

Choose LIFE - March 23, 2025

Intro:

Good morning/afternoon Riverside! We are missing our lead shepherd today as Pastor Brent is down under in Australia with the Springmans' and some others as they are bringing the gospel message there and I look forward to hearing all about that trip when they get back. So please remember to pray for the team that is there as well as the team that is Mexico working with Victor and Sonya there.

I so appreciate looking out and seeing so many faces expectantly waiting to hear from the Word of God and to listen to what His Holy Spirit would say to us this service and every time we are gathered here. I know that I speak for all of the pastors here at Riverside that when we are blessed to fill this pulpit and bring a message, that we study, we read, we listen and prepare and then we let go of all of that and ask the Holy Spirit to use what He wills to and to use us as an empty vessel for His use. And so, I pray, and I trust that the Holy Spirit fills me today with His words as we dig into the message today. We will be taking a brief break from our verse-by-verse teaching in Matthew today, but pastor Brent will be back, Lord willing" next week to continue on in chapter 24. As most of you know, I hope, today being the 4th Sunday of the month is Love Life Sunday here at Riverside and though we don't usually have an entire message on the topic, a couple of times a year we like to spend a bit of extra time to refresh the understanding of what we at Riverside believe about the issue of life.

Scripture reading: we will be looking at a passage of scripture today from Deuteronomy chapter 30 beginning at verse 11. Would you please stand with me as we read the first few verses.

READ Deuteronomy 30:11-14

11 "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 14 But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

PRAY!

– you may all be seated.

As I was preparing for this message, it has been very exciting to me, and I trust that the Spirit will cause that same excitement within your hearts today as you hear. Well, before we jump into our main text, it is important to talk a bit about what came before these verses. I am sure that you all have heard the old real estate expression that the most important thing is Location, Location and Location. Well in contemplating the Word of God the most important thing is Context, Context and Context!

In verse 11 Moses says, “For this commandment which I command you today...” well what commandment is he talking about?

Moses has been reminding the people of Israel that God had promised to either curse or bless them based on their obedience. If you read through chapters 28,29 and the beginning of 30 you will see Moses talking about the blessings that God has promised the people if they continue to walk in obedience to the commands that God has given them through the law. He also reminds them of the curses that will fall upon them if they walk in disobedience to God’s word. As they have passed through the nations since leaving Egypt, they have been witnesses to the idol worship and Pagan practices that took place in those nations and God is reminding them through Moses that they are not to follow in those ways... We see throughout the Israelites journey that it took no time at all for them to falter **EXPAND** – Don’t think of yourself more highly than you ought! ROM. 12:3 - **EXPAND (this is why they were dispersed to other lands IMPORTANT to remember is that the condition was not placed on the land, but on their ability to stay in the land. God never removed the land covenant. There was always a remnant that was brought back in repentance and obedience.**

That’s what I love about God, even when the people are disobedient and He has to take them through consequences because of their sin, He always leaves the door open for repentance and promises that His forgiveness and reconciliation are available to any that will come to Him in humility and ask for it. **(The last few verses before our passage about the blessings of obedience – Expand-RESTORATION)**

SLIDE:

9 The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of

your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, **10** if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

John puts it this way 1 John 1:9 **ADD SLIDE**

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God is just so full of love and forgiveness He always makes a way back to Him.

God is ALWAYS the SAME, the principles for the Israelites are no different than they are for us under the new covenant. You see God is immutable....**EXPAND**

So, that is a lot of introduction, but that is just how important context is!
Back to our text slide

SLIDE

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

11 “For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. **12** It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ **13** Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ **14** But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

I love how this passage begins in that God is saying through Moses that the law that has been given from God to the people is not hard to understand. There is no great mystery in God’s words. There is no need that someone come along and provide some great interpretation that had to be brought from heaven or from some faraway place across the ocean. God had given them His word through the prophet Moses and He wanted them to speak it to one another. To have it in their mouths. And to believe it and remember it. To have it in their hearts. This was the way that they could keep it and do it. **Psalms 119:11 says - your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you.** This is what Moses is doing here, he is repeating for the people that which they already know but a constant

reminder was and is needed to keep them/us on track. They were to repeat God's word to their children and their children's children. To pass on the knowledge of God to the generations to come. The same as we are to teach our children in the way that they should go. **Prov. 22:6 says train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**

But God was not asking them to do the impossible, He did not expect them to keep the law in its entirety. He knew that could not happen and that is why He also gave them the sacrificial system. Both to deal with the requirements of the law and as a foreshadowing of the new covenant to come. You see the Jewish people knew that year after year they had to take an animal and bring it to the tabernacle to sacrifice it on the alter for the sins that they had committed that year. They knew that it required a blood sacrifice to atone for sin. **Compare to Christ's sacrifice on the cross – the writer of Hebrews writes:**

SLIDE

Hebrews 10:1-10

1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. **2** For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. **3** But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. **4** For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me. **NEXT SLIDE**

6 In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin

EXPAND

You had no pleasure.

