

Loving Obedience Deuteronomy 10:12-22

Loving Obedience Introduction

- Last week we looked at what Jesus called the first or the greatest commandment.
- Israel – and we – were told to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

- Today we will further explore loving God.
- We will see how that love leads to walking in his ways, serving him and keeping his commandments.
- Read Deuteronomy 10:12-22.

“His loving ministry, His tender care, His thoughtful love — all should bind our hearts in affectionate devotion to Him, and quicken our steps in treading the path of loving obedience.”

— C. H. Mackintosh (1820 – 1896)

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

- What does the Lord your God require of you?
- It is a powerful question because:
 - God demands nothing outlandish or complicated.
 - Everything in this passage is understandable and very reasonable under the circumstances.

- to fear ... to walk ... to love ... to serve ... to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord
- Love without fear would subvert his authority.
- Fear without love would make us gloomy and discouraged.
- Love and fear together make the walking, serving and keeping of God’s commandments a joy.

- Love prompts us to service. When love motivates, it naturally expresses itself in service.
- Where no such expression appears, we lack evidence of love toward the one who is not served.
- See John 14:15, 23

- Israel had the commandments. They had God’s word to the extent that he had revealed it to them at this time.

- We have more. We have a fuller revelation. We also have the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- We know God in a more intimate manner than they did.

- I am commanding you today for your good
- The doctor doesn’t typically ask us to enjoy our medicine.
- The doctor asks us to take it. It is for our good.
- We may even learn to like it in the end.

- In the same way, not every command seems pleasant.
- Not every command matches our natural inclinations.
- They are for our good. We may even learn to like them in the end.

Deuteronomy 10:14-15

- God is ultimate owner and creator of all that is.
- There is no being higher than him.
- What a wonderful place of honor he gave to Israel.
- It all goes back to Genesis 12:1-3.

Deuteronomy 10:16

“Circumcise your hearts. Cast away all corrupt affections and inclinations, which hinder you from fearing and loving God.”

– Matthew Henry (1662 – 1714)

- Circumcise ... your heart
- All males among Israel had to be circumcised eight days after they were born.
- This was symbolic of the real work of cutting away the flesh.
- God takes our hearts inclined after the flesh and gives us hearts inclined after the spirit.

- See also:
 - Jeremiah 4:4
 - Ezekiel 18:31
 - Ezekiel 36:25-26

- God commanded Israel to do something for which they actually needed his help.
- He showed them their need for an inner transformation.
- We need the same inner transformation.
- This should persuade us to cry out for this inner work.

Deuteronomy 10:17

- God reveals himself as the most powerful being in existence.
- There is no god or power higher than him.
- He is also perfectly just, showing no partiality to anyone.

Deuteronomy 10:18-19

- The fatherless, the widows and the foreigners were particularly helpless people in the ancient world. This is still very true today.
- James 1:27 comments on this same topic.

Deuteronomy 10:20

- Our service should be with the firmest confidence, truest affection, and persistent obedience.
- The word serve includes a sense of worship, as in the service of the Levites.
- Our word *liturgy* comes from Greek and Latin roots pertaining to public service.

The word liturgy strictly means service; here service means adore, pray, and praise; worship outwardly, publicly, and privately with all the heart. We learn the essence of all true acceptable worship before God. Not material glory, ritual splendour; but depth of sincerity, intensity of love, the supremacy of God in the heart.

– John Cumming

Deuteronomy 10:21-22

- The pattern with God is not that we work to receive blessings from him.
- With God, the pattern is “Grace is given, obedience follows as a response.”

- God’s past goodness is grounds for immense hope.
- This was only the beginning.
- God had so much more in store for the people of Israel.
- He has more in store for them yet today.

- God’s past goodness is grounds for immense hope.
- Let’s also consider what God has done for us in the past.
- Let’s trust in his promises for the future.

Loving Obedience Conclusions

- God gave Israel a special status – a unique and privileged place in the drama of the nations.
- Our place is even more privileged.
- We live after the cross. We can see and experience God’s love in higher, deeper, nearer and more profound ways than Israel.

Yet far greater is our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ... And this carries with it a higher obligation to serve Him, to love Him and to walk in obedience, than Israel’s obligation.

– Arno Gaebelein (1861 – 1945)

- What prompts our love for God?
- Is it the benefits we have received?
- Is it the worthiness of the one to be loved?
- Is it the amount or sincerity of love toward us?
- Then God deserves from us the most love of all.

In the first creation He gave me myself; but in His new creation He gave me Himself, and by that gift restored to me the self that I had lost.

– Bernard of Clairvaux (1091 – 1153)

- If we are capable of any love at all - then our love rightly belongs to him.
- He is the most deserving of our love by any measure.
- And this love should prompt us to wholehearted, worshipful, loving obedience.

- Let’s end with a story about Jesus, which includes a story that Jesus told.
- It illustrates an ideal attitude toward him.
- See Luke 7:36-50.