandals was given instead to the construction of the tabernacle, to one of those outer layers of covering. The leather, the sandal leather that they brought with them of this particular durable kind was given to the work of the Lord and they didn't have it to make sandals out of. Do you know what God did? God said, you're not going to suffer for giving something to me, for putting me first.

And their sandals never wore out. Can you imagine? Now, I've got a pair of shoes that my mother went with me and we bought down at the men's store in 1975. They are 29 years old and I have worn them regularly.

They're a pair of dress shoes, wingtips, Florsheim Imperials, one of the finest shoes ever made, most comfortable shoe, terrific shoe. I love those shoes and I have worn them a lot. I have half sold them three or four times, put heels on them four or five times.

But I will tell you, that's a sad looking pair of shoes today. Those shoes are wearing out. And that's only 29 years.

These people wore sandals and crawled all over the rocky ground for 40 years and their sandals never wore out. God sustained them. God provided for them.

You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you. Anyone who has chastened their children knows what God is talking about here. It is not out of meanness.

It isn't out of pettiness. It isn't out of bitterness. It is out of love.

It is a desire to benefit the child that a loving parent disciplines them. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, fountains and springs that flow out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper.

When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. God has a great purpose if we just trust Him. He has a great purpose if we just remember who we are and why we are here.

That is what Moses is giving in his last words to Israel. He has led them for 40 years in the wilderness. He is not going to be able to go with them across the Jordan, but he says, Look, this is what is the most important thing to remember.

Well, we need to pause here and take our break. We have not even finished our scripture reading. As I told you, it is long this morning, but it is essential to understand what is happening at the foot of Mount Sinai in Exodus chapter 33.

That is where we will be when we come back from the break.