



Sermon, Sunday September 3, 2023 “Remember the LORD your God”

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 8:11-18 ¹¹ “Take care that you do not forget the LORD your God by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes that I am commanding you today. ¹² When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them ¹³ and when your herds and flocks have multiplied and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous^[a] snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock. ¹⁶ He fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you and in the end to do you good. ¹⁷ Do not say to yourself, ‘My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.’ ¹⁸ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

Introduction: The people of Israel placed between the past and the future

Today is the fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Deuteronomy is God's teaching that the Israelites received through Moses' sermon just before entering Canaan, the promised land. Today's text is Moses' second sermon. In it, Moses recalls the 40-year life of the Israelites in the wilderness. And it tells us to keep and remember the commandments of the Lord. Soon, the long-held dream of the Israelites is about to come true. However, now the Israelites are between the past of living in the wilderness and the future of living in Canaan. The Israelites had to prepare to enter Canaan.

The land of Canaan described by Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 8 is rich and beautiful. According to his description, the land of Canaan was a place where nothing was lacking. However, Moses' sermon about the people of Israel contains his love and concern for them. Moses was worried that the Israelites would forget the Lord because of their prosperous life in the land of Canaan.

Several tribes were already living in the land of Canaan before the Israelites entered it. In addition, Canaan was directly or indirectly influenced by various empires around it. These influences include political, cultural, and even religious ones. In this situation, it was not easy for the Israelites to remember and serve God.

That is why Moses exclaimed to the Israelites not to forget God right before entering the land of Canaan from the wilderness. The look of the Israeli people in today's text is like the look of Christians who were struggling to protect their identity from the powerful influence of material civilization.

Body: Don't Forget God

According to Moses' sermon in today's text, the reason the Israelites forgot God was because their possessions became abundant, and their hearts became proud. By the way, most people remember and serve God more when things go well for them. Conversely, when their lives do not turn out as they wish, they complain and live in unbelief.

Often, we say that our faith deepens through suffering. But even the people who say these things often don't think so. In fact, we think that suffering and trials are caused by a lack of faith. Like this, our faith is often dual.



On the outside, we say that hardships and trials are God's grace, but in our hearts, we think that everything going well is God's blessing.

Nevertheless, the words of today's text are not lies; they say that you become arrogant when you have a lot of possessions and eventually forget God. What do you think is the biggest reason people forget God in their lives? It's because people absolutely trust their abilities. Moses saw through the hearts of these people. **So today's text verse 17 says, "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth."** As this verse shows, the dazzling success in our lives makes our souls insensitive to God.

However, many people in the world do not seriously consider why this is a problem. Because the world says to us, "You are the center of the world! You are the main character of the world!". This is not to say that our lives are not valuable or that our existence is not valuable. Rather, our lives are precious, and our existence is valuable in and of itself.

However, if all our lives including our religious lives are centered on us and not on the Lord, it is killing our lives. The Bible says it is a sin. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Do you know why the Bible teaches us not to forget God? It is because the owner of life is God. He is the Creator, and we are his creatures.

However, it is difficult for us to recognize that God is the master of life and to enter that world. Because that is not an easy task, the Bible repeatedly conveys that only God is the true life.

In today's text, Moses uses the words "**Humble and Test**" to explain to the Israelites that only God is the true life. The Israelites suffered greatly in the wilderness after the Exodus. God provided water and daily bread for the Israelites and kept them safe. The reason why God did these things for the Israelites was to humble them, test them, and bless them, as stated in verse 16 of today's text.

The word '**Humble**' in this passage means something very fundamental. In fact, there was little the Israelites could do for their survival in the wilderness. The word 'Humble' means that the Israelites must thoroughly realize that their survival depended only on God.

So what does the word '**Test**' mean? It is a question about whether the Israelites can entrust their lives only to God.

However, the Israelites became arrogant after entering the land of Canaan. It is the curse that abundance brought upon the Israelites. The Bible says the result of pride is destruction.

Remember, people who are preoccupied with riches and self-confidence are not free from anxiety about life. They cannot keep the peace and they are living under the pressure of falling behind in the competition. God humbled the Israelites to give them freedom and rest, not a life full of anxiety and pressure. What we should not misunderstand is that when God humbled the lives of the Israelites, it was not to make excuses for their less abundant lives. Through today's text, Moses says that we must have a clear realization and trust in the fact that only God can save our lives.

A few days ago, I saw a beautiful Sunrise in the early morning. And while working, I experienced the refreshing feeling of the wind when my body was drenched in sweat. All my experiences are made only through God, who governs the creation world. There is nothing the Israelites or we can do about God's rule of the world.

So, what we need is to face and experience God's salvation event in our lives. Christians are the most blessed people in the world. It is because we know and believe in the salvation event that God has accomplished through Jesus Christ. The crucifixion of Jesus is when God lowered Jesus to the lowest place. And then raised Him to the place of resurrection. In today's text, God humbled and tested the Israelites so that we could enjoy the blessing of eternal life.



If we know God's interest and love for our lives, we must be able to respond in obedience to God's heart that was proclaimed to us through Moses. Nothing in the world or self-righteousness can take precedence over God, the source of life.

Conclusion: Face God, the source of life.

Now let's summarize today's message. Today, we are living our lives fiercely. Our lives are happy and there are many things we are grateful for, but the course of our lives is not easy. Sometimes it's too heavy. What do we rely on in our lives?

The Israelites who entered the land of Canaan depended on their ability and abundance instead of God, who is life.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Please do not forget that God is the source of life. Also, when God humbles and tests us in our lives, we hope that we will have the grace to face God who is life deep within us.