7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—
To do Your will, O God.’ ”

8 Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*” (which are offered according to the law), **9** then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the

second. **10** By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

This is why Paul quotes Deuteronomy to make clear what he is speaking about in Romans 10 when he is explaining the difference between the law and the gospel.

SLIDE – Compare the two scriptures

Romans 10:6-8

But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) **7** or, “Who will descend into the abyss?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). **8** But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach)

Do you see how Paul was taking the words that Moses spoke, and he uses them to explain how the law only led the way to the gospel of the new covenant. Paul said that Moses had been writing about the righteousness that came from the law but now we have the righteousness of Jesus through faith in the Word of God. And again, there is no work on our part needed to obtain this faith. We can't ascend into heaven or descend into hell to get Christ. Again, God's Word says that this word of faith is near us, it is in our mouths and in our hearts because it **goes on to say:**

SLIDE

Romans 10:6-13

6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) **7** or, “Who will descend into the abyss?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). **8** But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach)

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. **11** For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for

the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

Go to place slide

This is why the old covenant, the covenant of the law, was never meant for salvation. Because it (the law) could never be fully obeyed. It is not in the DNA of man to be able to live according to the law. Gal. 3:24-25 says: **24Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* 25But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**

This is why Jesus came. He came because He was the only one that could provide the sacrifice that could cover the sins of the entire world. This reminds me of the picture that we are given in the book of Genesis chapter 22 when Abraham and Isaac are making the trek to the mountain where God has told Abraham that he is to sacrifice his son Isaac on the altar. At one point Isaac looks to his father and says, I see that we have the fire and the wood for the burnt offering but where is the lamb? Abraham answers him “God will provide Himself a lamb for the sacrifice” that is exactly what happened, God provided Jesus to be that Lamb of sacrifice to take away the sins of the world.

EXPAND the old and new testament are so intertwined, you cannot fully understand the new testament without the old.

So, what we see again and again in scripture is that God has made things incredibly easy for us very simple people. We look back at the scripture we began with where God says “For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you” He says that He makes it so simple and He makes it available to everyone.

MOVING ON

So now we get to the meat of the matter.

SLIDE

Deuteronomy 30:15,16

15 “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may

live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

God is asking us today, “what (or more importantly WHO) are you going to choose”? **EXPAND** – People would say, oh look you have to obey this rule making God for anything to work for you **BUT THAT JUST MEANS THAT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHO GOD IS!!** attributes of GOD... Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Immutable, - Love, Grace, you cannot get to the other side of God's grace Forgiveness,.....

SLIDE

John 14:15-21

15“If you love Me, keep My commandments. **16** And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— **17** the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. **18** I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. **19**“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. **20** At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. **21** He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” **EXPAND?**

ADD SLIDE

Exodus 33:16

16 For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So, we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who *are* upon the face of the earth.” **EXPAND?**

But God will not force you to follow Him, if you choose to go your own way..

SLIDE

Deuteronomy 30:17,18

17 But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, **18** I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land

which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. **EXPAND – This is the world that we live in today. People have chosen to go their own way and ignore the God of the bible. Do people actually practice idolatry today? Everywhere we look we see people choosing death. Abortion, MAID, murder, lawlessness We see it in the secular culture but we unfortunately also see it in the so called church today. EXPAND**

You see...God takes great pleasure in His creation.

SLIDE

Genesis 1:31

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Revelation 4:11 (KJV)

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Isaiah 43:7

Everyone who is called by My name,
Whom I have created for My glory;
I have formed him, yes, I have made him.”

Colossians 1:16

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

How much must it grieve Him to see His creation destroyed, when someone kills a baby **in the womb. Destroyed in the midst of creation.**

SLIDE

Deuteronomy 30:17,18

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We can choose, we can go our own way. God will not stop us His Word tells us that it is up to us.

SLIDE

James 4:17

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

1 John 1:6

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

James 1:14-15

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.

SLIDE

Isaiah 59:2-3

2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,
So that He will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood,
And your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken lies,
Your tongue has muttered perversity.

So we have seen the blessings of choosing life and good, and the curses of choosing death and evil. At this point Moses brings it all home.

SLIDE

Deuteronomy 30:19,20

19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; **20** that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell

in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

EXPAND and wind up

SLIDE

Joshua 24:14,15

14“Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! **15** And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”